

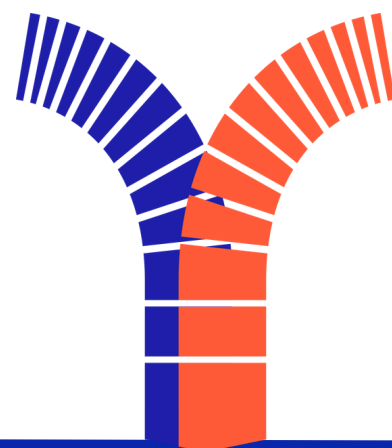


# Daily Physical Activity: Redesigning The Day Around Intentional Movement

**Brief Summary for School Leaders**



*Move Well.*



## Brief summary for school leaders

The case study describes a school that moved from a tightly packed, predominantly sedentary timetable to a more responsive day. Staff began with two questions: how can we lessen cognitive load in our timetables, and how can we adapt them to enable movement and a softer start? They changed the sequence of lessons, introduced a soft or active start, protected a mid-morning movement break, restored an afternoon break for Key Stage 2, and gave teachers autonomy to respond to their classes.

The account is best treated as a practical case study rather than proof of causation. Reported benefits included calmer starts, positive pupil feedback and improved attendance, but the speaker was clear that timetable change was not the only influence. The strongest transferable lesson is the process: diagnose the day, redesign a few moments, trial, listen, adapt and build staff confidence.

## Key messages

### 1. Movement belongs across the day, not only in PE

The opportunity is cumulative: arrivals, transitions, learning breaks, social times, targeted support and family engagement can all contribute.

### 2. Start with the problem, not the activity

A soft start may support connection; a brisk activation may support alertness; an afternoon reset may interrupt a long sedentary period. The purpose should drive the choice.

### 3. Timetable design can create or remove barriers

Reordering lessons and protecting short movement opportunities can be more sustainable than asking individual staff to remember an optional extra.

### 4. Autonomy needs a common entitlement

Staff should be able to respond to context, but pupils' access must not depend entirely on teacher confidence or preference. Agree minimum expectations and provide a usable movement menu.

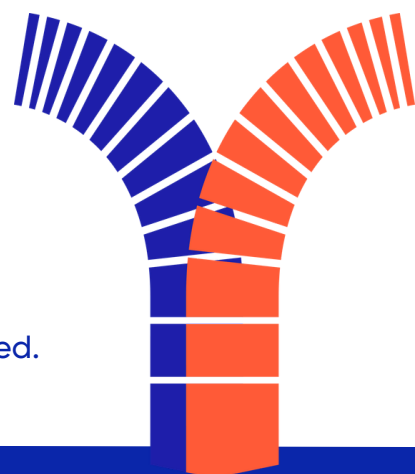
### 5. Secondary and other settings need different mechanics,

### not lower ambition

Movement may sit in tutor time, lesson routines, transitions, practical learning, social time and targeted provision. Departmental consistency and site logistics matter.

### 6. Inclusion must be designed in

Offer choice in intensity, position, space, sensory demand and social participation. Monitor who joins in, opts out or is inadvertently excluded.



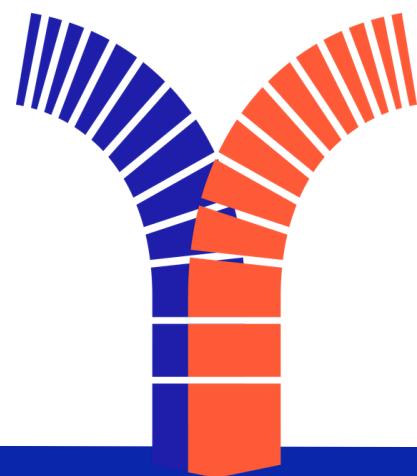
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## Implications for School Leaders

- Audit a real day before buying resources or prescribing activities.
- Protect a small number of intentional moments and define their purpose.
- Co-design a movement menu with staff and pupils, including inclusive alternatives.
- Trial changes, gather evidence and adapt the timetable rather than defending the first design.
- Track reach, experience and unintended consequences – not just minutes delivered.

## Leadership reflection question

If a pupil followed our timetable exactly as designed, when would they move with purpose, connect with others, regulate themselves and reset their attention – and which pupils would still miss out?





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