

# Good practices in HEPA

## NAME OF THE ACTIVITY

Active School Flag (ASF)

## LEADING ORGANISATION

Department of Education and Skills initiative supported by Healthy Ireland

## COUNTRY

 Ireland

## HEPA-RELATED TOPIC

Physical activity among children and youth

## TYPE OF ACTIVITY

Education, Guidelines

## TARGET GROUP

Primary Schools, Primary School Students

## OBJECTIVES

The ASF initiative provides schools with a framework to guide, support and incentivise them to work towards achieving a physically educated and physically active school community. Once awarded, ASF remains valid for a period of 3 years, after which time schools are invited to re-engage with the process. These are the goals of the Active School Flag initiative:

**PROMOTE** physical activity in a FUN, positive and inclusive way. **INCENTIVISE** schools to engage in a process self-reflection, action planning and collaboration at whole school level. **SUPPORT** schools to identify strategies to energise the school day and to reduce sedentary time. **ENCOURAGE, PROVIDE** students with voice, space, influence and audience to participate in the decision-making process of their school. **EMPOWER** schools to develop, and strengthen partnerships, with parents, local and national organisations. **GENERATE** a support network for schools where best practice, innovation and successful initiatives are showcased, affirmed and shared. **GUIDE** schools to create their own specific roadmap for sustained physical activity practices. **COLLABORATE** with schools, national organisations and expert groups to ensure that ASF continues to deliver benefits to schools

## ACTIVITIES

ASF encourages schools to strengthen their PE programmes and to promote physical literacy. It supports schools to identify strategies to energise the school day and to reduce sedentary time, promotes physical activity in a FUN, positive and inclusive way, and guides schools to create their own specific

roadmap for sustained physical activity practices. This provides students with a voice, space, influence and audience to participate in the decision-making process of their school. It also generates a support network for schools where best practice, innovation and successful initiatives are showcased, affirmed and shared.

ASF training events allow coordinators to network with, and learn from, teachers from other schools working towards the flag, at both new applicant and renewal stages. The ASF website and Twitter account both serve as sharing hubs. ASF empowers schools to develop and strengthen partnerships with parents, local organisations and national agencies. ASF collaborates with schools, national organisations and expert groups to ensure ASF continues to deliver benefits to schools. It values the feedback and suggestions offered by schools and uses this to shape the ASF framework.

## RESULTS / EVALUATION

Today 172 schools have joined CAS, with a further ~100 schools expected to join the pilot in September 2022. National rollout commences in September 2023 and is scheduled to recruit a further 200-250 schools by September 2024. CAS demonstrates acceptability and feasibility and maximises locality-school connections. The Bradford pilot (data collection ongoing, 23 schools) suggests that at 9 months CAS improves school PA organisational culture, staff PA support and PA provision within academic lessons, PE and active travel. School staff motivation and opportunity to adopt and implement PA improved.

## TIPS & TRICKS

This example is only for primary schools and it's not suggested to adapt it to post-primary schools. In our experience, teachers will bring the solutions, so it should be co-designed with schools and teachers. The schools should trust you. If they trust the process, they will share their ideas. It's also important to set achievable goals. The schools should know how near or far away they are from achieving them, without being put under too much pressure.

### WEBSITE

[www.activeschoolflag.ie](http://www.activeschoolflag.ie)

### CONTACT

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