



# Active Pass

Physically Active School Settings



*A review and action planning resource for primary and secondary schools  
to maximise opportunities to provide **PHYSICALLY ACTIVE SCHOOL SETTINGS***

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Education

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<http://www.education.monash.edu.au/research/groups/mec/>



## Why is physical activity important?

Physical activity is known to build strong bones and muscles; it promotes healthy growth and development; improves cardiovascular fitness; helps relaxation; improves posture and self esteem and provides opportunities to make friends.

Australian government guidelines for children's physical activity stipulate that children should engage in at least 60 minutes and up to several hours of a combination of moderate to vigorous physical activities each day.

Physical activity in children is influenced by many factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, parental involvement, the availability of community sports and recreation programs and the built and natural environment of the local neighbourhood.<sup>1</sup> Schools can have a significant influence on children between the ages of 5 and 17 years and provide the infrastructure to support physical activity programs and incidental physical activity. Schools can reach children at a time when habits for life can be formed.<sup>2</sup>

Although physical education classes foster positive attitudes towards physical activity and encourage physical activity outside formal classes, time for physical education is limited. School policies, the physical environment and interaction with parents and the community can also foster physical activity without increasing the workload for busy teachers. If a school environment that invites activity is coupled with supportive policies, programs and free play opportunities, then its students can be more active.

## What is Active PASS?

Active PASS is a convenient resource designed to assist any member of the school community to identify the factors in their school setting that enhance or inhibit student physical activity. It can increase awareness of ecological factors influencing physical activity and provide impetus to motivate action for change. It allows school communities to maximise **PHYSICALLY ACTIVE SCHOOL SETTINGS**.

Active PASS can be used as a review and action plan, to raise awareness, to generate ideas and discussion that will allow small steps to be taken towards developing more opportunities for students to be active at school. No specialised training is required to use this resource.

The items contained in Active PASS have been selected through a rigorous review of the literature, expert review and extensive trials in schools. This process has shown the items in this resource to assist staff to identify factors in the school environment that encourage physical activity in students.

Active PASS is presented in three sections: Section 1: Physical Environment; Section 2: Parent and Community Interaction; and Section 3: School Policy and Ethos. As well as listing the factors in the school setting outside the curriculum that influence student physical activity, this resource provides references to programs, research papers, websites and other resources that can be used to enhance these factors.

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<sup>1</sup> (Bauman, Sallis, Dzewaltowski, & Owen, 2002; Gorely, 2005)

<sup>2</sup> (Bauman, Bellew, Vita, Brown, & Owen, 2002)

## How will it help my school?

By using Active PASS, your school will be in a better position to make informed decisions about creating an inviting environment for physical activity. Once completed, Active PASS will provide a sound basis for lobbying to school council, planners or local government for support. It will also point you in the direction of useful resources.

Please take the time to read the instructions for completing Active PASS and ensure the information and outcomes are passed on to policy planners and decision makers.

Try Active PASS and give your school the chance to become an active school.

Each school is different and it is your knowledge of your school which will best guide any changes you may wish to take in maximising a **PHYSICALLY ACTIVE SCHOOL SETTING**.

## How to Use Active PASS

### Who should complete it?

No specialist training is required. Any passionate school community member who can access information from school policy documents and observe use of the playground and facilities can use it.

### How long will it take to complete?

With a good knowledge of the school, its policies and the immediate environment Active PASS should only take **20 minutes** to complete.

Time to follow up any outcomes of Active PASS will depend on the outcomes required and might include staff and school council meetings, meetings with local government authorities or engaging outside program providers.

### Where should it be completed?

Active PASS would be best completed on school grounds. School policy documents should be available for reference against the items in the section referring to school policy and ethos. Information about the various communication that occurs with parents would also be useful. Knowledge of the physical education program and any partnerships in place with organisations outside the school would be an advantage. A staff member who has undertaken yard duty would have a very good idea about use of the physical environment by students without having to go out to specifically make observations. Be sure to consider the whole school environment and all year levels when completing the resource.

### What you will need to complete the review.

A pencil; Policy documents; a willingness to ask colleagues with knowledge about policy, physical education and parent communication; twenty minutes

### Scoring

Scoring is for your school to assist in identifying priority areas you may like to focus on first, or to make comparisons with future reviews to track progress made in making changes.

# Section 1:

## Physical Environment



The extent to which the physical environment is inviting to students can influence their active engagement with it. The use of some of the physical environment can be influenced by policy and playground management issues; these will be investigated in Section 3. This section will be focusing on the natural and built environments of the school, including but not exclusive to the playground layout and structures, building and playground layout and appearance, facilities and equipment. In larger schools consider the whole school, not only the area in which you work.

Please indicate in the spaces 1 - 5 below the current situation in your school.

**NOTE: Enough space vs used space: Ask yourself if play spaces are full, are some students missing out? If play spaces are empty, are they uninviting?**

Criteria						Resources/ Reference
	Irrelevant for this school	Not present	Present but could be improved	Improvements planned	High standard attained	
1. Adequate natural or built shade structures are provided for frequently used areas of the school for physical activity.	1	2	3	4	5	Visit the Sunsmart website for some great shade ideas at <a href="http://www.sunsmart.com.au">www.sunsmart.com.au</a>
2. The school has a range of flat, hard play spaces for ball games, hopping and skipping.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. The school grounds provide enough space for large groups of students to engage in physical activities such as running, and ball games such as football or softball.	1	2	3	4	5	Space is great but if your school is limited for large spaces why not see if there are community spaces available for use?
4. The school's flat, hard play spaces are marked with plenty of court and ground markings for ball games, balancing, hopping and skipping.	1	2	3	4	5	Markings on the ground will encourage hopping and ball play. Want to find out more? (Ridges, Stratton, Fairclough, & Twisk, 2007)
5. The school has a range of stimulating wall cues in the playground to prompt physical activity such as ball targets, artwork and posters of students doing physical activity.	1	2	3	4	5	Wall markings can act as prompts for activity or as targets and provide an inviting environment in which to play.
6. The school has undercover play areas that are available to students for ball games and running in wet or hot weather.	1	2	3	4	5	Don't let hot or wet weather stop play; allow the undercover areas to be used as activity spaces.
7. School facilities such as ovals, running/walking tracks, and bike riding areas are used extensively by a students at recess and lunchtime.	1	2	3	4	5	Are all your potential play areas available to the students? Are they safe and inviting?
8. School facilities such as playgrounds, ovals, running/walking tracks, sporting courts and nets are used extensively by students before and after school.	1	2	3	4	5	Is there potential for further use of facilities before and after school?

# Section 1:

## Physical Environment cont.



	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>9.</b> There is enough school equipment for physical activity for all students who want it.						Do you need more physical activity equipment? Try a special equipment fundraiser using student physical activity to raise the funds.
<b>10.</b> School equipment such as balls, skipping ropes, and bats are available to students at recess and lunchtime.						Have you thought of an equipment borrowing system run by senior students.
<b>11.</b> School equipment such as balls, skipping ropes, and bats are available to students after school.						For those students waiting for a late school bus?
<b>12.</b> There are regular checks and maintenance of playground facilities and equipment.						Is there a maintenance register?
<b>13.</b> Playground facilities and equipment have inviting colours, are freshly painted and in good condition.						Safe and inviting equipment will attract students to be physically active
<b>14.</b> School grounds are attractive and well maintained. No graffiti, weeds, litter or rundown spaces. Lawns mown, adequate plants and attractive pathways to and from activity areas.						The notion of imageability (how nice an area looks) is important in encouraging its use.
<b>15.</b> The school provides secure and sheltered storage for bicycles and other modes of active transport.						Safe storage for bicycles, skates and boards will encourage their use and show that the school recognises their use as valuable.
<b>TOTAL</b>						

### Ideas for Action

Do you have any further ideas for making your school's physical environment more inviting for physical activity? Jot them down below as ideas for action.

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# Section 2:

## Parent and Community Interaction



People and facilities outside the school can influence the student's level of physical activity. Schools may interact with the community by going out to the community and using facilities. By inviting community members into the school or by lobbying local council to ensure the area around the school is as safe as possible for those students and teachers wishing to walk or use other forms of active transport to school, a school can also encourage physical activity.

Parents have enormous influence on their child's level of physical activity. The school's interaction with parents in and outside of the school setting with regard to physical activity can influence student's level of physical activity both at school and at home.

Please indicate in the spaces 1 - 5 below the current situation in your school.

Criteria	Irrelevant for this school.	Rarely	Sometimes	Mostly	Always	Resources/ Reference
<b>16.</b> Parents are regularly informed about school programs and initiatives in PE, sport and other physical activity.	1	2	3	4	5	Have a regular section in your school newsletter or school assemblies for physical activity news. Using photos of the activity is a winner.
<b>17.</b> Parents are made to feel welcome at the school and are given opportunities to be involved in their child's PE, sport and physical activity programs.	1	2	3	4	5	Parents can be directly involved, help prepare equipment, as spectators, timing and record keeping during events.
<b>18.</b> Parents are provided with progress reports of their child's achievements and participation in physical activity.	1	2	3	4	5	Photos can be an informative way to show parents what their child is doing.
<b>19.</b> Parents are provided with information on the benefits of physical activity through a range of mediums.	1	2	3	4	5	Check out the material available to make sure it is in line with school philosophy and is safe and accurate.
<b>20.</b> Parents: A variety of strategies and approaches encourage parents to become involved in their child's skill development and physical activity at home.	1	2	3	4	5	Homework tasks, family days, activity suggestions for whole family, promotion of community activities involving physical activity.
<b>21.</b> The school promotes community physical activities and clubs for students and staff in parent newsletters and at assembly.	1	2	3	4	5	Promote you local community activities – it's good for your students and staff and for the community organisations.

## Section 2:

Parent and Community Interaction cont.



<b>22.</b>	Community: The school grounds are recognised as a key community asset and remain open out of school hours for public recreation, clubs and community groups.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	The more people using the school grounds the safer they will be.
<b>23.</b>	Community: Equipment, facilities and resources for physical activity are shared between the school and community.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Expand your resources and those of the community by sharing.
<b>24.</b>	The school's rationale for PE, sport and physical activity is widely stated and shared with the community.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Tell the community about the school's support for physical activity by promoting achievements in the local media and by inviting the broader community to school events.
<b>25.</b>	Community: The school makes connection with the community by using halls, ovals and sporting facilities outside the school.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	If you are lucky to have great facilities at the school why not invite the community in.
<b>26.</b>	Community: Community recreation facilities outside the school are of good quality.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	If you would like to use facilities in the community but they are not good quality this is your opportunity to lobby for improvements – schools and their students are an important part of the community.
<b>27.</b>	The school has links with other local schools for physical activity and sport including linking secondary schools with primary schools.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Secondary students can gain leadership experience for senior study units while acting as good role models for the younger students.
<b>28.</b>	Programs: The school has partnerships/links with local health promotion agencies through its physical activity framework.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Community health services and local government have funding for health promotion; they may have a program or activities which could benefit your school.
<b>TOTAL</b>							

## Ideas for Action

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# Section 3:

## School Policy and Ethos



Policies should be regularly reviewed and changed to meet the changing needs and focus of a school. Clearly communicated school policies that are supportive of physical activity will be reflected in many aspects of the school ethos. School ethos is broader than the policies of the school and reflect an overall philosophy towards the promotion of health and physical activity. This section includes references to policy, programs and ethos

This section contains three parts. Part A includes criteria that are considered essential, key indicators for students' physical activity. Part B contains items specifically referring to policies present that support physical activity, and Part C includes extension ideas and indicators for school ethos, policy and programs supportive of physical activity.

Please indicate in the spaces 1 - 5 below the current situation in your school.

### PART A

Criteria						Resources/ Reference
	Irrelevant for this school	Rarely	Sometimes	Mostly	Always	
<b>29.</b> The school implements a whole school healthy living framework supporting physical activity.	1	2	3	4	5	Try the following physical activity policy guide <a href="http://www.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/2003/qld/pa_policy_model.asp">www.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/2003/qld/pa_policy_model.asp</a>
<b>30.</b> The school ethos supporting physical activity is explicit.	1	2	3	4	5	How do you communicate this with students, parents and the wider community?
<b>31.</b> The school implements Department of Education Victoria requirements or follows a written policy for minimum instruction time in physical education and sport.	1	2	3	4	5	Year P – 2: 150 min per wk; Year 3 – 6: 180 min per wk; Year 7 – 10 200 min perwk
<b>32.</b> The school employs a specialist physical education teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>33.</b> Physical education and physical activity programs are regularly evaluated for participation and engagement of students, use of equipment and meeting physical activity targets as well as skill development.	1	2	3	4	5	NSW Department of Education and Training. (1998). <i>Fitness and physical activity a resource for school communities.</i>
<b>34.</b> It is a requirement that physical education classes keep the students moving and active for at least 50% of the time.	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>35.</b> It is required that students receive instruction in and opportunities to practice fundamental movement skills such as throwing, catching, jumping and striking in the context of active games.	1	2	3	4	5	Department of Education and Training. (1998). <i>Fundamental motor skills - An activities resource for classroom teachers.</i> Melbourne, Victoria.
<b>36.</b> Students are given the opportunity to participate in games, sports and activities that utilise student centred teaching approaches.	1	2	3	4	5	

## Section 3:

School Policy and Ethos Part A cont.



<b>37.</b>	The school promotes participation in physical activity equally to all students regardless of gender, race or ability.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Students with a disability benefit from physical activity too.
<b>38.</b>	The school encourages staff to be physically active role models by offering staff physical activities such as a walking challenge, or staff use of school swimming pools or gymnasiums. Staff are encouraged to walk or ride to school, walk on excursions, showcase physical activity achievements.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Organise some staff physical activities which all staff can participate in (e.g. Count steps on a walking challenge).
<b>39.</b>	Physical activity is reinforced across the curriculum outside of physical education (e.g. science – nature walks; maths – distances walked; using throwing and catching to investigate measurement; and school camps).	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Want some more ideas on how to include physical activity across the curriculum? <a href="http://www.srg.qld.gov.au/tips_for_teachers/ways_to_teach_physical_activity.cfm">www.srg.qld.gov.au/tips_for_teachers/ways_to_teach_physical_activity.cfm</a>
<b>40.</b>	Physical activity programs for students are available at the school after school hours.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	These can be supplied by the school or by other organisations outside the school community. <a href="http://www.ausport.gov.au/aasc/index.asp">www.ausport.gov.au/aasc/index.asp</a>
<b>41.</b>	The school applies for additional funding to support physical activity within the school.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Try a partnership with your local community health service or recreation facility or apply for the next government funding round.
<b>TOTAL</b>							

### Ideas for Action

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What policies does your school have in place to support physical activity? Complete the items in Section 3 B to assess your schools progress in these areas.



# Section 3:

## School Policy and Ethos



These items refer to the presence of school policy and do so in order to encourage schools to discuss the topics described, to develop a policy, and to regularly review that policy. The choices for these items are listed with separate rating criteria to assist in tracking progress with policy development and review for these items. There is evidence to indicate that policy is an important driver of change and the development of policies further influences a whole school ethos.

When completing these items you should be able to locate a written policy stating support for the specific item to score a 4. To score a 5 there must be written records from meetings to show that the policy is regularly reviewed.

### PART B

Criteria	No ethos or policy	School ethos no written policy	Written policy in development	Written policy in place	Policy in place regularly reviewed	Resources/ Reference
<b>42.</b> School policy encourages access to <b>outdoor facilities</b> and natural spaces at recess and lunchtime including ovals, running/walking tracks, sporting courts and nets.	1	2	3	4	5	With supervision more outside areas might become available to students.
<b>43.</b> School policy encourages access to school <b>indoor facilities</b> such as gymnasium, pool or large indoor play spaces at recess and lunchtime.	1	2	3	4	5	If have such wonderful facilities, don't keep them for special occasions, allow students to use them all the time.
<b>44.</b> The school has a policy that ensures staff are released for professional development sessions to enhance their ability to deliver physical activity programs.	1	2	3	4	5	The inspiration staff can get from a good PD session can promote some great action in the school. <a href="http://www.achper.org.au">www.achper.org.au</a>
<b>45.</b> The school has a policy that does not condone the use of physical activity as a punishment.	1	2	3	4	5	10 push ups or a run around the oval as punishment? Not allowing students to participate in sport as a punishment? No way!
<b>46.</b> The school has a policy that encourages students using active transport to school.	1	2	3	4	5	Encourage safe active transport to school by foot, bike or skates. For more ideas on active transport see Part B.
<b>TOTAL</b>						

### Ideas for Action

There are some more ideas for extending your school policy and ethos in Part C or you can add some of your own here.

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# Section 3:

## School Policy and Ethos



### Extension Ideas for School Policy and Ethos

This part provides some extension programs you may be involved in or would like to be involved in which can supplement your support for physical activity.

#### Part C

Criteria	Irrelevant for this school					Resources/ Reference
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>47.</b> Active transport: The school has assessed safe routes to school for active transport	1	2	3	4	5	Look at the travelsmart website or order a free travelsmart CD <a href="http://www.travelsmart.vic.gov.au">www.travelsmart.vic.gov.au</a>
<b>48.</b> Active transport: The school encourages mass walk or ride to school initiatives.	1	2	3	4	5	Start by surveying families to see who is interested to walk or cycle as a group or check out <a href="http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au">www.vichealth.vic.gov.au</a> or <a href="http://www.bv.com.au">www.bv.com.au</a>
<b>49.</b> Active transport: On local excursions, students walk where possible.	1	2	3	4	5	With parents to help this is both a healthy and cheap way to get around your local community.
<b>50.</b> Active Transport: Local traffic hazards have been minimised such as a separate bus parking area or pick up points away from the school gate.	1	2	3	4	5	Some ideas for minimising traffic hazards can be found at the travelsmart website or school travel planning CD available on <a href="http://www.travelsmart.vic.gov.au">www.travelsmart.vic.gov.au</a> Local government may be able to help.
<b>51.</b> Active Transport: There are monitored school crossings on main routes to the school.	1	2	3	4	5	Remember to keep reminding parents and students to use the crossings.
<b>52.</b> Recess, lunchtimes and after school: There are physical activity clubs for students at the school.	1	2	3	4	5	Seasonal team games, school garden or circus skills can be fun.
<b>53.</b> Recess and lunchtimes times: The school has strategies to actively recruit students to physical activity during recess and lunch times.	1	2	3	4	5	Activity challenges such as skipping or ball bouncing.
<b>54.</b> Recess and lunchtimes times: Teachers are encouraged to prompt and engage students in physical activities while undertaking yard duty.	1	2	3	4	5	Have a few simple games in the first aid kit which students can lucky dip for.

## Section 3:

School Policy and Ethos Part C cont.



<b>55.</b>	Recess and lunchtimes times: The school allows for lunchtimes to be used for structured activities such as team training, walking and gardening activities.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	How about a walking pedometer challenge involving secondary students and staff.
<b>56.</b>	PE and sport: Provision is made for separate physical activity sessions for boys and girls where appropriate/desirable.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Your school may have cultural factors influencing this, it is for you to judge.
<b>57.</b>	The school maintains a sun protection policy involving hats and sunscreen.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	To keep our students active in the sun, it's worth it in our harsh country.
<b>58.</b>	Students are involved in activities which involve incidental physical activity such as school gardening and keeping the school clean.	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	Incidental physical activity may be more inviting to some students.
<b>TOTAL</b>							

### Ideas for Action

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Now you have completed Active PASS, collect some of the Ideas for Action to develop your own school's action plan for the coming 12 months. Where your scores are less than 3, look at that item and see if there are some ideas or references you might like to try. Have you identified some policies that need to be developed or reviewed? You may like to use Active PASS to review annually, comparing one year's score with the last to track your improvements.

The process of working through Active PASS may have sparked some additional ideas not listed here for encouraging physical activity in the students at your school.

Each school is different and it is your knowledge of your school which will best guide any changes you may wish to take in maximising a **PHYSICALLY ACTIVE SCHOOL SETTING**. Does your school **PASS**?

