

**This is a copy of the criteria for the Healthy Schools'  
Physical Activity Award for Secondary Schools**

**Please use this as a guide only as we will only  
accept online submissions via our [website](#).**





## **Physical Activity Specialist Award (Secondary Schools)**

Welcome to the Bristol Healthy Schools' Physical Activity Award.

### **What is the Physical Activity Specialist Award?**

The Physical Activity specialist award outlines best practice in the delivery of Physical Activity and includes Physical Education. Our aim with this award is to help schools:

- build a culture of physical activity throughout their school day
- get pupils enjoying sports and travelling to school actively
- address some of the barriers pupils might have to being active

Our guidance closely follows evidence based interventions and national guidance.

### **Is this the right award for us?**

Typically schools decide a topic of focus based on health need. The School Health Data packs provided by Bristol City Council/ Healthy Schools provide a good insight and schools may also have their own data and insight.

### **How long does it take?**

Each Specialist award takes up to a year but it may take only a few months if you already have good practice in place

### **How does the online system work?**

Throughout your journey you can log in and out as many times as you like, updating your evidence as you go. Your email address becomes your login. Please keep saving your changes as you go.

Most of the criteria require a Yes/No response, others ask for more detail via a text box. We never ask you to upload documents or provide additional evidence. Only this form is needed.

IMPORTANT: Do not click the back button at the top left of your browser as you complete the form. To go back to the previous section, click 'previous page' at the bottom of the survey.

### **Do I get guidance?**

Yes, there is guidance throughout. This will either help you make sense of what we are asking for, or signpost you to helpful documents. For example, we might ask you to write a policy about something. In that case, we have provided you with an example policy and that should save you time.

At any point, you can email us for help or further guidance on [healthy.schools@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:healthy.schools@bristol.gov.uk).

### **How do I know if I've passed?**

To pass this award, you need to be able to answer 'yes' or 'correct' to every question (other than the text box questions) as they are all essential. If you answer 'no' or 'incorrect' to any question, you will have the opportunity, at the end of the application form, to tell us why and what you are doing to work towards this criteria.

We will consider your response but it may be that you need some extra time to put the required practice in place and should re-submit once you have done so. We will support you to achieve this.

We aim to advise you, via email, of the outcome of your application within 3 weeks of submitting. The outcome will either be 'Pass' or 'Further work and/or clarification needed'. If the latter, we will provide you with feedback and guidance about what you need to do to pass.

If you do not pass the first time, you can re-submit your application as many times as you need, although we hope that the guidance is clear enough that this won't be necessary.

**Good luck!**

## Establishing a Healthy Schools Infrastructure

The Healthy Schools team encourage all schools to sign up to the [Essential Award](#) before completing Specialist Awards. The Essential Award covers key health and wellbeing topics and sets the foundations for creating a healthy and happy school. You can sign up on the Healthy Schools website by filling out the first page of the [Essential Award application](#). By completing the Mental Health and Wellbeing Specialist Award, you will have already made some progress towards the Essential Award.

1. Have you achieved or are you “working towards” the Bristol Healthy Schools Essential Award?

('Working towards' the Essential Award means that you have started the online application and you are implementing the criteria.)

Yes

No

## Establishing a Healthy Schools foundation

These initial steps involve completing a brief self-assessment and making sure that you have established a foundation for your healthy school's work. This foundation will provide you with a support network, leadership, and strategic focus, all of which will strengthen your successes.

Before proceeding with the application, it's important to complete this initial self-assessment. This short survey is designed to:

- act as a benchmarking tool to determine your current status.
- provide a quick overview of where you might focus your efforts.
- identify areas where the healthy schools team can provide extra support.

[Please click here to fill in the short Physical Activity Specialist Award, Initial Self-Assessment.](#)

The answers to this survey will not be used in your final assessment. The information will only be used at the start of your process to highlight where we can be of support. Your honest responses are greatly appreciated as they will help us better understand your starting point.

2. Whilst establishing your Healthy Schools foundation or working on the Essential Award, have you completed the following?

	YES	NO
Our School Improvement Plan has a section on improving health and wellbeing.		
We have a Healthy Schools Coordinator.		
We have established a Healthy Schools Steering Group. The Groups meets at least 3 times a year and has a wide representation.		
We have a pupil Healthy Schools Team with representation from across the year groups OR We have included Healthy Schools as a standing item for every School Council meeting.		
Our school has taken part in the Bristol Pupil Voice Survey or/and we commit to taking part in the next round (2024)*.		

**\*Find out more about the Pupil Voice Survey 2024 and sign up [here](#).**

## Creating a culture that positively promotes and encourages physical activity

### Reducing known barriers

#### Reducing known barriers

We know from research that there are particular barriers impacting on children’s engagement of physical activity. This section challenges schools to work to reduce some of these barriers.

Working with your Health Action Group and, ideally, consulting with pupils (see section 5), you should create an action plan to address at least three of these.

Once complete, please tick the ones you have tried to address in your school and give detail about the steps you have taken and the impact this has had.

Note that some of these barriers (gender, disability, and cultural issues) are, in part, governed by the Equality Act, which schools must adhere to. This part of the award is about going above and beyond what is statutory or mandatory.

15. We actively address gender stereotypes:

- Yes  
 No

Please tell us about the steps you have taken and the impact this has had.

Gender stereotypes can affect both girls and boys. However, we know that girls specifically are not doing as much physical activity as boys and this gap increases with age. Challenging gender stereotypes is one of the important factors in increasing girl's participation in physical activity.

You should actively challenge gender stereotypes associated with physical activity and sport, for example, challenging and removing any unhelpful gender stereotyping that appear in the promotion of physical activities on-site; in staff, parental and pupil attitudes; in uniform policies and in the types of activities offered.

We recommend the [This Girl Can](#) campaign to support your work in this area. If you register as a 'supporter' you will have access to their resources.

16. We actively address period dignity:

Yes

No

Please tell us about the steps you have taken and the impact this has had:

Research suggests that girls are missing school due to being unable to afford period products. Our local research found a further barrier linked to girls avoiding school sports/ PE during their period.

Children can start their periods as young as 8 and schools play a role in helping pupil's understand and manage their periods with dignity and respect. Aside from lessons in PSHE, there are other things schools can do to reduce the impact of periods on physical activity by:

*Having a sympathetic approach to pain management that balances promoting the fact that physical activity can help in managing pain with a respect and understanding for those whose period pains are too bad to take part either entirely or for parts of the session.*

*Availability of good quality, absorbent sanitary products in changing rooms and all PE areas. Offer a range of sizes and types so the pupil has choice and that the products meet their needs. Ensure that there are also sanitary bins to dispose of used products in all of these places.*

*An agreement that girls can wear leggings, track suit trousers etc. for all physical activities.*

17. We have worked to reduce economic barriers:

- Yes  
 No

Please tell us about the steps you have taken and the impact this has had:

You should aim to reduce economic barriers wherever possible, for example offering sports clubs for free, consider using sports funding to reduce economic barriers and ensure access for all, particularly families experiencing deprivation, having a PE kit that is low cost.

18. We have worked to reduce barriers related to clothing:

- Yes  
 No

Please tell us about the steps you have taken and the impact this has had:

Implement a clothing policy for physical activity/ PE that is practical, affordable and acceptable to all participants. Clothing for physical activity/ PE should not compromise pupil's safety and it should minimise concerns about body image. E.g. all pupils wear joggers and a plain t-shirt.

19. We have worked to reduce barriers related to cultural requirements:

- Yes  
 No

Please tell us about the steps you have taken and the impact this has had:

Consideration should be made for specific cultural requirements, for example allowing and supporting access to specialist swimwear for children that must have full body/ hair cover.

20. We have worked to reduce barriers related to disabilities:

Yes

No

Please tell us about the steps you have taken and the impact this has had:

Provision should be made for those who have a disability, for example adapting PE lessons to ensure all pupils have access and do not miss out and that specialist equipment is provided. Further, schools could challenge stereotypes by promoting para sports and ensuring any images used to promote sports are inclusive.

### **What you are most proud of?**

21. Please tell us about something that you are particularly proud of in relation to your school's approach to physical activity:

### **Tell us what you think**

22. If you answered 'no' or 'incorrect' to any of the questions, please tell us why you are not able to comply with this criteria at present, what the barriers are, what steps you are taking to work towards being able to comply and when you expect this to be possible (if at all). We will consider your response when we review your application. Please state clearly which criteria/ question(s) your answer refers to, including the section heading and question number.

23. To help us improve, please give us some feedback on this award, e.g. What was your experience of completing it? Was it clear what was required? What did you think of the criteria? Does anything need to change?

**Well Done!**