HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THRIVE
HOW ACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE ACHIEVE MORE!
Dear Colleague,

Thank you for taking the time to read this brief publication. We have looked across Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland to find some of the excellent work in physical activity that is helping young people to thrive in our secondary schools.

We know that high quality physical education and sport makes a contribution to the well-being of young people far beyond the curriculum. In this booklet we recognise, describe and value this wider contribution. Included are six case studies where the benefits are felt in tackling difficult issues for schools – complex areas where the school has a big responsibility. You will see evidence relating to mental health and well-being, student engagement and active lifestyles, positive behaviour changes, student voice and leadership, as well as examples of raising attendance, attainment and progress of students.

The evidence from educational and medical research is clear, persuasive and continually growing. It demonstrates that physical activity not only provides enjoyment for young people, it actually improves the quality of their lives. Leicestershire, Leicester City and Rutland provide young people with a rich network of sporting and other physical activity opportunities that are among the best in the country. Our young people thirst for these opportunities. It is the role of Head Teachers and Governors to make sure that our schools are at the heart of this provision and that all young people can and do benefit.

On behalf of the PE & School Sport Head Teacher Champion Groups, we would like to thank you for all that you do and we look forward to achieving champion status as the most physically active capital of England. I hope you enjoy reading this booklet. If you would like your school to be featured in the next publication, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Callum Orr
Principal, Rawlins Academy, Leicestershire PE & School Sport Champion Group Chair

Bernie Green
Principal, Crown Hills Community College, Leicester City PE & School Sport Champion Group Chair

“Student engagement is so high, all the activity plays a huge part in the life of the college.”
Jan Turner, Principal UCC

“My daughter was offered counselling and medication but what she really needed all along was rugby!”
Hannah’s Mum

“I don’t get into fights any more... I’m not on my console all the time... and I sleep better!”
Charlie Year 9

“Confidence is built through team activities, comradeship and support for each other.”
David Kirkby, Governor, Rawlins

“The student leaders are so impressive. With such enthusiasm they are great role models.”
Steve Roddy, Primary Head, Church Langton

“Sport Leadership has provided me with opportunities which challenge my own weakness.”
Lily Year 12

“Helping Young People To Thrive - How active young people achieve more!”

LRS
Physical activity for children and young people (5–18 Years)

- Builds confidence & social skills
- Develops co-ordination
- Improves concentration & learning
- Strengthens muscles & bones
- Improves health & fitness
- Maintains healthy weight
- Improves sleep
- Makes you feel good

Be physically active

Aim for at least 60 minutes everyday

- Spread activity throughout the day
- All activities should make you breathe faster & feel warmer

Include muscle and bone strengthening activities 3 times per week

- Play
- Run/walk
- Bike
- Active travel
- Swim
- Skate
- Sport
- PE
- Skip
- Climb
- Workout
- Dance

Sit less
Move more

Find ways to help all children and young people accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity everyday

How do you get students involved when they are not active? How do you enthuse the 'non-sporty' youngsters?

In this case study we can see where a systematic approach to identifying and targeting these young people has changed the direction of their life and transformed their future. These are the students’ stories:

**Hannah - Year 9:**
“Before, when I was young, I had a lot of anxiety. I didn’t have any confidence. I wouldn’t do sport. I found it difficult to speak to people. I didn’t have many friends. Then I got invited to the after school club. I was surprised but went along. Now I go all the time and have joined Coalville Rugby Club. It has changed me. I can now express myself and have loads more confidence. When you are running with the ball you don’t care what people think of you - you just get on with it. The best thing I’ve ever done was when I cleared the ball out of a scrum. I’m not sure if anyone noticed but I knew that it was a great piece of skill and it made me feel good.”

**Jess - Year 9 (Hannah’s friend):**
“Sport has changed Hannah. You should see her - she always plays with a smile on her face. She used to be so quiet and never speak. Now she’s always talking to people and not just sports people. She always tries her hardest and always helps others. Sport has made me quite loud too!”

**Charlie - Year 9:**
“I used to get into fights with people that wound me up. I didn’t have many friends and I only used to go on my games console after school. I didn’t expect to be invited to join the club. Mr Webster asked me and wrote to my parents. Now I play rugby, football and basketball and have played for the school at rugby and basketball. It has helped me to make friends and get on with people and not get wound up and fight. I even sleep better! I go out of my house now and don’t use my console as much. When I broke through the line in a rugby match everyone saw it and said well done. Sport has opened me up.”

**Ben and Oli - Year 9 (Charlie’s team mates):**
“We’ve always been sporty. We never even thought about talking to Charlie because he was always in trouble. Since he joined the club and the team he has changed. He is never in trouble; other students can’t believe the change on the ball court at break time. He’s got lots of friends now and some of them are very different to him. When he’s on the pitch running with the ball he is so brave. We’re glad he’s on our side! He goes to Coalville Rugby Club now.”

**Mr Elderton - Pastoral Leader:**
“Charlie has gone from being a total refuser to being a real enthusiast. Sport has shown him that he can succeed and now he tries in all his lessons, even though he finds the work difficult. If you want to know how much it has changed him, just ask his English teacher! He was on his way to the behaviour panel - now he’s on his way to Coalville Rugby Club. He enjoys the fact that the turnaround in his behaviour allows him to be a role model to the younger students. Students don’t just like him now, they respect him.”

**Mr Webster - Head of PE:**
“We have so many students with similar journeys. It is our job to identify them and get them involved. Nothing beats the personal invitation to them and their parents. It makes them feel special and wanted. Phone calls and letters to parents make the difference. In lots of sports there is a clear pathway for students, from lessons to after school clubs, then to teams and competitions and then on to local clubs.”

**Hannah’s Mother:**
“In the last 3 months we have seen a huge transformation in our daughter. She was quiet, shy and lacked any form of self-confidence. Over the last months we have seen our daughter grow in confidence and self-esteem. The anxiety, panic and fear that you could see taking over her life and denying her opportunities has gone. Hannah is a completely different person, smiling, happy and with endless amounts of confidence.

A child is the greatest gift of all and needs cherishing. It’s not all about grades, exam results, getting the best jobs or providing schools with good statistics and reports. It is about believing in our children, encouraging them, providing them with the opportunity to build their self-esteem and building the foundations for a healthy person. My daughter would not have achieved what she has without the opportunity she has had with rugby. It is not just about them running around a field - it is building young peoples’ confidence, giving them belief and a sense of belonging. I will always be thankful that Hannah was believed in and has had this opportunity. I know that there are plenty of Hannah’s in this world. My daughter was offered counselling and medication but what she really needed was rugby!”
The College and its Sports Partnership have worked hard to provide opportunities for all students and have seen the positive impact on students that have faced significant problems. Two students, from many, have been chosen to show how sport has helped them to overcome difficulties and thrive.

Amy – My story:
“I was quite unhappy. I didn’t have many friends and had low levels of confidence. I used to see the Head of Year every day because I needed support. My head of Year asked me to go to the hockey club. I had told her that I had helped out with sport at my high school. I went along and it really helped things. It was a ‘safe’ place to go. My confidence increased. People noticed a different me. Things were hard at home and by joining after school clubs I could think about good things. I joined the football club too and now I’ve joined the hockey and football clubs in Coalville. Now I do sports leadership and lead youngsters in other primary and high schools. It has helped me to make friends. I love it because I’m in the moment. I don’t think about yesterday or tomorrow. I have less stress, worry and anxiety. It helps me to get fit and to stay healthy. I would tell the younger Amy to just get involved. I am going to do more sports in the future. For me sport is the best medicine.”

What the Staff say: (Pastoral, PE and Sports Partnership staff)
“Amy was clearly struggling and unhappy. She required significant support on a daily basis. She was invited to build on her interest in sport by attending the hockey club. From there things developed. She was directed to the Sports Partnership and got involved in sports leadership. She made more friends, smiled more, grew in confidence and is happier. Now she is doing higher level leadership. Her problems have not gone away; however, her ability to cope with them is immensely improved. On top of this, she has become a very valued and popular student.”

David – My story:
“I was doing ok but when I was 11 I suddenly developed a stammer. This really got me down. I didn’t cope with it. I lost all my confidence. I went into myself and wouldn’t speak. Because I liked sport at my high school, the school got me involved with the rugby team in year 8 and I went to Coalville Rugby Club.

From there things have just got better. I do two main sports, rugby and hockey, but will try anything. I play, coach, officiate and help out at festivals and events with the Sports Partnership.

Sport brings people together to enjoy one thing in common. It teaches you teamwork, loyalty and camaraderie. It has changed me and given me confidence. My stammer hasn’t gone away but people can’t shut me up (ask Shane Fox at the rugby club!) I am happier because I believe that I can overcome any problems. I would tell the 11 year old David, ‘don’t be afraid - get involved.’ I will play and train for sport until the day I die”

What the Staff say: (Pastoral, PE and Sports Partnership staff)
“David has had to deal with an extraordinary situation that had a big impact on him. It really dented his self-confidence and self-esteem. He has built himself up from a very low point. He has volunteered for leadership, helped in clubs, refereed matches and coached younger students.

He is now a sports ambassador, mentors younger students and is doing his coaching badges. He is coaching at County level and helps in events, competitions and festivals. He has represented the college in volleyball, rugby and hockey. He has also led coaching for girl’s rugby and at tag festivals for Coalville Rugby Club. His journey has been remarkable.”

Brian Rushe, School Sports Partnership:
“David has gained so much, but also given so much. He has thrown himself into everything. He is a fantastic ambassador and a great role model to the next generation of youngsters.”

Emma Booth, Assistant Principal, Head of Sixth Form:
“Both Amy and David are like different people. Sport has been their route to a better future. They are confident, independent and self-assured. It is the power of sport that has helped them in different ways.

Without expensive interventions I don’t know how you could have such a turnaround in the fortunes of young people. I am really proud of the success they have both had.”

Jenny Byrne, Principal:
“We need to do everything we can to promote positive mental health and well-being. PE and Sport has transformed the lives of so many of our youngsters. These two examples are repeated many times over. They are an example to us all.”
Building on the growing evidence, Rawlins Academy is putting PE and Sport at the heart of the curriculum to improve attendance, attainment, progress and achievement. The school has recently undergone an age range change. The new curriculum, for the first ‘all-through’ cohort, has been re-designed to maximise student engagement and achievement.

The Evidence:
There is clear evidence that PE, sport and physical activity can do the following:

- Increase the oxygen flow to the brain
- Increase the number of brain neurotransmitters
- Increase the number of brain neurotrophins (these support neutrons to improve areas responsible for learning, memory and higher brain functioning)
- Have a bigger impact on younger (developing) brains
- Improve attendance, drop-out rates and social connectedness

Provision:
The Academy provides 5 hours of PE on a two week timetable in year 7 and 8. This is supplemented with built in lessons aimed at developing resilience. In year 9, as well as a basketball academy and introduction to GCSE PE, students are able to ‘Find Your Talent’ and opt for a range of new activities that may include Ultimate Frisbee, dance and/or link to a club.

Over 75% of year 9s choose a PE related enrichment option. The core provision is extended into year 10 and year 11. The Academy achieved some of the best A-level results in Leicestershire last year and are looking to add a Post-16 core PE offer, to support the SMSC provision for the cohort.

Beyond the formal curriculum there is an extensive extra-curricular offer. This includes clubs before school, at lunch times and after school. Many students are members of clubs that are based at the Academy in the evenings and at weekends. On any given day there will be 150 to 200 students staying behind for clubs and activities and there will be up to 40 being physically active before school!

There is an extensive range of activities for students to get involved in. Much activity is aimed at students that do not belong to the teams representing the Academy. This is supported by links to local leagues and activities run by the local School Sport & Physical Activity Network (SSPAN).

What Helps:
PE kit is part of the school uniform offer.

Every student gets changed for PE [and then joins in]. Primary schools support the PE kit policy with a kit of their own, so the students are in good routines. Staff from beyond the PE department are willing to run activities for students.

The Impact:
Taking 6 key measures: Attendance, Attainment 8, Progress 8, 3 Levels Progress in English, 3 Levels Progress in maths and 5 A*-C including English and maths, in 2015, every single one was higher for students who were involved in physical activity beyond the curriculum. The improvement was even more marked for ‘disadvantaged students’. It really is ‘enjoy and achieve.’

What they say:
Matt Kinsey - Pastoral House Team Leader:
“PE empowers students and creates role models within peer groups. There are so many students that have made excellent progress through sport”

Laura Watts - Director of Learning – Faculty of Society in Action:
“Sport at Rawlins has allowed students to see the variety of ways that they can engage. It has opened their minds and helped them to build the skills of perseverance and teamwork”

Brett Collins - Parent – Police Officer:
“We have seen our unconfident, shy, little girl turn into a happy, enthusiastic and confident young lady. I have no doubt whatsoever that this is down to PE”

Christine Warmington - Parent – Probation Officer:
“Our girls have developed a sense of pride in their school through what the sport staff do outside core school hours, in PE clubs, training and fixtures”

David Kirkby - Vice Chair – Rawlins Academy Governors:
“At parents’ evenings the PE students turn out in vast numbers and draw admiration from visitors. They are great ambassadors for us”

Natalie Arrowsmith – Director of Learning – Faculty of Inquiry:
“PE at Rawlins has transformed us and given the students real pride in the school. Regardless of their skill level, students get involved. It has allowed staff to see their potential in all areas of Rawlins life”
The Academy will become an 11-19 provider from September. The Leadership Pathway in PE and Sport is central to the relationship with the 14 local primary schools. It is a real focal point for activity that joins up the primary and secondary phases of education.

What Happens:
Students enter the Sports Leadership Academy. They gain level 1, 2 (both sport and community) and 3 awards as they progress from years 10 to 13. The level 3 Higher Sports Leaders Award has UCAS points attached. The Sports Leaders Academy works to support the Academy’s Sports Council with representatives from each year group. It has led the way and now there are leadership academies in MFL and the Arts, as well as a team of student mentors.

Students have:
Developed the following qualities and skills; reliability, resilience, organisation, time management, self-confidence, assertiveness, independence, listening, how to be a role model, volunteering, mentoring, logistics of organising conferences / events and taking responsibility.

Transformation:
Imagine the impact on the self-esteem of a quiet Year 10 boy, when a year 4 boy points him out in town and says, “I remember you from the mini-Olympics.” Imagine the pride of the students carrying the Olympic torch or meeting gold medal Olympian Greg Rutherford. Imagine the glow for the students invited to be part of the County Elite Sports Leadership Academy.

Imagine the boost to everyone for being the National Sports Leaders UK runner-up. Imagine the impact on numbers of students involved in: peer mentoring, cubs, guides and scouting, prefects, head girls and boys. Imagine the PR impact of the students that presented at the Local Government Association’s ‘Get Set’ Community Change Conference (as a ‘Champion School’). Students have put themselves on the line and then come through!

Key Lessons:
Firstly, the Leadership Pathway is the key; it creates a ‘production line’ of leaders. Secondly, have the personal touch and invite students to get involved, especially those that don’t see themselves as sporty. Thirdly, it is a long term process, not a quick fix. Fourthly, there are people out there to support you; Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport, the School Sport & Physical Activity Network (SSPAN), local clubs, the Youth Sport Trust, National Governing Bodies of Sport and the local council. You are not doing this on your own!

Sue Jones, Principal, Robert Smyth Academy:
“The enthusiasm, dedication and talent our leaders have, has resulted in a high quality sporting culture across all of our local schools, including within our own Academy. The reputation of sports leadership has permeated, leading to myriad leadership opportunities in many curriculum and extra-curricular areas, for example Arts Council, STEM and Language leaders. Leadership is now well-embedded within our ethos and is an undoubted strength of the Academy.”

Lily, Year 12 student:
“The Sports Leadership Academy has provided me with opportunities which challenge my own weaknesses, by overcoming these I am developing as a strong leader as well as an individual.”

Steve Roddy, Headteacher, Church Langton Primary:
“They have organised so many events for our pupils. The commitment and enthusiasm is impressive. Great role models.”

David Fox, Headteacher, Ridgeway Primary Academy:
“We have benefited greatly from the Sports Leaders over the years. They support cross country, inter school competitions and extra-curricular activities. They have always been well organised, enthusiastic and reliable – a real credit to their school and to Market Harborough.”

Remy, Year 11 student:
“Sport has given me a huge amount of self-confidence. I would recommend sports leadership to any students.”

Tim Leah, Headteacher, Fleckney Primary School:
“The sports leaders are a very important part of the PE provision that our children receive.”
The school is a large multi-cultural, inner city school. The students are keen to learn and are enthusiastic.

Background:
The school wanted to gauge the student voice regarding PE for a number of reasons; to engage more students, to build better relationships with students and to help to make faster progress with students. It is also something Ofsted like to see!

What was done:
Two main strands were followed. Firstly, a Student Sports Council was set up and secondly, a questionnaire for every student in the school. By involving students and giving them a say in the provision, things changed and improved. It is an eye-opener to ask students what they want to do, what they enjoy, what they value and where they feel safe and secure in PE lessons. We have been doing this for 10 years now and it has helped to transform our school.

What changed:
Sports provision has changed. As a direct result of asking the students, new sports have been introduced. This includes girls’ football, dodgeball, girls’ cricket and inter-form competitions in a range of sports. It also informs the whole inter-form programme with new sports such as pop-lacrosse. It involves every student – every term!

What changed:
Leadership Activity has grown. Every student now completes the Level 1 Sports Leader Award in year 10. Over 100 students will choose to carry on with sports leadership into year 11, where every single one will do at least 10 hours of work in the community. In terms of ambassadors and PR for the school – what could be better? This has led to Rushey Mead students being invited to lead and officiate at the Level 3 School Games and the National Level 4 School Games.

Rushey Mead School is now recognised by Sports Leaders UK as a National Leadership School because of the high quality leadership activity that is taking place.

What changed:
Other subjects have grown their student leadership activities. There are now leadership pathways in Science and Modern Foreign Languages. There is a clear connection and route; student voice leads to greater student ownership. This leads to greater involvement and this leads to high quality student leadership. This work has liberated students to take things further themselves.

What changed:
‘Non-sporty’ students found their voice. The pathway has led to far greater involvement for the students that didn’t consider themselves sporty. The choice of activities was extended and for them this was terrific. They can choose to do activities that they like. There was also an opportunity for these students to lead on organisation, officiating and running events, games and competitions. This has also given the less sporty students added confidence in PE and beyond.

In the words of just one Year 11 girl:
“Sport has really built my confidence. I used to be really shy. Now I enjoy sports more. I am going to officiate at the National Level 4 games. It’s not just the physical activity, it has a wider benefit for me with communication and confidence. It has helped me in other lessons and at work.” Simran.

Rita Hindocha - Headteacher:
“Our PE department is exemplary in its provision which caters for our very diverse and unique community of students. The expert, dedicated staff are always looking to improve the provision. They have actively sought the students’ views and extended real leadership opportunities. This has enriched student experience and contributed to our excellent attendance levels (routinely 97% for our school). Students are happy at our school.”
The College is a heavily oversubscribed, 11-16 age range school serving a dispersed rural area in a market town.

**Background:**
A new PE team was established 4 years ago. The aim was to take the sporting provision to another level.

**The Challenge:**
From the Director of the Academy of Sport, “Name me a sport that we don’t offer?”

**The Response:**
The College has set about transforming the sporting offer in order to maximise student involvement in sporting activity.

**This has included:**
- Running and completing 256 fixtures in the past school year. Being involved in the Rutland and Melton Varsity League (with support from the Sports Partnership)
- Bringing in external club coaches and National Governing Body coaches. Running a vast programme of activities at lunchtimes and after school. (See the fantastic Student Activities Guide on the College website)
- Realising the potential of Year 10 and 11 Student Leadership to help with running events and competitions (Level 1 and Level 2 Sports Leadership Centre of Excellence status). Developing sports leadership in years 7, 8 and 9
- Targeting students that don’t see themselves as sporty to take on specific roles. Using older students (Silver and Gold Leaders), as role models, from the Sports Partnership
- Encouraging students into external provision through the fantastic Village Sports Network (cricket, rugby, football etc.) and providers such as Adrenaline Alley in Corby. Playing sport informally with ex-students and parents
- Developing sports qualifications (GCSE, BTEC, NGB awards, Level 1 and 2 Sports Leaders). Having a high profile through ‘PE Success Assemblies’, charity fund raising events and briefings
- Links to the ‘Performance Education in Sport’ programme, with a range of visiting elite athletes. Running trips and exchanges {the Don Bosco Sport Exchange with Belgium is in its 43rd year!}. Offering climbing, dance, fencing, Duke of Edinburgh, golf, rugby, football, cricket, swimming, sailing, tennis, windsurfing, badminton (all with qualifications) and additionally; cycling, equestrian, kick boxing, squash, skiing, futsal, fun racquets, trampolining, netball, yoga, karate, handball, dodgeball, softball, athletics, cyclo-cross, rounders, rowing, basketball, and gymnastics
- In fact, offering any sport that is requested, or that anyone can think of (the worst that can happen is that it doesn’t take off!)

**Essential:**
1. Maximum student involvement needs maximum commitment from Tom, his team of PE staff, other staff and local sporting networks
2. The work is supported by Rob, the Whole School Co-ordinator for Student Activities (sole focus – to make sure all of the above happens!)

**Impact:**
Student involvement is at an all-time high. The College is recognised as a centre of excellence and it has helped to recruit more students than ever before!

**Transforming Young People:**
Take Josh, Ellen, Kyle and Fay. All had difficulties ranging from a speech impediment or anxiety, to poor social engagement, to low confidence and poor self-esteem. Now they are thriving through street dance, kick-boxing and leadership. Their lives have been transformed by sport.

**This is Ellen’s story:**
Ellen is a Y10 Girl who performs at a low level for her age and would admit that PE is not one of her favourite subjects. She has suffered with emotional problems and mental health issues throughout her life. Ellen has taken part in the Rutland ‘This Girl Can’ events as well as attending girls Kickboxing club on Friday after school.

Ellen says:
“This Girl Can was a fun and enjoyable experience. The kickboxing was great and the rock climbing taught us to conquer our fears. As a non-sporty person this was quite an ‘eye opener’ to different sports as most girls dislike football and other ball sports. I also feel like it was a confidence booster as there were many other girls at the same sporting level as me. After taking part I felt really proud of myself and that I had achieved something which I didn’t know that I could.”

**UCC Principal - Jan Turner:**
“The level of student engagement in PE and other sport related activities is extremely high and plays a significant role in the life of the whole College.”
"The link between pupil health and well-being and attainment"  

"What Works in Schools and Colleges to Increase Physical Activity?"  

"Health Position Paper"  
Association for Physical Education

For links to the documents visit www.lrsport.org/schoolsport
We would like to thank all six schools for agreeing to share their work. It is sensitive and important work. The students featured in this publication have agreed to take part and we would like to praise their contribution especially.

We would also like to thank Russell Webster at Castle Rock, Steve Partner and Brian Rushe at King Edward VII, Matthew Byrne at Rawlins, Mike Scully at Robert Smyth, Jay Acharya at Rushey Mead, Tom Bourne and Rob Lewin at Uppingham College. The commitment of staff to the lives of young people is exceptional. We would also like to thank the Head Teachers and Principals of the featured schools. At a time when the curriculum is under such pressure, it is really encouraging to see such strength in leadership protecting a broad and balanced provision.

Thanks must also go to Noel Melvin, former Principal of King Edward VII College in Coalville, who undertook the school research for this publication.