

PE and Sport Premium for schools confirmed

The Education Secretary has announced that schools in England will benefit from £320 million from the PE and Sport Premium during the academic year 2020-21.

The PE and Sport Premium is designed to help children get an active start in life, supporting primary schools to improve the quality of their PE and sport provision so that pupils experience the benefits of regular exercise – from becoming healthier both mentally and physically to improved behaviour and better academic achievement.

Gavin Williamson has today (Sunday 5 July) confirmed that funding for the PE and Sport Premium, which was doubled in 2017, will once again continue at this higher rate of £320 million next year. It builds on the ambitious School Sport and Activity Action Plan launched last year and underlines the importance of PE and sport in the Government's manifesto.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson, said:

During these challenging times, it has become clearer to me than ever the importance of keeping active and how it benefits not just our physical health but also our ability to pay attention, our mood and our mental health too.

Every family will have had a different experience of the pandemic, and I know that many children will have missed time spent outdoors with their friends – that's why it's so important that ahead of a full return to school in September, schools get the certainty they need to prepare their PE and sports activities for next year.

The Department for Education has also confirmed today that any PE and Sport Premium funding from the current academic year (2019-20) that schools were unable to use as a result of the coronavirus pandemic can be brought forward to use in the next academic year, giving school leaders an opportunity to develop or add to their existing provision, or to make improvements that will benefit pupils joining the school in future years.

The PE and Sport Premium is a ring-fenced grant for English primary schools to provide additional and sustainable improvements to the quality of PE, sport and physical activity. Allocations to schools are determined by a formula based on pupil numbers. The average one form entry primary school will receive roughly £18,000 per year.

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden, said:

Being active is absolutely vital for our children's mental and physical health. This £320m package will ensure sport is provided in primary schools throughout the country so children get their 60 active minutes a day. I'm grateful to all those in sport who have stepped up with workout videos and ideas to keep families healthy over the last few months, as it's clear getting Britain fit is part of the Covid fightback.

Public Health Minister Jo Churchill said:

The physical and mental benefits of regular exercise can never be underestimated, and I believe all children should have the chance to have fun playing sport and enjoy high quality PE lessons.

Lockdown has been a testing time for many of us, not least for children who have had their usual routines turned upside down, and I'm delighted they'll be able to benefit from new and improved sporting opportunities once they're back in school.

Sue Wilkinson MBE, CEO of Association for Physical Education said:

afPE is delighted that the Department for Education has announced the continued funding of the Primary PE and Sport Premium, for the next academic year.

The Government's commitment since 2013 has demonstrated the importance of physical education and school sport and in light of current circumstances further investment is crucial. This acknowledgment is testament to its importance in ensuring the best outcomes for all children and young people are achieved. We know this investment will have a significant impact on teachers' confidence and competence.

Youth Sport Trust Chief Executive Ali Oliver said:

As young people return to school, their wellbeing will be one of the biggest priorities in education. Sport and Physical Education have an essential role to play in children's recovery, particularly following a period of lockdown which has seen too many either become less active or completely inactive.

We are delighted that the primary PE and Sport Premium for 2020/21 has been confirmed at this critical time. Many primary schools will be using this funding to improve provision of PE and sport and to develop teachers' confidence to deliver it, positioning PE and sport at the core of schools' work to improve pupils' health, wellbeing and ability to learn.

Sport England's Chief Executive Tim Hollingsworth said:

We welcome the confirmation of the investment into primary schools for PE, school sport, activity and play. It's never been more needed given the massive disruption to children's activity levels during lockdown with our research showing that the number of children meeting the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines has dropped from almost 47% to 19%. Over a third of children say they've had less chance to be active because schools are shut. When schools return this welcomed investment will play an important part in encouraging schools to prioritise PE and getting children active – which is important not just for their physical health but because being active builds mental resilience and helps children achieve academically.