

Covid-19 and school funding: 7 top tips for spending the Primary PE and Sport Premium

Being physically active was one of the four reasons that people were allowed to leave their homes during the Covid-19 lockdown. With schools now re-opened and children settled back into learning, it's even more important than ever to instil good behaviours, to be active throughout the day and to ensure that the Primary PE and Sport Premium is spent in an effective and impactful way to ensure sustainability of this investment. Outlined below are seven ways schools could spend this year's PE and Sport Premium grant effectively taking into account the opportunities and challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic:

1. Sustainability

It may currently be difficult to bring in external providers to support PE lessons and sports clubs so it is of paramount importance that existing staff are qualified, competent and confident to deliver high quality PE and physical activity opportunities. If coaches continue to assist with staff training and enhance the extra-curricular offer, this work should be comprehensively risk assessed and in line with locally agreed policies.

TOP TIPS: Look for CPD opportunities linked to Physical Education delivery, whole school physically active learning strategies or outdoor learning initiatives. Try to invest in CPD that aims to address staff motivations and relationships with physical activity rather than simply upskilling staff in technical aspects of traditional sporting activities.

2. Whole School Improvement

The impact of PE and physical activity on a wide range of school priorities is well researched and extends to improvements in concentration, memory retention and behaviour in general. In order to leave a legacy, the PE and Sport Premium grant should impact on far more than just pupils' physical health but also be used as a resource that can be a driver for whole school improvement.

TOP TIPS: Look at your whole school improvement plan; identify any areas where PE, school sport or physical activity can positively impact on targeted pupils or outcomes such as academic attainment, behaviour or attendance. This can be achieved by embedding successful physically active learning approaches such as Active Maths, Active Phonics or Cross Curricular Orienteering.

3. Outdoor Learning

Wellbeing and mental health are fast becoming a significant issue in primary schools and much research exists showing how exposure to the natural environment can have a positive effect. In addition to this, current DfE reopening guidance encourages schools to take pupils outside of the classroom as much as possible both within PE and wider lessons. This is a great opportunity to look at any improvements that can be made to your school's physical environment that could better support outdoor learning and the promotion of physical activity. Please note however that the PE and Sport Premium grant is not allowed to be used for capital expenditure.

TOP TIPS: Audit your physical environment and try to create a playground that is stimulating and encourages children to move frequently outdoors. Introduce 'all weather' equipment that children can interact with in different ways to help build their physical literacy. Invest in CPD that builds

confidence in your staff to deliver cross curricular outdoor lessons or forest school activities along with finding ways to make being outdoors this winter more practical e.g. investing in footwear storage, waterproof clothing and boiler suits etc.

4. Active Travel

With more people working from home since lockdown there is an opportunity to advocate leaving cars at home and walking, scooting or cycling to school instead. We have also seen an increase in families walking together to school. There is a great opportunity now for schools to build on this trend by promoting active travel amongst pupils and their families.

TOP TIPS : Use your PE and Sport Premium to invest in cycle training for pupils across the school. Consider purchasing storage facilities for bikes or scooters. Make active travel an easy option for families by ensuring the school grounds are accessible by bikes and scooters. Look to research and invest in proven schemes that reward children for travelling to and from school in an active way.

5. Ensuring high quality PE provision

This should always be a priority when schools are planning their PE and Sport Premium spend. Now is a perfect time to ensure the staff at your school have the confidence and skills to deliver high quality physical education as access to external coaches or sport specific specialists may be more limited due to Covid restrictions.

TOP TIPS: Use the grant to invest in staff capacity to audit PE provision and staff competency through observation and interviews. Look for CPD opportunities for staff to be upskilled in PE delivery either through the Level 5/6 qualifications or a quality assured PE provider. As outdoor PE is now the 'new normal', this would also be a perfect opportunity for your staff to be upskilled in Outdoor Adventurous Activities (OAA, forest school initiatives).

6. Innovation

Lockdown saw many PE practitioners from around the country, plan and deliver online PE activities for their children to take part in at home to continue their skill development and remain active. Use this unprecedented Covid-19 landscape as an opportunity to be innovative rather than a reason to restrict PESSPA provision.

TOP TIPS: Involve children in shaping your PESSPA offer and use this opportunity to expose children to activities that historically have not been part of your PE curriculum but would still develop their fundamental movement skills. Some activities may also be more 'Covid safe' and naturally promote social distancing such as Yoga. Build on the PE at Home momentum by creating an online platform or page on the school website that provide PESSPA ideas for parents and children to enjoy together outside of school – you may find our collaborative [#ThisisPE](#) online resource a useful starting point.

7. Swimming

We know that for many children, particularly those living in more deprived areas, school may be the only opportunity they will have to learn how to swim and be safe in and around water. Despite being on the National Curriculum, around one in five children leave primary school unable to swim. This figure rises to almost half of children from the least affluent families. Covid-19 has had a significant impact on leisure centres and the national lockdown earlier this year will have resulted

in large numbers of children missing out on school swimming. Swim England has worked with industry partners, including local authorities, leisure operators, DfE and afPE to release clear guidance on how schools are able to resume [swimming lessons](#) where they can do so in line with guidance.

TOP TIPS: Use the [Return to Swim guidance](#) to support the return of National Curriculum School Swimming and Water Safety either on-site or via an external provider. Speak with your swimming provider to understand how and when they will be able to resume lessons again and consider using the PE and Sport Premium to provide top up lessons for those who missed out last year.

For further advice and information on how to spend your school's PE and Sport Premium grant effectively, you can get in touch with your local [Active Partnership](#), the [Youth Sport Trust](#) or [Association for Physical Education](#).

Further reading and resources

Association for Physical Education

- [Covid-19 FAQs](#)
- [Covid-19: interpreting the Government Guidance in a PESSPA context. A practical self-review tool for risk assessment](#)
- *Reactivating learning: [why and how to rejuvenate pupils' wellbeing through physical education and physical activity](#) and [what to do in physical education and physical activity to promote wellbeing](#)*

Youth Sport Trust

- [Return to schools' guidance and support](#)
- [PE and Sport Premium Guidance and a webinar on putting PE, sport and physical activity at the heart of children's recovery from the Coronavirus crisis](#)
- [Putting PE, school sport and physical activity at the heart of children's recovery from Covid](#)

Swim England

- [Guidance for school swimming](#)
- [Free and online National Curriculum swimming training course](#)

UK Active

- [A framework for the safe delivery children's activity provision during social distancing](#)

UK Coaching

- [Guidance for head teachers and PE subject leaders on the effective and sustainable use of coaches in primary schools](#)
- [Questions to consider when you return to coaching](#)