

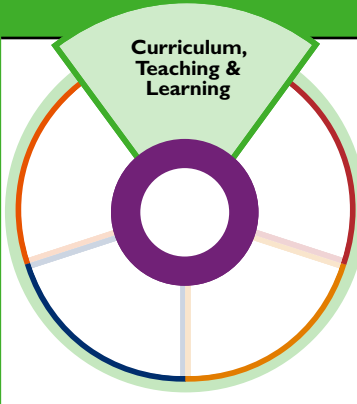
Creating a Healthy Secondary School that supports: **Physical Activity**


Why Encourage Physical Activity at School?

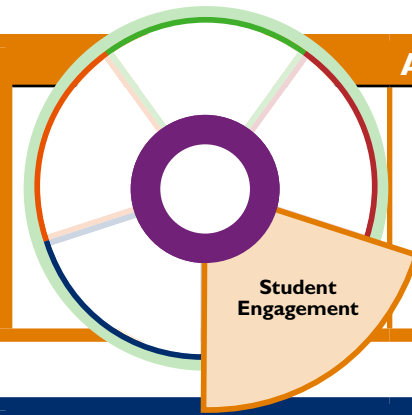
Physical activity has many benefits for the entire school community including students, staff, and parents. Regular physical activity can help students improve their health and do better in school by improving memory, concentration and attention span. It can also help students perform better in school, socialize with friends, maintain interest in class, and learn new skills. Physical activity helps students to cope with stress and anxiety, feel happier, and improve self-confidence and self-esteem. You can promote physical activity to your entire school community using the healthy school approach.

The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that youth aged 12 to 17 years old get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity every day.

Statistics Canada surveys reveal that only 5% of 12 to 17 year olds in Canada meet this target (2012-13 CHMS, Statistics Canada).

At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer all teachers equal opportunity to attend workshops/training on health and physical education/physical activity. • Work with physical education teachers to start a fitness challenge for the school. • Ensure inclusion in physical activity for students of all abilities/socioeconomic status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the benefits of being physically active with your students. When students are going through periods of stress, such as exam time, being active can help. • Talk with students about ways they can balance life to include activity into their day and decrease time spent on screens (e.g. going for a run instead of watching TV). • Highlight different physical activities/sports to foster understanding about different cultures. • Promote decreased screen time in class (cell phone/laptop use). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When students are finding it difficult to participate, encourage them to increase their activity level gradually (e.g. 10 minutes at a time). • Have a dress code in physical education classes that reduces concerns about body image and is culturally inclusive. • Encourage students to set a goal to become more active as part of a class assignment. Have them plan when, where, what and for how long they will be active each day. • Use the physical activity planner. Visit durham.ca/physicalactivity to order/print copies of the planner.

At the School	In the Classroom	Student
 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a school guideline that supports all students of all abilities to be active (e.g. ensure frequent opportunity for all students to participate in intramurals and physical activity clubs). • Have students, staff and parents sign a physical activity pledge and hang it in the school. The school public health nurse can provide a free pledge banner. • Start a walking (or activity) group at lunch for students and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest students get up and move during class time. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Set a timer and stand up and move every half hour. ○ Ask students to lead the class in stretch breaks. ○ Get students to stand to answer questions. • Staff role model positive physical activity behaviours and attitudes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start a walking group or staff intramurals at lunch. ○ Participate in intramurals with students. ○ Host staff vs. student games (e.g. basketball). ○ Share stories with students about the physical activities they enjoy and why, as well as how they fit them into their day. • Share stories of the physical activities students of all abilities enjoy (ask for stories of low/no cost activities). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities for students of all abilities to evaluate physical activities they participate in and incorporate feedback into planning initiatives that represent school priorities. • Provide opportunity for a student voice in planning activities that are reflective of interests of children of all abilities and socioeconomic/cultural backgrounds.



At the School

- Train student leaders to promote being active to other students at lunch and after school (e.g. student ambassadors, student athletic association).

In the Classroom

- Students choose activities that they enjoy including those typically not viewed as sport (e.g. walking).
- Offer individual and group activities.
- Recognize students for trying new skills, being active and for their positive attitude in class by giving feedback to each individual student.

Student

- Students lead the planning and implementation of a physical activity initiative within the school (e.g. dance-a-thon, carnival, morning announcements, activity day).



At the School

- Create a school climate that encourages and values physical activity for all students.
 - Use active fundraising options, such as a walk-a-thon or dance-a-thon.
- Promote physical activity over the morning announcements, at school assemblies, on the school website, and through social media.
- Display physical activity guidelines and messages. Promote active transportation (e.g. walking or wheeling) to and from school.
- Organize team sports, intramurals, and activity clubs.
 - Offer non-sport related activities such as walking.
 - Create “no cut” sports within and between schools.

In the Classroom

- Avoid using physical activity as a punishment (e.g. push-ups or laps when students are late for class).
- Convert an unused room in the school into a fitness centre.
- Recommend a girls/boys only time in the school gym or fitness room.

Student

- Plan and implement physical activity initiatives based on the needs and interests of the school community (e.g. cultural preferences).
- Invite students to suggest which activities they would like at the school during the day and after school.
- Provide sports equipment identified by students that they can sign-out and use at lunch.



At the School

- Connect with your school’s public health nurse for resources and support with physical activity initiatives.
- Connect with post-secondary students to lead a fitness or sports club (e.g. running club, badminton, soccer, yoga).
- Create an online sign-up sheet to make volunteer sign up easier.
- Establish a partnership at a local gym to hold a free weekly “student hour” or offer student discounts.
- Network with other schools to:
 - Organize a non-competitive sports tournament and create teams with a mix of students from each school.
 - Organize a physical activity “buddy program” with an elementary school.
- Connect with local organizations or athletes to share information with students, staff, and parents.

In the Classroom

- Connect with a local fitness instructor to offer yoga/fitness classes to staff or students during lunch hour or class time.
- Partner with local recreation centres to organize free physical activity programs for students throughout the year.
- Connect with local universities or colleges to have students assist with classroom activities.

Student

- Promote current free community activities to students and their families in newsletters, on your school’s website and through social media (visit durham.ca/physicalactivity for a list of free activities in your community).
- Connect students with local physical activity organizations (e.g. local recreation centres) as a way to earn their mandatory volunteer hours, as part of a class assignment, or as part of an organized “volunteer day.”



Durham Health Connection Line
905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

durham.ca/physicalactivity



If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729

*Supporting complimentary resources to assist schools with planning, teaching and promoting physical activity within their communities are available online under the “For Schools” tab at durham.ca/physicalactivity. Public health nurses are assigned to schools in Durham Region. They can support you in addressing physical activity with your school community. For more information on Physical Activity in schools please contact your school’s public health nurse or call Durham Health Connection Line at 905-666-6241 or toll free 1-800-841-2729.