



# *Physical Activity*

Physical activity involves people moving within cultural spaces and contexts and influenced by an array of interests, emotions, ideas, instructions and relationships.

**INTRO**

- 5 Categories
- The evidence
- Recommendations

**HEPAS**  
HEALTHY AND PHYSICALLY  
ACTIVE SCHOOLS IN EUROPE

# 5 Categories of Physical Activity:

We define Physical Activity in the HEPAS project as body movement and exercise done in the school context outside of Physical Education and School Sport, but still connected to the school environment. We identify the following 5 categories for Physical Activity in a school context.

## 1 Active Breaks

A short bout of physical activity performed as a break from academic instruction to increase or decrease students' activation.

## 2 Active Homework

Assigned physically active homework tasks that students can do on their own or with family members.

## 3 Active Transport

Travel that incorporates all modes of transport relying on human power for propulsion.

## 4 Active Learning

The use of physical activity lessons in which curriculum topics are delivered through movement.

## 5 Active Recess

The dedicated break time for school-based children to engage in spontaneous play (self-organised) or in structured play (active), but out of the formal subject-content curriculum.



# The evidence:

*Adding more active elements to an average school day can boost children's physical activity levels.*

## **Active Breaks** (strong evidence)

- increase students' PA levels
- contribute to healthier weight status, improved behaviour, enhanced cognition and greater enjoyment

## **Active Learning** (strong evidence)

- cost-effective, enjoyable, motivating strategy to increase students' daily PA at school
- often enhances other educational outcomes.

## **Active Homework** (weak evidence)

- positive outcomes for both girls and boys
- effects tend to be relatively small across the school week

## **Active Recess** (moderate evidence)

- provide up to 40% of students' recommended daily PA
- greater benefits going to younger children and boys

## **Active Transport** (strong evidence)

- important source of daily PA
- associated with increased MVPA (Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity)
- Active Transport interventions are effective

# Recommendations:

*What schools can do to encourage more physical activity during the school day*

## Active Breaks

- ✓ daily & regular ritual in all classes at all school levels
- ✓ inclusive activities that engage all students
- ✓ make ideas available as a resource for all teachers
- ✓ encourage parents to implement Active Breaks at home

## Active Learning

- ✓ professional development opportunities for all school staff
- ✓ accessible strategies and practices for implementation including working examples
- ✓ use in all curriculum areas

## Active Recess

- ✓ ensure easy access to a variety of active recess examples
- ✓ particular attention to traditionally marginalised groups (girls, disabled etc.)
- ✓ make funding available (school spaces, including playground markings and safe equipment/apparatus)
- ✓ make developmentally appropriate play and sports equipment (balls, bats, hoops, ropes, etc.) available and supervised to ensure equitable and safe use

# Recommendations:

*What schools can do to encourage more physical activity during the school day*

## Active Homework

- ✓ requires the support and engagement of parents
- ✓ regular meetings, shared information, effective means of communication
- ✓ help families identify accessible spaces and facilities
- ✓ establish cooperative relationships with local partners

## Active Transport

- ✓ establish safe and well-lit routes to school & places for securing students' vehicles
- ✓ communicate supportive messages, share guidance, initiate collaborative actions (e.g. 'walking buses' and group cycling)
- ✓ plan school projects exploring the local environment, surveying perceptions of safety in the local area, and calculating distances, speeds and times of different routes to and from school
- ✓ introduce bicycle education programmes



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For more information about the HEPAS Physical Activity  
model and its other dimensions, please visit:

[www.movingschoolsaward.com/hepas](http://www.movingschoolsaward.com/hepas)

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