

Physical Education at The Cavendish School

*“Intelligence and skill can only function at the peak of their capacity when the body is healthy and strong.”
John F. Kennedy*

Physical Education supports not simply the growth and development of a healthy body, but also a positive, inclusive and involved way of living, both as an individual and as a contributing and engaged member of the many teams that children and young people will find themselves in as they move from school into their adult and working lives.

Positive attitudes and engagement with personal health and fitness support the development of self-esteem, positive self-image, confidence and a recognition that no individual achieves their goals without the involvement, dedication and belief of others.

The interdependent relationships fostered through team sports in particular support each child's awareness and understanding that they do not exist simply as an individual and that they need to be able to trust and rely on others, just as they too will be trusted and relied on in turn. For young people with ASD building relationships based on trust, friendship and shared goals are key developmental aims and these can be developed through active participation in sport of all kinds, that will provide them with opportunities for lifelong pleasure and enjoyment.

Young people live in a rapidly changing world and benefit from developing a range of personal and social skills such as peer relationship skills, prosocial behaviours such as respect, empathy, and compassion, leadership skills, problem-solving skills, and personal and social responsibility skills. When children develop these personal and social skills, they will not only be more successful learners, they will also be more likely to make a more successful transition to adult life.

There is clear evidence that demonstrates that young people can develop these personal and social skills through their participation in physical education (PE) (Weiss, 2011)¹ and sports (e.g. Holt et al., 2011)². While the development of personal and social skills seems to be a widely accepted goal of PE and sports worldwide, and although the body of evidence on this topic is developing, the literature currently appears to be fragmented in terms of terminology, the methods used, and the resulting conclusions.

Active involvement in PE and sports provides a positive, enjoyable context for learning these skills and supporting the transferability of these skills to other areas of life. Young people learn how to solve problems and to communicate and work as a team, which are skills they will need both at work and in their personal lives and relationships.

These are key skills for all young people but are even more important for young people with ASD to develop if they are to live successfully within society as a whole.

Sport and physical activity is an international activity that fosters understanding and the breakdown of barriers between people of different races, colour, religions and beliefs. Whilst sport has become highly politicised at its highest levels, as the recent Olympics and other international sports events repeatedly demonstrate, the individuals taking part participate and relate to each other without prejudice. Learning to accept and value difference whilst accepting that there are rules that must be applied to all are also key skills for young people with ASD to develop and internalise.

Developing Key Skills and Knowledge through participation in PE and Sports

A balanced curriculum includes the following types of experiences;

- **Individual pursuits:** The development of basic motor skills and the body's capacity for movement through locomotor and manipulative skills and/or experiences; the techniques, rules and purpose of a range of athletic activities (for example, track and field, swimming, skating, skiing); recognizing a high level of achievement and how to improve a performance.

- **Movement composition:** Recognizing that movements can be linked together and refined to create a sequence of aesthetic movements. Movements can be in response to stimuli or performance elements and/or criteria and can communicate feelings, emotions and ideas (for example, gymnastics, dance*, martial arts).
- **Games:** Recognising the challenges presented by games; the importance of manipulating space; the categorizing of games; identifying and developing appropriate skills and strategies; recognizing the importance of rules and how they define the nature of a game; modifying existing games and creating new games; teamwork.
- **Adventure challenges:** A variety of tasks requiring the use of physical and critical-thinking skills by individuals and/or groups; challenges that require groups to work together collaboratively in order to solve problems and accomplish a common goal; recognizing the role of the individual in group problem solving.
- **Health-related fitness:** Recognizing and appreciating the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle; the body's response to exercise including the interaction of body systems and the development of physical fitness.

School priorities and vision

We aim for the children at The Cavendish School through inquiry to develop the skills of being an effective, lifelong learner and build successful relationships. We want our children to build on their natural enthusiasm for movement by developing their skilfulness and knowledge of the body in action through exposure to a range of conceptual understandings of physical activities and sports. We aim to encourage our children to be creative, competitive and face challenges as individuals and in groups and teams. As a school, we encourage and hope that pupils will discover their aptitudes, abilities and preferences, making choices about how to get involved in lifelong physical activity.

The school's vision is "enabling the self", and the attributes of the IB Learner Profile, as developed in all subjects, are at the heart of this.



At the end of their school journey, our pupils will be:

- **Knowledgeable** about health, the importance of being physically active and the skills in games.
- **Reflective** on their own lifestyle, how they can improve their health through healthy eating and exercise
- **Moral** when considering how they engage in sports and fairness and equity within play and the rules
- Able to **celebrate difference** when discussing how other people might engage with PE, the limitations of the physical self and natural abilities.
- **Thinking** about strategy and community games. Regarding the social element and contexts that apply to physical education
- **Caring** towards other people and their experiences within Physical education. Caring to self through understanding the importance of nutrition and exercise in health.
- Able to **communicate** with team mates effectively.
- Able to give a **balanced** view on health including exercise and nutrition. Balanced in their view of this alongside rest and relaxation for optimum health
- **Inquiry** through adaptation, research and group working in sports, health and nutrition.
- **Courageous** in attempting something new, knowing that physical learning involves making mistakes whilst keeping self safe.