

# Physical Activity Participation Levels and Opportunities for Primary School pupils



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Physical Activity Participation Levels and Opportunities for Primary  
School pupils

Report  
By

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
1.1 Definition of Physical Activity.....	6
1.2 The Benefits of Physical Activity .....	6
1.3 Recommended Levels of Physical Activity.....	6
1.4 Children and Physical Activity .....	7
1.5 The Role of Primary schools in Physical Activity .....	7
1.6 Recent Trends of participation in Sport and Physical Activity .....	9
1.7 Rationale for the research .....	10
1.8 Aims and Objectives.....	11
1.8.1 Aim .....	11
1.8.2 Objectives .....	11
<b>2. Methodology .....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	12
2.2 The Sample .....	12
2.3 Questionnaire to the School Pupils .....	13
2.4 Questionnaire to the School Principals .....	133
<b>3. Questionnaire to Pupils.....</b>	<b>144</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	144
3.2 Profile of the Pupils.....	144
3.3 Travel to School.....	155
3.4 Watching Television and playing computer games.....	188
3.5 Fast food consumption .....	19
3.6 Participation in Sport and Physical Activity .....	19
3.6.1 Sports or physical activities participated in .....	19
3.6.2 Reasons for playing sports and physical activity.....	222
3.6.3 Why they do not play sport and physical activity.....	222
3.7 PE Class within the schools .....	233
3.7.1 Sports and physical activities participated in during PE class .....	244
3.8 Physical Activity participation during break-times .....	255
3.9 School Competitive Teams .....	255
3.9.1 Competitiveness of the pupils .....	266
3.10 Extra-curricular sports or physical activities in school .....	266
3.11 Free-time Participation.....	266
3.12 Other pastimes when not participating in sport or physical active .....	266
3.13 Additional Comments .....	277
<b>4. Questionnaire to Principals .....</b>	<b>288</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	288
4.2 Facilities .....	288

4.3	<b>Physical Activity on the Curriculum .....</b>	<b>288</b>
4.4	<b>Responsibility for physical activity provision .....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.5	<b>Hours for PE class per Week .....</b>	<b>29</b>
4.6	<b>What Sports or physical activities the schools provide for the pupils. ....</b>	<b>300</b>
4.7	<b>School Sports Teams .....</b>	<b>311</b>
4.7.1	Sports provided for as teams .....	311
4.7.2	When the teams compete.....	311
4.8	<b>Extra Curricular Sport or physical activity.....</b>	<b>322</b>
4.9	<b>Community usage of the schools facilities .....</b>	<b>333</b>
4.10	<b>Action For Life .....</b>	<b>344</b>
4.11	<b>Comments Made.....</b>	<b>344</b>
5.	<b><i>Pupils Discussion</i> .....</b>	<b>355</b>
5.1	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>355</b>
5.2	<b>Gender and Age.....</b>	<b>355</b>
5.3	<b>Travel to school.....</b>	<b>355</b>
5.4	<b>Lifestyle Habits.....</b>	<b>355</b>
5.5	<b>Participation levels in sport and physical activity .....</b>	<b>366</b>
5.6	<b>Physical Activity in Schools .....</b>	<b>377</b>
5.6.1	Physical Education .....	377
5.6.2	Extra Curricular Activities .....	39
5.7	<b>Additional Comments .....</b>	<b>39</b>
6.	<b><i>Principals Discussion</i>.....</b>	<b>400</b>
6.1	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>400</b>
6.2	<b>Facilities .....</b>	<b>400</b>
6.3	<b>Physical Activity Provision .....</b>	<b>400</b>
6.3.1	Physical Activity on Curriculum.....	400
6.3.2	Physical Education Class .....	411
6.3.3	School Sports Teams.....	411
6.3.4	After School Hours.....	422
6.4	<b>Action For Life .....</b>	<b>422</b>
7.	<b><i>Conclusion and Recommendations</i> .....</b>	<b>433</b>
8.	<b><i>References</i>.....</b>	<b>455</b>
	<b><i>Appendix 1</i> .....</b>	<b>477</b>
	<b><i>Appendix 2</i> .....</b>	<b>49</b>
	<b><i>Appendix 3</i>.....</b>	<b>51</b>
	<b><i>Appendix 4</i> .....</b>	<b>600</b>

## Executive Summary

Physical Activity and healthy sports are essential for our health and well being. Children can help establish a more active lifestyle and minimise the threat of diseases such as heart disease, obesity and cardiovascular problems in their adult life by participating in sport and physical activity. Sport and physical activity offers many benefits to physical health and psychosocial wellbeing. It helps to encourage the release of endorphins or “feel good” hormones, builds body awareness, self-esteem and social integration. This study aimed to establish baseline information on the physical activity participation levels and opportunities to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class children in Galway city and county.

A self-completed questionnaire was distributed to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils of ten randomly selected national schools in Galway city and county. This consisted of a total of 356 pupils from five city national schools and 208 pupils from the five county national schools. A questionnaire was also distributed to the principals of the schools to determine the level of sport and physical activity provision in Galway primary schools both during and after school hours.

The findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

- Virtually all of the pupils (99%) engage in sport and physical activity for an average of 3.46 hours per day.
- Female children spend less time being physically active per day than male children (Female = 2.68 hours per day, Male = 4.39 hours per day)
- More male children than female children participate in team contact sports such as soccer, GAA sports and rugby. Female children participate more in individual or non-contact sports such as basketball, gymnastics, dancing, tennis, or rollerblading.
- Most schools provide up to one hour for PE class per week to their pupils
- Soccer, GAA games, athletics, basketball and swimming are the most common sports offered both during and after school hours to the pupils.
- All schools have at least one sport's teams and 60% of the pupils participate in a school team.
- The majority of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class primary school pupils use inactive modes to travel to and from school with the journey taking less than five minutes to travel by car.
- Children spend 2.2 hours per day on average watching television and 1.1 hours per day on average playing computer games. Only 39% of the pupils said their parents limit the amount of time they spend watching television or playing computer games.
- Over two thirds of the pupils are part of a sports club or team outside school hours.
- Enjoyment and to keep fit and healthy were the reasons given by the majority of the pupils (83%) for participating in sport or physical activity.

- The majority of schools (80%) provide extra curricular activities for their pupils and over half of the schools (60%) allow the use of their school facilities to the community.

The study recommended that consideration be given to the following in encouraging increased participation and opportunities in sport and physical activity among primary school children:

- Children at the stage of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class are quite physically active and efforts should be made to encourage continued participation in physical activity through adolescence.
- It is crucial that activities are promoted which appeal to both boys and girls, especially those entering adolescence.
- Parents need to be encouraged to ensure their children have a balance between time spent watching television, using computers and physical activity.
- Schools need to be encouraged to adopt an “Active school” approach where their aim will be to provide an ethos and environment conducive to healthy physical activity rather than just promoting sport and competition
- The Department of Education and Science need to support the development and delivery of the Action For Life programme along with other health related physical activity initiatives.
- Local Authorities should promote the concept of active transportation by incorporating safe walking and cycling routes into local development plans and provide safe routes to school through improved routes and road junctions and school wardens as required.
- The government should develop initiatives within National Governing Bodies of sport to make sport more relevant to a broader range of people, taking the emphasis from competition to participation.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Definition of Physical Activity

Physical activity has been defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO), (1999) for the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study as “*any activity that increases your heart rate and makes you get out of breath some of the time.*” Activities such as walking, swimming, cycling and running are examples of such physical activities.

## 1.2 The Benefits of Physical Activity

The benefits of physical activity are evident in physical, psychological and social areas of a person’s life. Regular physical activity encourages young people to develop active lifestyles that can be maintained throughout adult life thus reducing the risk of cardiovascular and other chronic diseases of adulthood. Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence, has a number of benefits to the child, including:

- Improves muscular strength and endurance
- Helps build healthy bones and muscles
- Helps maintain healthy body fat/lean ratio
- Reduces anxiety and stress; increases self-esteem
- May improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels

(National Heart Alliance, 2001)

Physical Activity has been shown to have favourable effects on anxiety, depression, self-esteem and some measures of cognition (Biddle, 1995). Participation in exercise and sport is an opportunity for self-expression for the child. Physical Activity can also enhance social integration, social interaction, cultural tolerance, an understanding of ethics, fair play and respect for the environment (European Heart Network, 2001).

## 1.3 Recommended Levels of Physical Activity

The European Heart Network (EHN) recommends that “All young people should participate in physical activity of at least moderate intensity for one hour per day” (EHN, 2001) The World Health Organisation (WHO) stated that relevant daily moderate to vigorous physical activities of longer than one hour gives additional health benefits. For children and young people, they need an additional 20 minutes vigorous physical activity 3 times a week and weight control would require at least 60 minutes everyday of moderate/vigorous physical activity. (WHO, 2002)

## **1.4 Children and Physical Activity**

Children are less active and less fit than 10 years ago, spending less time walking and cycling (Physical Activity Group, 1997). Modern technology developments have allowed for many luxuries to become more accessible to society and this is especially so in the case of computers such as the playstation's, gameboys and the development of dvd players. Such developments have an impact on the physical activity levels of all ages but especially for children. Children spend a considerable proportion of their leisure time outside of school watching television/video or playing electronic games. (Broderick & Shiel, 2000)

“Throughout the early years of life, physical activity plays a key part in young people’s physical, social and mental development. All forms of activity have a part to play over the years, whether informal play, ‘free range’ activity (such as tig, catch, or hide and seek etc) and games, physical education, sport, walking and cycling as transport, or more formal ‘exercise’. Babies learn and develop physical capabilities through play; toddlers develop key social skills and an understanding of rules and team membership through sport and physical education.” (EHN, 2001)

According to psychological research, Owen (1994) summaries those who are most likely to participate in exercise later in life as,

- People who exercised as children
- People with a positive self-image
- People who believe that exercise is enjoyable
- People who value good health
- Those who have the support of a spouse

Physical activity also tends to decline significantly with age during adolescence. The overall trend of physical inactivity is worse in socially deprived areas, especially in very densely populated inner cities of large and rapidly growing metropolises. (WHO, 1999)

## **1.5 The Role of Primary schools in Physical Activity**

According to a statement from the Fourth International Conference on Health Promotion, (WHO, 2002) every child has the right and should have the opportunity to be educated in a health promoting school. A health promoting school can be characterised as a school that is constantly strengthening its capacity as a healthy setting for living, learning and working. Primary schools are the foundation for all learning experiences that children receive right through to adulthood and physical education is the aspect of the curriculum that gives children the foundation to physically active lifestyles. The National Heart Alliance (NHA), with the aim of promoting improved heart health amongst young people is calling on schools to adopt an 'active school' approach, with the aim of providing an environment conducive to healthy physical activity, rather than just promoting sport and competition. (NHA, 2001)

Dr. Michael Woods, T.D in 2001 stated that Physical Education provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives. (Woods, 2001) However, the Department of Education and Science, (1997) states that 40% of children do not participate in sports organised by their schools. A most alarming worldwide trend is the decrease in official programmes of physical activity/physical education in schools. A report of the Surgeon General in 1997 outlines that school and community programmes have the potential to help children and adults establish lifelong, healthy physical activity patterns (CDC, 1999).

In 1999, the then Minister for Education and Science, Micheál Martin, outlined the key changes to the revised Primary school curriculum and Physical Education was one of the main areas to be concentrated on. What is most important is to introduce young people to a range of activities and provide them with enjoyable activity experiences, which are likely to motivate them to continue an active lifestyle. (NHA, 2001)

According to the physical activity group for the strategy for Health Boards in Ireland (1997), about 60% of primary schools in Ireland include physical activity as part of their curriculum (The Physical Activity Group, 1997). In Ireland the suggested minimum time for PE in primary schools is one hour per week. However, what is offered during that time to the children for physical education is an area that requires investigation.

The curriculum for Physical Education in primary schools was divided into six strands –

- **Athletics** – incorporates a broad range of running, jumping and throwing.
- **Game's** – helps to develop an understanding of games, which will enable children to appreciate and enjoy games as participants and spectators.
- **Dance** – encourages children to improve body management skills, understand movement, work with others and develop creativity and imagination.
- **Outdoor and adventure activities** – encourages participation in challenges such as hill-walking, cycling, orienteering and others.
- **Gymnastics** – focuses on body actions such as jumping, turning, swinging and balancing and with the control and management of body movements in increasingly challenging situations.
- **Aquatics** – involves not only teaching children how to swim but also promoting enjoyment of water-based activities.

The aims of the physical education curriculum are to promote the social, emotional and intellectual development of the child. To provide the children with a wide variety of activities is also an aim of the curriculum. It is outlined by the department of education that five of the six strands should be included each year where possible. (Department of Education and Science, 2001)

A worldwide UNESCO survey (1999) showed that school-based physical education (PE) faces many challenges across the world. Some schools have sought to reduce the number of physical education lessons, often due to pressures on the curriculum from other subjects. However, data reveals that an appropriately designed, delivered and supported PE curriculum can enhance current levels of physical activity and can improve physical skill development and that a greater number of PE lessons correlated with increased participation in active leisure pursuits.

The Council of Europe (1999) recommends a minimum of three Physical Education periods a week for children at post-primary and a period each day for children at primary level. The current department of education recommendation is 1 hour per week for primary schools.

As part of the Health Promoting Schools programme, a health related exercise programme called “Action for Life” was designed for Irish schools. This programme was developed by a team of health promotion and exercise specialists, primary school teachers, physical education and primary school inspectors and overseen by a steering committee. The intention is to provide a valuable, practical and easy to use educational resource package to assist teachers in planning and teaching physical education in primary schools (Hope, 2001)

## **1.6 Recent Trends of participation in Sport and Physical Activity**

It has been found that many Irish teenagers do not participate in regular physical activity (NHA, 2001). Condon (2001) stated that, just 63% of 9-11 year-olds take regular physical activity, representing a decrease of 23% over the last six years.

A recent health and lifestyle survey reveals that only 40% of 15-17 years olds in Ireland are taking part in regular physical activity, participation in regular physical activity decreases from 63% of 9-11 year olds and 58% of 12-14 years olds to 40% of 15-17 year olds. This decrease is particularly noticeable among girls, dropping from 59% of 9-11 year olds, to 26% of 15-17 year olds. (NHA, 2001)

According to research from the WHO (2002), although many journeys are short enough for walking (under 2km) or cycling (under 8km), on average only 5% of all trips are made by bicycle. More than 30% of car journeys cover distances less than 3km and 50% less than 5km. These distances can be covered within 15-20 minutes by bicycle or 30-50 minutes by brisk walking. As a result, over 30% of adults are not sufficiently active during a typical week.

## **1.7 Rationale for the research**

Physical Activity and healthy sports are essential for our health and well being. Children can help establish a more active lifestyle and reduce the risk of suffering from diseases such as heart disease, obesity and cardiovascular problems in their adult life by participating in sport and physical activity. Sport and physical activity offers many benefits to physical health but more so to psychosocial wellbeing such as building body awareness, self esteem and social integration.

Minister Martin (2001) outlined that two thirds of Irish people are now at increased risk from heart disease and other serious illnesses. One in four people are not taking part in any activity and six out of ten people are not taking enough activity to benefit their health.

To date there has been little evidence to suggest that primary school children are receiving adequate amounts of physical activity. The WHO (2000) has identified Physical inactivity as one of the key threats, even greater than smoking to worldwide population health. It also outlined that inactivity and incorrect nutritional habits have led to the recent epidemic of obesity and overweight observed in western countries.

The regular practice of appropriate Physical Activity in communities can bring significant economic benefits in terms of reduced health care costs, increased productivity, healthier physical and social environments, better performing schools and work sites, stronger participation in sports and recreations and greater sports achievements. Physical Education is the only educational experience where the focus is on the body, physical activity and physical development. Because of this fact, physical education should become a core part of the curriculum. (Mac Donnacha, 2002)

The Department of Education has adopted a policy of promoting equity in education. Sports facilities should be seen as a priority in the promotion of equity, given that many children may not have access to other facilities. Provision in schools still varies greatly and is probably better in schools in more affluent areas; however, there is very little reliable data on this. (Physical activity group, 1997)

The evidence points towards the levels of inactivity of children but also highlights the lack of opportunities available to children to be active such as in school, lack of safe amenities in their areas or lack of community input.

## **1.8 Aims and Objectives**

### **1.8.1 Aim**

To investigate the physical activity participation levels and opportunities to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils of Galway city and county primary schools.

### **1.8.2 Objectives**

- To identify the levels of participation of 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> class children in physical activity both during and after school hours.
- To identify the physical activity opportunities offered by the schools both during and after school hours.
- To determine how many schools offer their facilities to the community for physical activities after school hours & what activities are provided.
- To determine whether activities are offered to promote healthy physical activity or to promote sport and competition.
- To assess whether gender or city/county differences occurs in physical activities provided or participated in.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Introduction

The research methodology of the study comprised of the following;

1. Questionnaire to School children
2. Questionnaire to Principals

### 2.2 The Sample

A list of National primary schools in Galway was obtained from the Department of Education and Science. The list consisted of 236 schools in Galway, 26 of which were in the city area. It was decided to randomly select five schools from both the city and county in order to have a substantial sample size.

The following schools participated in the survey;

- St Patrick's Boy's National School
- Scoil Croi Iosa
- Briarhill National School
- Scoil Rois
- Tirellan Heights National School
- Kilenadeema National School, Loughrea
- Muire na Dea Comhairle, Headford
- St Brendan's National School, Loughrea
- SN Sailearna, Indreabhan
- Scoil Mhuire, Oranmore

The principals of the ten schools were approached by post (letter in appendix 1) and followed up by telephone to receive a response. Three principals decided not to participate in the study and 3 other randomly selected schools replaced them.

Parental consent forms were devised and sent to the schools for distribution to the relevant classes. This form outlined to the parent the aim of the study, the length of the questionnaire, the time it would take to complete it and the content of the questions. It also informed the guardian that their child would remain anonymous and the information would be used for research purposes only. Parental consent forms (appendix 2) and a copy of the questionnaire for the school children (appendix 3) were sent to the principals followed by a telephone call to arrange a distribution date and time with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes.

The researcher visited the schools to distribute the questionnaires and clarify questions if needed. The pupils were given clear written and verbal instructions on the format for answering the questionnaire. Also, they were assured there was no right or wrong answer and they didn't need to include their names on it. They were asked also to give their own answers and to be honest. The researcher answered any questions related to

the questionnaire when they arose. As the researcher was present for the distribution and completion, there was a 100% response rate for analysis. A total of 564 pupils (259 Boys & 305 girls); 163 boys and 193 girls from fifth and sixth class in the city and 96 boys and 112 girls from fifth and sixth class in the county schools completed questionnaires.

The questionnaire for the principals (appendix 4) were sent out to them by post at a later date along with a letter of appreciation for allowing the researcher to visit their school. Of the ten principals who were involved, a total of 10 were returned for analysis giving an overall response rate of 100%.

### **2.3 Questionnaire to the School Pupils**

The questionnaire consisted of 31 multiple choice and open-ended questions. The questionnaire (appendix 3) was designed to elicit the following information;

- What sports and physical activities children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class are participating in?
- How much time per day and week they spend being active?
- What factors influence their participation in sport or physical activity
- Gender differences in the time and types of sports being played.
- Comparison of city and county sport and physical activity provision by the schools - time allotted, variety offered, competitiveness and gender differences

### **2.4 Questionnaire to the School Principals**

This questionnaire (appendix 4) consisted of 24 multiple choice and open-ended questions. Consideration was given to allow the principals to include any comments they may have. The questionnaire was designed to elicit the following information;

- What facilities are available to the school for sport and physical activity.
- Whether the school promotes physical activity as part of the curriculum, if so, by what means and who is responsible for its provision.
- In relation to Physical Education, how much time is given to it and what activities are provided.
- The competitiveness of the school - do they have sports teams, how often do they compete, is there gender equality and what sports are most used to compete.
- Whether the school offers extra curricular activities, open their school to the community after school hours and if so, what activities are most commonly participated in by the community.
- To determine the awareness levels of the principals to the “Action for Life” programme and whether the teachers use it.
- To determine whether trends emerge between city and county schools physical activity provision.

### 3. Questionnaire to Pupils

#### 3.1 Introduction

A total of 10 schools in Galway (5 city schools and 5 county schools) participated in the study. The questionnaires were distributed to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils and they were asked to include details of their participation in physical activity both during and after school hours. In addition, they were also asked to give details of their participation in sedentary behaviour (such as watching television, playing computer games) and weekly consumption of fast foods. A total of 564 pupils participated in the study, giving a 100% response rate.

#### 3.2 Profile of the Pupils

The gender breakdown of respondents was 46% male and 54% female. A total of 63% of the pupils were from a city school and 37% were from a county school (table 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Breakdown of the Gender by city and county**

Gender	Galway City		Galway County		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Male</b>	163	29	96	17	259	46
<b>Female</b>	193	34	112	20	305	54
<b>Total</b>	356	63	208	37	564	100

Table 3.2 outlines overall age and gender breakdown of respondents. The age ranged from 9 – 14 years. The average age of pupils was 12 years old.

**Table 3.2 Age and gender of Respondents**

Age (Years)	Male		Female		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>9</b>	0	0	1	1	1	0.5
<b>10</b>	23	9	31	10	54	10
<b>11</b>	92	36	121	40	213	38
<b>12</b>	118	46	138	45	256	46
<b>13</b>	20	8	9	3	29	5
<b>14</b>	1	1	0	0	1	0.5

### 3.3 Travel to School

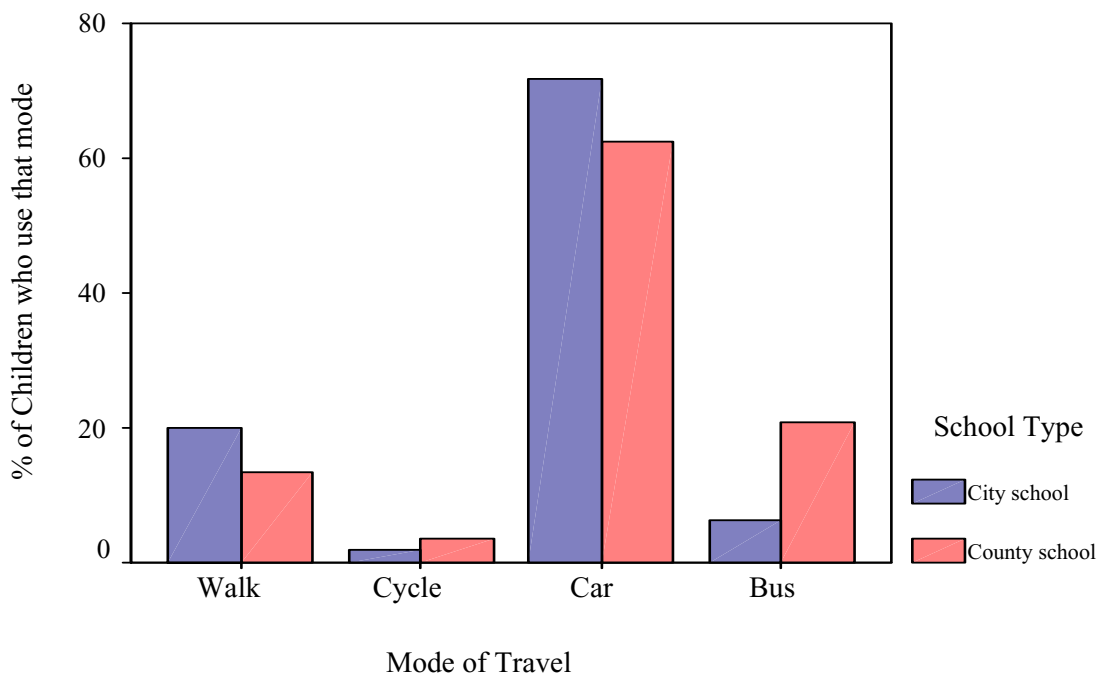
The pupils were asked to include the mode of transport they use most often to travel to school. Table 3.3 outlines that over two-thirds, 67% of the pupil’s travel by car and 11% travel by bus to school, 17% walk and 2% cycle to school.

**Table 3.3 Mode of travelling to school**

Mode of Transport	Total	
	No	%
Walk	96	17
Cycle	14	2
Car	375	67
Bus	64	11

The results also show that a difference in mode of transport used by children in city and in the county. Figure 3.1 outlines the modes of travel used by children in the city and county with the greatest variance occurring with bus travel, where 21% of children in the county and only 6% in the city travel to school by bus. There is a 10% difference in travel by car between the city (72%) and the county (62%).

**Figure 3.1 City and County mode of travel comparison**



Cycling is the least used mode overall with 2% use in the city and 4% in the county. More children walk to school in the city (20%) than the county (13%).

Table 3.4 shows the amount of time it takes for each pupil to travel to school. Overall, almost a third of pupils travel to school in 0-5 minutes while 27% take 6-10 minutes to travel to school. Only 8% of the pupils require 26-60 minutes to travel to school. The table also shows a breakdown of the city and county pupils travel times to school. Half of the city pupils (50%) and over two-thirds of the county pupils (73%) travel to school in less than 10 minutes. 10% of city and 5% of county schools take 26-60 minutes to travel to school. The average time it takes for city and county pupils to travel to school is 12.7 minutes.

**Table 3.4 Length of time to Travel to School**

<b>Time to Travel to School (Minutes)</b>	<b>Total City</b>		<b>Total County</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>0-5</b>	85	24	93	45	178	32
<b>6-10</b>	92	26	58	28	150	27
<b>11-15</b>	73	21	25	12	98	17
<b>16-25</b>	69	19	22	11	91	16
<b>26-45</b>	34	9	10	5	44	8
<b>46-60</b>	2	1	0	0	2	0.4

Figure 3.2 outlines the journey time in relation to the mode of transport used to travel to school, the car being the most used mode of transport with the majority of the journeys taking up to 5 minutes.

**Figure 3.2 Time taken to Travel to school per mode of transport**

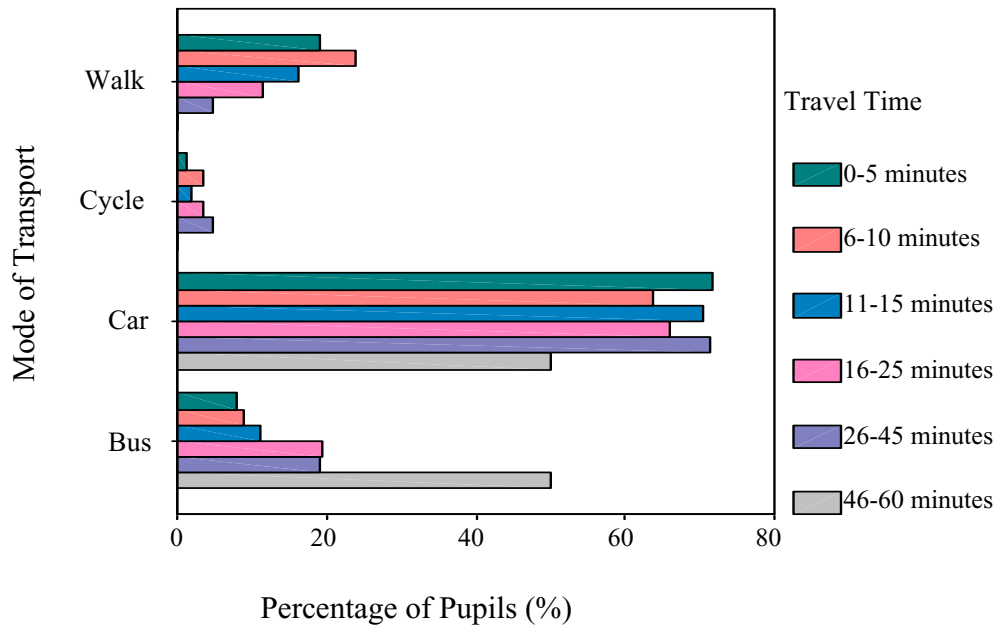
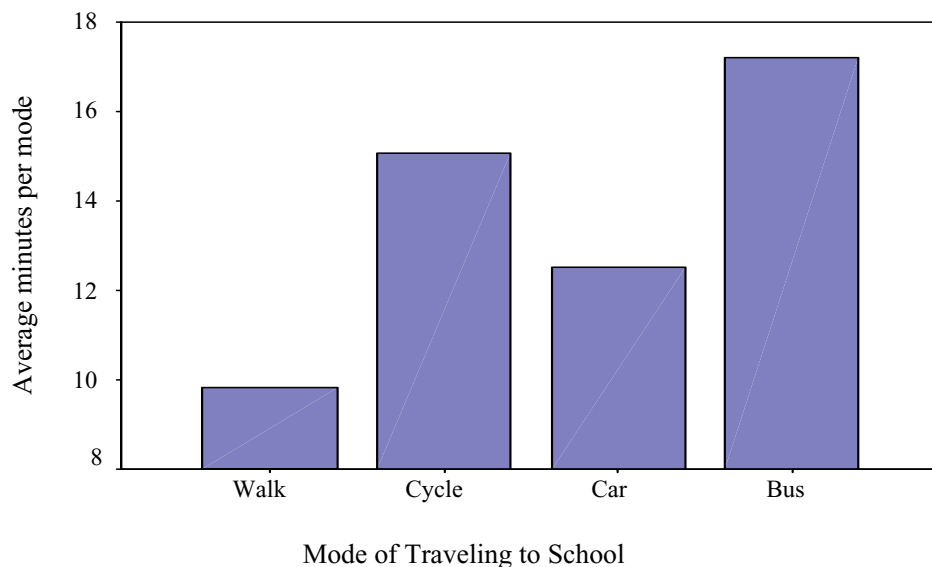


Figure 3.3 shows the average time per mode of travel. The average time it takes respondents who walk to school is 9.83 minutes. Cycling, on average, takes 15.07 minutes and travelling by bus takes on average, 17.20 minutes. Respondents who travel to school by car require 12.52 minutes on average.

**Figure 3.3 Average number of minutes to travel per mode of transport**



### 3.4 Watching Television and playing computer games

The pupils were asked to include the amount of time per day they spent watching television and playing computer games. Table 3.5 outlines the amount of time spent watching television. It can be seen that, the majority (66%), watch up to 2 hours of television per day; 34% watch over 2 hours of television per day. On average, respondents watch television for 2.2 hours per day.

**Table 3.5 Time spent watching Television Per Day**

Time Spent Watching TV	Total	
	No	%
Up to 1 hour	124	22
1 - 1.5 hours	89	16
1.5 – 2 hours	152	28
2 - 3 hours	111	20
3 - 4 hours	46	8
Over 4 hours	33	6

Overall, 69% of the pupils reported to play computer games every day. This consisted of 55% of the girls and 85% of the boys. Table 3.6 shows the amount of time the pupils spend playing computer games. The majority (72%) reported to play for 1 hour or less per day. The average number of hours these pupils play computer games for is 1.1 hours per day.

**Table 3.6 Time spent playing Computer games per day**

Time Spent playing Computer Games	Total	
	No	%
0 - ½ hour	160	41
1/2 – 1 hour	122	31
1 - 1 and a half hours	26	7
1 and a half hours - 2 hours	52	13
2 - 3 hours	20	5
3 - 4 hours	6	2
Over 4 hours	5	1

Respondents were asked whether their parents influence the amount of time that they watch television or play their computer games. Of those who responded, 39% said yes their parents limit the amount of time and 61% said no, their parents do not limit the amount of time they spend watching television or playing computer games. Gender difference did not occur.

### 3.5 Fast food consumption

Table 3.5 shows that overall, 66% of the pupils eat fast food every week - 51% report to eat fast foods once a week and 11% eat it twice a week. More girls reported to eat fast foods twice a week and there was no significant difference of fast food consumption between city and county pupils.

**Table 3.7 Fast Food Per Week**

Times Per Week	Total	
	No	%
None	192	34
Once	285	51
Twice	59	11
3-4 times	19	3
More than 5	4	1

### 3.6 Participation in Sport and Physical Activity

The vast majority of pupils (99%) report that they play sports or other physical activities and 1% of the pupils reported they do not play sports or other physical activities.

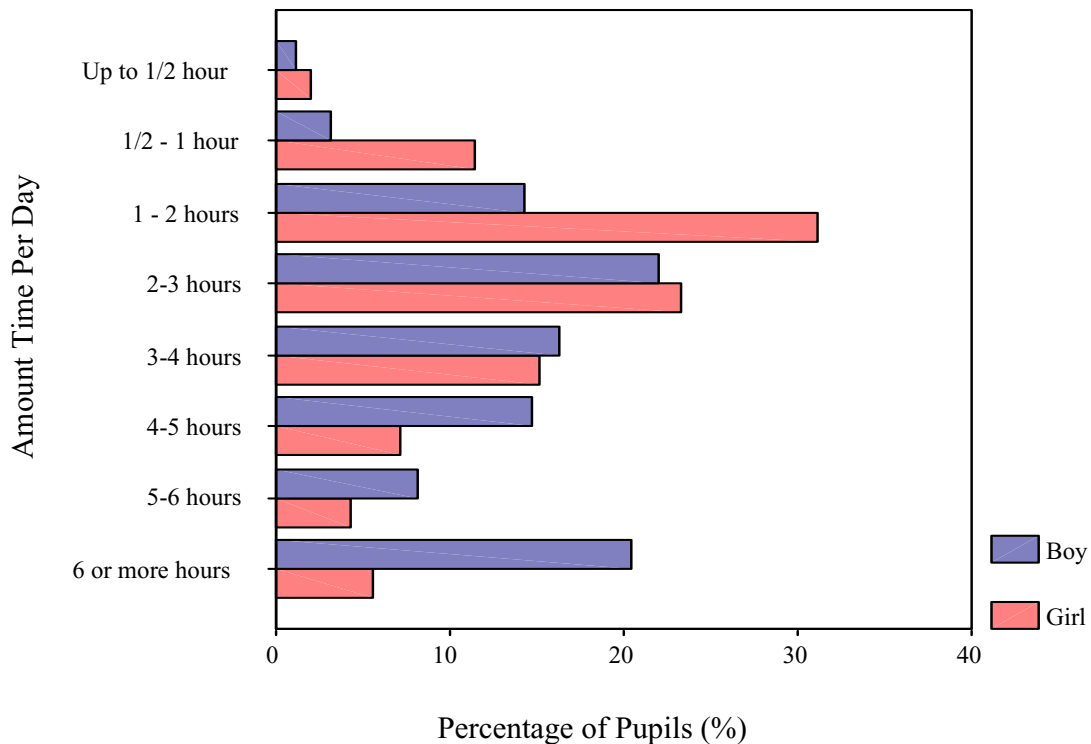
#### 3.6.1 Sports or physical activities participated in

In order to determine the most popular sports being played by 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils today, they were asked to include the sports or physical activities they play. The pupils were asked to include all occasions they may play – school, with friends, alone, with a club etc. Table 3.8 lists the sports and physical activities in relation to their popularity and also the gender breakdown for each sport. Soccer was reportedly the most played sport among the pupils with 74% in total playing it. Games for fun (Tig, catch etc), cycling, basketball and swimming are played by over half of those who play sports or physical activities. Girls dominate in sports such as basketball, dancing, roller-blading and hockey where boys dominate in sports such as rugby, hurling and pitch and putt.

In order to establish the activity levels of the pupils in relation to the amount of time they play on each day of the week, they were asked to include the total time spent at each sport they play and the days they play the sports. The results show that overall, on average, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils are physically active for 3.46 hours per day. It also shows that boys spend 4.39 hours per day and girls spend 2.68 hours per day on average being physically active. Gender differences in daily physical activity participation were significant (Independent T test,  $p < 0.001$ ). With regard to the city and county comparison for daily activity levels, there was no significant difference in the time spent being active per day or in the sports or activities they participate in.

Figure 3.4 identifies the categories of time that respondents are active for per day based on gender. It outlines how most girls are active for up to three hours per day and boys are more active for up to six or more hours. Of the respondents, 10% are active for less than one hour per day and 12% are active for more than 6 hours per day. The majority (43%) of respondents are active between 1 and 3 hours per day with both 1-2 hour and 2-3 hour categories representing 23% of the respondents.

**Figure 3.4 Categories of time children spend being physically active per day**



**Table 3.8 Sports or physical activities participated in**

Sport or Physical Activity	Total		Females		Males		Average No of days
	No	%	No	%	No	%	
<b>Soccer</b>	415	74	178	43	237	57	3.1011
<b>Games for fun</b>	406	72	249	61	157	39	3.3812
<b>Cycling</b>	338	60	181	53	157	47	2.2358
<b>Basketball</b>	325	58	238	73	87	27	1.5833
<b>Swimming</b>	286	51	174	61	112	39	.8298
<b>Gaelic football</b>	276	49	114	41	162	59	1.3883
<b>Other(s)</b>	212	38	138	65	74	35	1.2748
<b>Dancing</b>	168	30	158	94	10	6	.5567
<b>Hurling/Camogie</b>	166	29	55	33	111	67	1.1649
<b>Roller-Blading</b>	144	26	119	83	25	17	.6365
<b>Rugby (+ Tag)</b>	136	24	32	23	104	77	.5514
<b>Tennis</b>	131	23	94	72	37	28	.4805
<b>Olympic handball</b>	120	21	92	77	28	33	.2819
<b>Athletics</b>	117	21	61	72	56	28	.4929
<b>Nature Walks</b>	108	19	71	66	37	34	.4433
<b>Skate-boarding</b>	89	16	39	44	50	56	.5372
<b>Hill walking</b>	69	12	41	59	28	41	.2943
<b>Pitch &amp; Putt</b>	63	11	21	33	42	66	.1933
<b>Horse-riding</b>	60	11	43	72	17	28	.2305
<b>Badminton</b>	55	10	33	60	22	40	.2110
<b>Hockey</b>	48	9	41	85	7	15	.1472
<b>Volley ball</b>	48	9	39	81	9	19	.1135
<b>Judo/Karate</b>	37	7	20	54	17	46	.1152
<b>Squash</b>	33	6	12	36	21	64	.1436
<b>Boxing</b>	20	4	8	40	12	60	.0957
<b>Gymnastics</b>	19	3	15	79	4	21	.0443
<b>Windsurfing</b>	16	3	7	44	9	56	.0603
<b>Canoeing</b>	15	3	8	53	7	46	.0355
<b>Taekwondo</b>	15	3	11	73	4	27	.0532
<b>Rowing/Sailing</b>	14	3	6	43	8	57	.0372

### 3.6.2 Reasons for playing sports and physical activity

The pupils were asked to circle one reason from a list, which they felt was the most reason why they play sport and physical activity. Table 3.9 shows the breakdown of the responses. Over half of the pupils (65%) stated enjoyment as their most reason with 18% saying “to keep fit and healthy” as their reason to participate. More boys than girls used “I want to be a professional player when I’m Older” as their reason.

**Table 3.9 Reason for playing sport and physical activity**

<b>Reason for playing sport and physical activity</b>	<b>Total %</b>	<b>Male %</b>	<b>Female %</b>
I enjoy it	65	59	71
To Keep Fit and Healthy	18	20	17
I want to be a professional player when I’m Older	9	15	4
My friends do it	2	1	3
To meet other people	1	1	1
I like to win	1	2	1
I am made do it by parents	1	1	0
To relax	1	1	1
All my family play or played before	1	1	1
Other(s)	1	1	1

### 3.6.3 Why they do not play sport and physical activity

Only 1% of the pupils do not engage in sport or physical activity and they were asked to state their reason for not playing from a list of reasons. Table 3.8 shows the responses. The majority, (60%) stated they do not like sports or physical activities, 20% stated there are no teams to play with and the remaining 20% prefer other activities to sport.

### 3.7 PE Class within the schools

The pupils were asked to report whether they have a PE class and if not, why not. They were also asked how much time they receive for PE and what sports or activities they do during PE. Of those who responded, 93% stated they do have PE class in school and 98% of these pupils stated they enjoy it.

The remaining 7%, who do not have PE class, were asked to give the reason for not having it. Table 3.10 shows that one-quarter (25%) stated the reason as “Teacher doesn’t bother” and another quarter stated they don’t know the reason why they don’t receive PE class.

**Table 3.10 Reason for not having PE Class**

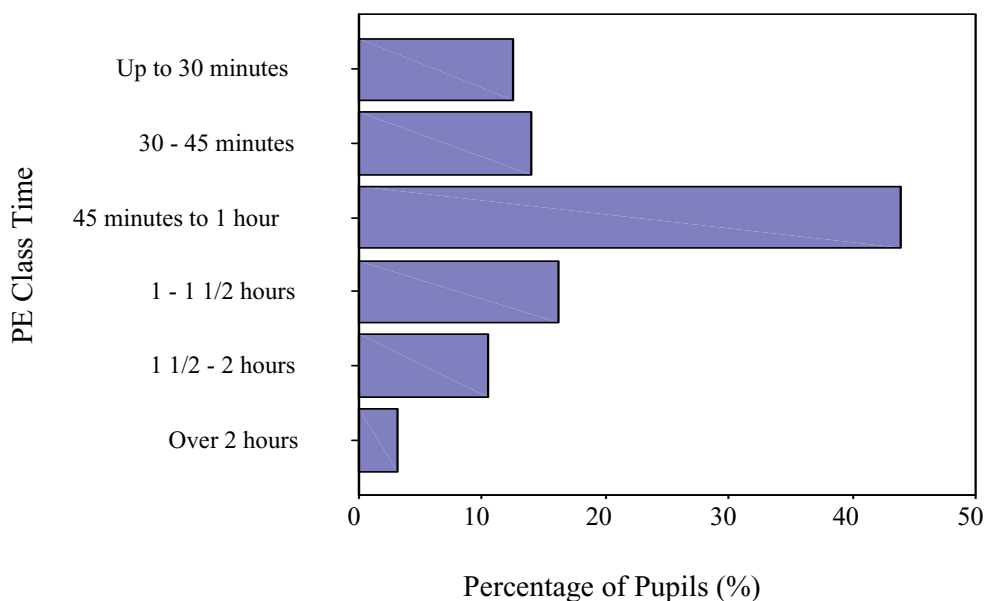
Reason for not having PE Class	Total	
	No	%
There is no time for PE	4	14
There is no hall or pitch for PE	2	7
Teacher doesn’t bother	7	25
We go for swimming lessons instead	2	7
There is other subjects on instead	3	11
Don’t know	7	25
Other(s)	3	11

The pupils were asked how much time they receive for PE class and on average they receive 1.1 hours per week. Table 3.11 outlines the breakdown of the amount of time the pupils report to receive for PE class per week. The majority (44%) of pupils stated they receive between 45 minutes to 1 hour per week for PE class.

**Table 3.11 Amount of PE Time Per Week**

Amount of PE Time Per Week	Total	
	No	%
Up to 30 minutes	65	13
30 – 45 minutes	73	14
45 minutes – 1 hour	229	44
1 – 1½ hours	84	16
1½ - 2 hours	55	10
Over 2 Hours	16	3

**Figure 3.5 Categories of time children report having for PE class per week**



### 3.7.1 Sports and physical activities participated in during PE class

Table 3.12 shows the list of sports that pupils participate in PE class for city and county schools. Basketball and soccer are the most sports played during PE with over 51% of the pupils stating this. Basketball is offered more in city schools than county whereas soccer is provided to almost the same number in both city and county. Tag Rugby, Benchball, dodgeball and rounders were the most common other physical activities that the pupils play in PE class.

**Table 3.12 Sport or Physical Activity participated in PE Class**

Sport or Physical Activity	Total		City		County	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Basketball</b>	328	58	219	61	110	53
<b>Soccer</b>	288	51	172	48	118	57
<b>Games for fun</b>	223	40	162	46	61	29
<b>Olympic handball</b>	185	33	163	46	22	11
<b>Gaelic football</b>	171	30	102	29	69	33
<b>Others</b>	130	23	64	18	66	32
<b>Unihoc</b>	88	16	23	7	34	16
<b>Athletics</b>	82	15	52	15	30	14
<b>Rugby</b>	76	14	66	19	10	5
<b>Hurling/Camogie</b>	69	12	32	9	37	18
<b>Dancing</b>	63	11	43	12	20	10
<b>Gymnastics</b>	51	9	45	13	6	3
<b>Volley ball</b>	41	7	9	3	32	15
<b>Hockey</b>	36	6	23	7	13	6
<b>Badminton</b>	9	2	1	1	8	4
<b>Tennis</b>	9	2	7	2	2	1

### 3.8 Physical Activity participation during break-times

During break times, 85% (n=473) participate in sports or physical activities. Table 3.13 outlines the sports or physical activities engaged in by the pupils during break-times. The majority of the pupils play games for fun and soccer during their break-times. Wall ball, tennis football, skipping and walking around the yard are other sports participated in by 15% of the pupils.

**Table 3.13 Sport or Physical Activity during Break-times**

Sport or Physical Activity	Total		Male		Female	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Games for fun</b>	292	52	99	38	193	63
<b>Soccer</b>	258	46	182	70	76	25
<b>Basketball</b>	135	30	33	13	102	33
<b>Gaelic football</b>	89	16	55	21	34	11
<b>Other(s)</b>	86	15	21	8	65	21
<b>Hurling/Camogie</b>	58	10	53	21	5	2
<b>Athletics</b>	47	8	16	6	31	10
<b>Dancing</b>	32	6	1	1	32	10
<b>Olympic handball</b>	29	5	10	4	19	6
<b>Rugby</b>	26	5	21	8	5	2
<b>Rounders</b>	19	3	0	0	19	6
<b>Nature walks</b>	11	2	1	1	10	3
<b>Gymnastics</b>	6	1	1	.1	5	2
<b>Volley ball</b>	5	1	1	.1	4	1

### 3.9 School Competitive Teams

According to 99% of the pupils, they have sports teams in their school and 60% of these pupils play for one of them. Table 3.14 shows the breakdown of those who coach the school teams. A teacher is responsible for coaching in 50% of the schools followed by a special coach in 23% of the schools.

**Table 3.14 Breakdown of those who coach the school teams**

Person Responsible to coach school teams	%
<b>Principal</b>	14
<b>Parents</b>	3
<b>PE Teacher</b>	4
<b>Teacher</b>	50
<b>Special Coach</b>	23
<b>Others</b>	2

### 3.9.1 Competitiveness of the pupils

Winning a game against another team was more important to 17% of the pupils with 78% preferring to have fun while playing the game and 6% felt both were equally as important to them. Two thirds of those who preferred winning games were male while the majority of those who preferred to have fun while playing were female.

### 3.10 Extra-curricular sports or physical activities in school

Teachers are the main promoters of extra curricular physical activities in the schools of the 69% respondents who said there was sports in their school after school hours. Of the remaining respondents, 22% do not have and 9% did not know if they have extra curricular physical activities. The pupils included the sports on offer and the most common extra-curricular physical activities in the schools are soccer, gaelic football, hurling/camogie, basketball and olympic handball. Also, Irish dancing and athletics featured as common extra-curricular activities in some of the schools.

### 3.11 Free-time Participation

To determine if children at this age participate in sport or physical activity in their own free time, they were asked if they were part of a team or club. Of the respondents, 68% are part of some team or club when they are not in school. Soccer, gaelic football, hurling/camogie and swimming were the most featured responses given for the sports or physical activities they participate in. Other popular responses were Irish dancing, hockey, rugby and basketball.

### 3.12 Other pastimes when not participating in sport or physical active

The pupils were invited to include what they spend most of their time doing when they are not being active. Table 3.16 outlines that from the list provided, visiting friends, watching TV/dvds/videos and doing homework were the most involved in past-times when they are not being active.

**Table 3.16 Past times the pupils spend most of their time doing when not being active**

<b>Past-time</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Play a musical Instrument or lessons</b>	53	10
<b>Visit Friends</b>	164	30
<b>Listen to music</b>	45	8
<b>Watch TV/dvds/videos</b>	92	17
<b>Play computer games</b>	43	8
<b>Do my homework</b>	92	17
<b>Read books or magazines</b>	27	5
<b>Other lessons (grinds, Art)</b>	11	2
<b>Other</b>	16	3

### 3.13 Additional Comments

The pupils were given an opportunity to voice their opinions on what they would like for sport or physical activity in school. The amount of time the pupils receive for PE class was a strong discussion point among the pupils. "More PE time" was called for by many of the pupils with school teams for sports such as rugby, soccer and GAA sports also popular comments. There was a wide variety of sports and activities suggested by the pupils such as the popular team games e.g., soccer, hockey, basketball, and rugby but also there was a wide range of individual sports and activities suggested such as gymnastics, athletics, tennis, swimming and dancing. There was also a call for gender balances in the sports with requests for girls' Gaelic teams or camogie teams and basketball for boys' team from many of the children. Some samples of the comments made are included below;

"Tennis, badminton, water-sports - we don't do enough PE"
"A tennis net - we are not allowed to run in the yard and PE might be cancelled because of bad weather"
"I would really like tennis. I hate gaelic football and we are always playing it. I'm really into tennis, soccer, basketball and dancing. I wish our school would do more pe – we barely get any!"
"A school soccer team and more break time and PE"
"Football, swimming and tennis - you have to be in 6th class to play on the sports teams"
"I would like to have a gaelic, soccer and basketball for girls"

## 4. Questionnaire to Principals

### 4.1 Introduction

Ten schools were involved in this survey – 5 in the city and 5 in the county, which consisted of two girl’s schools, two mixed schools and one boy’s school in each. In order to determine what the school provides in relation to sport and physical activity, the principals of the school involved were asked to fill out a questionnaire of which there was a 100% response rate for analysis.

### 4.2 Facilities

Details of the facilities available to the schools for provision of physical activity were investigated. The facilities include a sports hall, playing pitches, changing rooms and a schoolyard. Table 4.1 shows the percentage of schools who have access to each facility.

**Table 4.1 Facilities available to the school**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Sports Hall</b>	6	60
<b>Playing Pitches</b>	9	90
<b>Changing Rooms</b>	5	50
<b>School Yard</b>	10	100

### 4.3 Physical Activity on the Curriculum

All respondents promote physical activity as part of the curriculum. Table 4.2 show the breakdown of the methods of promoting physical activity in the schools – PE class, extra curricular activities, other lessons i.e. swimming lessons, school teams, none of the above or other methods.

**Table 4.2 Breakdown of how physical activity is promoted in schools**

<b>Method of Promoting Physical Activity</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>PE class</b>	10	100
<b>Extra Curricular Activities</b>	9	90
<b>Other Lessons i.e. swimming lessons</b>	7	70
<b>School Teams</b>	10	100
<b>Other</b>	0	0

#### 4.4 Responsibility for physical activity provision

It can be seen from table 4.3 that all teachers are responsible for physical activity provision in all schools with half also using special coaches. In less than one third of the schools (30%), the principal is responsible along with all teachers for physical activity provision.

**Table 4.3 Responsibility for Physical Activity provision**

<b>Responsibility for Physical Activity provision</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Special Coaches</b>	5	50
<b>All Teachers</b>	10	100
<b>Principal</b>	3	30

#### 4.5 Hours for PE class per Week

Table 4.3 outlines the breakdown of the time per week that primary schools give to PE class. In most primary schools (60%) one hour for PE class is provided per week. There was no city/county difference in PE time evident.

**Table 4.4 Breakdown of time allocated to PE class**

<b>Hours of PE per week</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Up to <math>\frac{3}{4}</math> of an hour</b>	2	20
<b><math>\frac{3}{4}</math> to 1 hour</b>	1	10
<b>1 hour</b>	6	60
<b>1 – 2 hours</b>	1	10

One school stated that the provision of PE class is dependent on weather conditions' as they do not have indoor facilities.

#### 4.6 What Sports or physical activities the schools provide for the pupils.

Athletics and basketball are the most catered for sports with the majority of the schools (90%) providing these. Table 4.4 outlines where the sports are provided be it PE class, Break-times or both. Soccer is mostly catered for in both PE class and Break-times.

**Table 4.4 Breakdown of Sports and physical activities provided**

<b>Sports Provided</b>	<b>Provided %</b>	<b>PE %</b>	<b>Break %</b>	<b>Both %</b>
<b>Athletics</b>	90	67	11	22
<b>Basketball</b>	90	44	11	45
<b>Soccer</b>	80	0	12	88
<b>Gaelic football</b>	70	14	29	57
<b>Games for fun (tig, rounders)</b>	70	71	0	29
<b>Olympic Handball</b>	70	71	14	14
<b>Swimming</b>	60	50	0	10
<b>Nature Walks</b>	60	67	17	17
<b>Hurling/Camogie</b>	50	20	20	60
<b>Rugby</b>	50	80	0	20
<b>Gymnastics</b>	50	80	20	0
<b>Unihoc</b>	40	75	25	0
<b>Cycling</b>	10	100	0	0
<b>Volley ball</b>	20	100	0	0
<b>Dancing</b>	20	100	0	0
<b>Hockey</b>	10	100	0	0
<b>Badminton</b>	10	100	0	0

The vast majority (80%) of schools provides swimming lessons to their pupils. There was no city/county difference in sports or physical activities provided for the pupils.

## 4.7 School Sports Teams

### 4.7.1 Sports provided for as teams

Table 4.5 shows that all schools have at least one sports team within the school. Of the schools, 40% have both girls and boys teams in hurling/camogie, athletics and tag rugby.

**Table 4.5 Breakdown of school teams based on gender**

School Teams	Male		Female		Both	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
<b>Hurling/Camogie</b>	4	40	1	10	2	20
<b>Athletics</b>	1	10	3	30	1	10
<b>Tag Rugby</b>	1	10	2	20	1	10
<b>Soccer</b>	2	20	1	10	0	0
<b>Gaelic football</b>	6	60	1	10	0	0
<b>Olympic Handball</b>	0	0	3	30	2	20
<b>Basketball</b>	0	0	5	50	0	0
<b>Dancing</b>	0	0	0	0	1	10
<b>Swimming</b>	1	10	0	0	0	0

It can be seen from table 4.5 in relation to equality, that male teams dominate gaelic football, soccer and swimming team provision in mixed schools. Female teams dominate basketball team provision in mixed schools. Hurling and camogie teams were equally provided in mixed city schools but in the mixed county schools, only male teams were provided.

### 4.7.2 When the teams compete

Table 4.6 shows how often the teams competed against other schools and 30% compete once a week, 30% compete once a month, 10% each said 2-3 times a week, once a month, once in 6 months. Also 10% did not know how often the school teams competed.

**Table 4.6 How often the teams compete**

How often do the teams compete	%
<b>2-3 times a week</b>	10
<b>Once a Week</b>	30
<b>Once a month</b>	10
<b>Once every 3 months</b>	30
<b>Once in 6 months</b>	10
<b>Never</b>	10

#### 4.8 Extra Curricular Sport or physical activity

In order to determine the overall sport or physical activity provision in primary schools, the principals were asked to include whether they provide any extra curricular physical activities. The majority (80%) responded that they do provide extra curricular physical activities for their pupils. Those who provide extra curricular physical activities were asked to include what activities are provided. Table 4.7 shows these activities in the order of most provided activity. Most schools (50%) provide Hurling/camogie with soccer and basketball both provided by 30% of the schools. There was no evidence of a city/county difference in extra-curricular sports or activities provided.

**Table 4.7 Sports or Physical Activities provided by the schools as extra curricular activities**

<b>Sports or Physical Activities</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Hurling/Camogie</b>	5	50
<b>Basketball</b>	3	30
<b>Soccer</b>	3	30
<b>Olympic Handball</b>	2	20
<b>Gaelic Football</b>	2	20
<b>Irish Dancing</b>	2	20
<b>Athletics</b>	2	20
<b>Table-tennis</b>	2	20
<b>Cycling</b>	1	10
<b>Gymnastics</b>	1	10

#### 4.9 Community usage of the schools facilities

Over half of the schools (60%) allow the use of their school to the community. One school did not give examples of what activities occur in their school. Table 4.8 outlines the community-based activities that require the school facilities and Irish dancing, hurling/camogie and basketball occur in two schools each. Also included as activities, which the community uses the school facilities to engage in, are soccer, gaelic, gymnastics, hockey, keep fit, drama, art, music and table quiz. There was no city/county difference in schools who open to their school for community use.

**Table 4.8 Community use of school facilities**

<b>Community Activities in school Facilities</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Hurling/Camogie</b>	2	20
<b>Basketball</b>	2	20
<b>Irish Dancing</b>	2	20
<b>Karate</b>	1	10
<b>Soccer</b>	1	10
<b>Gaelic Football</b>	1	10
<b>Hockey</b>	1	10
<b>Keep Fit</b>	1	10
<b>Drama</b>	1	10
<b>Art</b>	1	10
<b>Music</b>	1	10
<b>Gymnastics</b>	1	10
<b>Table Quiz's</b>	1	10

The 40% of schools who do not open their school to community use after school hours were asked to include a reason why in order to determine whether a trend in barriers arise. Table 4.9 shows that half of the schools report insurance reasons prohibited the use of the school by the community with 25% each responding that it was a board of management decision and they have no space for community use.

**Table 4.9 Reason for not allowing community access**

<b>Reason for not allowing community access</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Insurance Reasons</b>	50
<b>No space</b>	25
<b>Board of management decision</b>	25

#### **4.10 Action For Life**

The Department of Health's health promotion unit in conjunction with the Irish Heart Foundation, ESB, and the Department of Education and Science devised a health-related exercise programme called Action For Life (Hope, 2001), to assist teachers in planning and teaching physical education in primary schools. In order to determine the principal's knowledge of the programme, they were asked questions on their awareness, whether their teachers are trained for it plus whether the programme was implemented in their school. Three schools (30%) said they were aware of the Action for Life programme, two city schools and one county. One school has teachers trained for the programme and two said the programme was implemented in their school.

#### **4.11 Comments Made**

The principals were invited to include any comments they wished to make and one principal replied;

- 1. Our school promotes a healthy sporting environment - not over competitive - respectful of all effort.*
- 2. Children have plenty opportunity to participate in mini games*
- 3. Relatively young teaching staff empathises with pupil's activities - very keen*
- 4. Sport is very important in creating order/structure and consequently avoids disciplining any difficulties that would arise in its absence"*

## **5. Pupils Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The aim of the study was to establish baseline information on the physical activity participation levels and opportunities to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils of Galway city and county primary schools. It was also expected to examine what sports or activities they take part in, why they did or did not participate in physical activity and any differences that occur between gender or city and county.

### **5.2 Gender and Age**

Two thirds of the pupils were from the city with one third from county schools and 54% were female. Their ages ranged from 9 to 14 years of age with the average age being 12 years old.

### **5.3 Travel to school**

Over three-quarters of respondents used modes of transport that require little physical activity (e.g. bus or car). City children use more active modes than county children do. Over half of the pupils take less than 10 minutes to travel to school. For the majority of those who travel by car to school, the journey takes less than 5 minutes. These results indicate these pupils live within walking or cycling distances of the school but choose not to do so. These children should be encouraged to walk or cycle to school in order to add to their physical activity levels. However, this may be difficult due to concerns among parents regarding the safety of their children with the increased traffic levels on the roads and inadequate footpaths or cycle-lanes. There is an opportunity for local government departments to improve the safety of the infrastructure to allow for safe active travel methods for all which in turn could encourage children to be more physically active. The Galway County Development plan 2003 – 2009 outlines policies for safety features in the vicinity of schools and to ensure better environment for pedestrians and cyclists in towns and villages which should help to encourage active travel to school (Galway County Council, 2002).

### **5.4 Lifestyle Habits**

Time spent in front of the television or computer is a factor, which influences body weight. The prevalence of obesity and energy intake increases as hours of television watching increase (Crespo CJ et al, 2001). Researchers found that those who spend at least 3 hours per day watching television had a 40% increased risk of becoming obese and a 30% increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes (Condon, 2003). Overall, the results from this study are relatively positive in that the vast majority (66%) of the pupils involved watch up to 2 hours of television per day. However, 34% watch over 2 hours per day of television.

In the United States it has been reported that 67% of children watch television for at least two hours a day (Andersen, Crespo, Bartlett, 1998). Excessive time in front of the television has been shown to contribute towards bad eating habits, such as eating foods high in saturated fats and increased caloric consumption (Condon, 2003). This fact adds greatly to the risk of obesity for children, as does the fact that half of the pupils who responded to this study eat fast foods at least once a week.

In relation to time spent using a computer, an alarming 69% of the pupils reported to using a computer every day with three-quarters using it for up to 1 hour per day. Adding the time spent watching television with the time the pupils spend using a computer puts them under the increased risk of developing obesity and type 2 diabetes later in life.

Of the pupils, 61% reported their parents/guardians do not limit the amount of time they spent watching television or using the computer. There is potential for an intervention program aimed at educating parents/guardians to become aware of the amount of time their children spend participating in sedentary activities and become more alert to the risk of disease that may accrue as a result. Parents need to ensure a balance between the time their children spend watching television, using a computer and physical activity to reduce the risk of their children becoming affected by obesity or type 2 diabetes.

## **5.5 Participation levels in sport and physical activity**

Owen (1994) outlined those who are most likely to engage in exercise in later life as those who engage in exercise in childhood years. The results which this study provides are positive in that virtually all (99%) of the pupils report to play sport or any other physical activities at some time during the week. It went on to show that these pupils engage in sport and physical activity on average for 3.46 hours per day. However, it also states that 10% of these children are active for less than 1 hour per day. The World Health Organisation (2000) recommends one hour of moderate exercise per day for children. This suggests that there is some scope to improve physical activity levels for these children. One way of achieving this would be if parents encouraged children to exercise and to exercise with them.

Participation in a variety of physical activities early in life is essential for acquiring the willingness, necessary skills and favourable experiences to maintain a regular exercise habit throughout life, or to adopt it later in life (WHO, 1998). The results from this study show that overall; children are participating in a variety of activities on a regular basis. There was no significant difference in the sports or activities participated in between the city and county pupils. The pupils also included any other activities they do which they feel is a form of physical activity. Walking and golf, snooker and pool, martial arts such as kick boxing and Ai Keido and the most recent computerised invention, the dance mat.

The results of this study show that children are mostly involved in team or competitive sports. The adventure sports such as canoeing, sailing and hill walking are not participated in by any more than 3% of the children. Individual sports such as athletics, badminton, squash or tennis are not engaged in as frequently as the team sports. Other

hobbies such as skateboarding, roller-blading and horse riding are other popular individual activities. These findings suggest that team sports are more readily available to children of this age and require fewer resources' than some individual sports for the schools or community programmes to run. Schools and community programmes could encourage participation in such sports as badminton, tennis or gymnastics, by combining their facilities and resources to promote such participation.

Enjoyment and to keep fit and healthy were the reasons given by the majority of the pupils (83%) for participating in sport or physical activity. This result indicates that children understand the importance of physical activity to their health both physically and psychologically. In their free time, 68% of the pupils play sports or physical activity as part of a team or club. Sports such as soccer, GAA games and swimming were the most popular among the pupils. Most physical activity among children occurs after school hours and at weekends. Therefore, community sports programmes are as important as school physical education programmes in promoting regular physical activity among children. When they are not being physically active, the majority of respondents (64%) visit friends while most others watch tv/video/dvds or spend time doing their homework.

## **5.6 Physical Activity in Schools**

### **5.6.1 Physical Education**

“PE is concerned with the development of positive personal qualities, skills and the understanding and knowledge of the child” (NCAA, 2002). Of the pupils, 93% reported having PE class every week and the vast majority reported they enjoy it which demonstrates a positive interest and outlook for PE. The 7% who did not have PE said “Teacher doesn’t bother” or “I don’t know” as the reasons for not having PE. “Investment in Physical Education will result in a significant reduction in juvenile delinquency and violence, and social costs” (Brettschneider, 2001). PE brings many physiological benefits but also economical and social benefits so teachers should be providing PE class where all children are encouraged to part-take in the activities.

The current regulations at primary school levels require one hour per week of PE. Positively, the reported average amount of time the pupils receive per week is 1.1 hours. However, 13% of the pupils reported to receive up to 30 minutes for PE, 14% said 30 – 45 minutes and most pupils 44% stated they receive 45 minutes to one hour per week for PE. Of the remaining, 26% said they receive one to two hours and 3% said over two hours. It is however, the quality of Physical Education, which the children receive, that gives cause for concern.

The PE curriculum is divided into six strands, Athletics, Games, Dance, Outdoor and adventure activities, Gymnastics and Aquatics (NCAA, 2002). The pupils should be exposed to at least five of those strands within the PE class. In this study, team games dominate the PE class with dance, athletics and gymnastics being participated in by 15% or less. There is no evidence of outdoor activities being participated in. Activities such as basketball, soccer, Olympic handball, Gaelic, rugby, uni hoc, etc being reported by the pupils as the most common sports or activities participated in during PE class. All these team games require a level of skill and enforce competition among the children. There are little or no development opportunities for those who do not possess

adequate skill to perform at the same level as everyone else. Teachers or those responsible for PE provision within the schools should programme the PE class to encourage the development of the skill and ability level of the children in the class. PE class should also be used as means of allowing the children to explore their abilities and talents by providing a variety of activities.

Competition contributes to the holistic development of the child if the opportunities presented are such that the child is progressing towards achievement of his/her potential. A balanced approach to competition provides fun, enjoyment and satisfaction for the child. Of the respondents, 60% play for one of their school teams and 78% of these children felt it is more important to have fun while playing the game than to win. The results of this study show that the majority of those who preferred to win were male showing that males are more competitive than females. Overall, these results show that the schools are taking a balanced approach to competition as the majority of the children are participating because they feel it is more important to have fun before winning. Positive experiences of having fun while playing sport should entice children to participate right through to adulthood in physical activity.

The majority of the pupils (85%) reported being active during break-times. Team games dominate the break-time activities as soccer and Games for Fun are the activities most pupils play during break-time. Gaelic, basketball and hurling/camogie are also participated in by many of the children. The results also show a difference between city and county pupils and the activities they participate in during the break-times. Basketball and GAA games are participated in by a greater amount of county pupils and this finding could be a reflection of factor that was highlighted by some of the city pupils during this study in that they were prohibited from running in the schoolyard. An example of the comments given by the pupils is included below;

*“Uni-hock, badminton, tennis are what I would like for sport in school – I don’t think its fair that we can’t run in the yard. All we can do is stand and talk and if the teachers catch us running they put us out by the wall”.*

The increase in population size, especially in the city, has given rise to a number of situations; one being increases in pupil numbers in schools. This has lead to a reduced pupil space in schoolyards and therefore, increases the risk of injury among the pupils should activity levels increase. Children should be directed to more traditional activities, which are less vigorous such as hopscotch, skipping ropes, wall ball etc, to allow for some degree of physical activity during their break.

### **5.6.2 Extra Curricular Activities**

The World Health Organisation (1998) recommended that schools should provide extracurricular activity programmes that meet the needs and interests of all students. In this study, 69% of respondents were aware that there were extra curricular activities in their school. Soccer, gaelic football, hurling/camogie, basketball and olympic handball are the most offered extra curricular activities. Irish dancing and athletics were also offered in some schools. As this study shows, team sports are dominating the sports and physical activity provision in extra curricular activities. The World Health Organisation (1998) recommended schools should provide a diversity of developmentally appropriate competitive and non-competitive physical activity programmes for all students. Parents and interested teachers should be encouraged to get involved in promoting and developing extra curricular activities.

### **5.7 Additional Comments**

Although there appears to be a reasonably good amount of physical activity opportunities given to the pupils within the school, many comments made were for more time for physical education class and more variety of sports or activities. Team games such as rugby, soccer, basketball and GAA games were quoted as activities which would be preferred within the school however, there was an emerging trend for opportunities to engage in individual activities such as tennis and swimming. There did appear from the comments that the pupils felt school teams training or repeatedly playing the same games to them, was not Physical Education.

## **6. Principals Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The aim of this section of the study was to examine what facilities and opportunities were provided and made available to the pupils of the school both during and after school hours. The questionnaire was used to elicit information in relation to the sports and physical activities that are offered to pupils and in what context they are provided. Additionally it sought to determine whether its teachers were aware of and trained for the Action For Life programme.

### **6.2 Facilities**

All of the respondents possess a schoolyard, the majority (90%) have access to playing pitches and 60% have a sports hall but only half of the respondents have changing facilities. In general, facilities for the school to host physical activity programmes both during and after school hours are readily available. This is a positive result considering the results of the ICSSPE World-wide Survey of the State of School Physical Education (1999) which indicates that 48% of Western European schools have inadequate facilities and equipment for physical education.

### **6.3 Physical Activity Provision**

This study established the use of the schools involved both during and after school hours to promote physical activity. All schools involved reported providing physical activity during school hours. This result is positive as it shows that schools are operating in accordance with WHO principles. The WHO Global Initiative on Active Living calls among its priority actions for appropriate use of the school setting to enhance physical activity among school-age children and young people, boys and girls, in all parts of the world (WHO, 1998).

#### **6.3.1 Physical Activity on Curriculum**

In relation to Physical Activity on the curriculum, all respondents stated they promote physical activity as part of their curriculum. All schools provide PE class and have School sports teams. Extra curricular activities are available to pupils in 90% of the schools and 70% of the schools provide swimming lessons on curriculum. All teachers of the schools hold responsibility along with 50% of the respondents using special coaches, for provision of physical activity in primary schools. Principals are also responsible in 30% of the schools. The attitudes of each individual teacher will vary with regard to physical activity so therefore there will be a varying PE programme throughout the children primary school years. The department of Education and Science should recognise the importance of implementing a physical activity co-ordinator in each primary school to ensure adequate physical education provision.

Activities during break times are available to pupils in some schools mostly in the county. A number of the city schools prohibit any form of running or contact activities in the yard at break times and the pupils may only walk around the yard or participate in activities such as skipping, wall ball or tennis football. Increases in population size,

especially in the city, have resulted in increased numbers in primary schools, which has led to overcrowding on schoolyards which in turn increases the risk of injury.

### **6.3.2 Physical Education Class**

The practice of physical education and sport is a fundamental right for all (UNESCO, 1998). All respondents provide PE class and in most schools, each class receives it for one hour per week, which is the recommended amount of time under current Department of Education and Science regulations. This was also found in the study of pupils (section 5.6.1). The Council of Europe recommend a period of Physical Education each day for children at primary level and the nature of the experience needs to be specific to the child's level of development and behavioural stage (PEAI, 2002).

An important aim of the PE curriculum is to provide a wide variety of activities (NCAA, 2002). The respondents reported to having a variety of activities catered for but the team games dominate the PE class with 50% and over providing them. Of the six strands on curriculum, athletics is provided in 90% of the schools, games in 70%, swimming in 60%, gymnastics in 50% and dancing in 20% of the schools. Outdoor or adventure sports or activities are not provided in any schools. "In schools where there is scope for development, it is found that provision is not planned on a whole-school basis and pupils do not have access to a balanced physical education programme, with the teaching of gymnastics, athletics and outdoor pursuits receiving little attention" (Department of Education and Science, 2002). The Department of Education and Science completed a 50 school report on what the inspectors who visited the schools reported. They concluded that the imbalance in provision is attributed to lack of facilities or resources. In this study, schools reported having facilities but most are small junior sized halls with limited resources, which prohibit certain strands of the curriculum to take place. Schools and community programmes should get together to combine existing or purchase new resources and facilities. This in turn should allow for the school to implement a balanced curriculum and the community programmes will have potential participants in the school children.

### **6.3.3 School Sports Teams**

The WHO (1998) recommends that schools should provide a diversity of developmentally appropriate competitive and non-competitive physical activity programmes for all students. In this study, all schools involved provide at least one school sports team for students. Team games such as soccer, gaelic, Olympic handball and basketball dominate the school teams with individual sport teams such as athletics, swimming and dancing being provided in fewer schools. Wilcox (1996) survey outlined the finding that a distinct games/sport competition-based curriculum features in different parts of the world to the extent that the "performance discourse" dominates over the "participation discourse". Reports of such became apparent from comments made during the data collection with some schools, especially in the county, using their PE time for school team training. These sessions need to be kept separate to allow the children who are not involved in school teams a chance to participate in physical activity.

One of the aims of physical education is to enable children to develop competence that leads to confidence in their physical abilities (Hope, 2001). However, a gender imbalance in mixed schools team provision was evident with male teams dominating in gaelic football and soccer and female teams dominating basketball. Male teams in mixed county schools dominated where only hurling teams were provided and not

camogie teams. Dominating sports do not allow for each child to develop to his or her potential. Omitting children from the school team because they are not good enough or because of their gender is unfair and will give the child a negative attitude towards sports for the future.

The more frequent the teams compete against other schools could indicate the competitive levels of the schools. Competing once a week was reported by 30% of the schools with 30% stating they compete once a month. One school reported to compete two to three times a week against another school. Schools need to be encouraged to adopt an “Active school” approach where their aim will be to provide an ethos and environment conducive to healthy physical activity rather than just promoting sport and competition (NHA, 2001).

#### **6.3.4 After School Hours**

The majority of schools (80%) provide extra curricular activities for their pupils and again team sports are mostly provided. The most common extra curricular activity is hurling/camogie followed by soccer and basketball. Less than 20% of schools provide Irish dancing, gymnastics, athletics, cycling or table tennis to their pupils. WHO (1998) suggested that schools should work together with local partners to increase opportunities in physical activity both in and out of school. In this process, schools are expected to allow wider access to their facilities for all young people in their local community. Over half of the schools (60%) allow the use of their school facilities to the community, which catered for activities such as team games, (i.e. basketball, hurling/camogie, soccer, gaelic, hockey) individual activities (gymnastics, karate, Irish dancing, keep fit) and other activities such as table quiz’s, drama, art and music.

Those who do not allow the use of their school to the community included that for insurance-reasons, board of management decisions and lack of space prohibited them from doing so. Schools should develop links with local providers such as sports clubs, health and fitness clubs, youth organisations and increase the use of their sports facilities out of school hours to create more physical activity options available to school pupils and the local community.

#### **6.4 Action For Life**

Action for Life is a health promotion initiative and was designed as a resource for teachers’ on physical activity in the classroom, which has been sent to all primary schools (IHF, 2001). Less than one third of the principals were aware of this initiative, 20% replied it was implemented in their school and 10% have teachers trained for the Action For Life programme.

The Department of Education and Science need to become more aware of the importance of age-specific physical education. They also need to support the development and delivery of the Action For Life programme along with other health related physical activity initiatives (NHA, 2001).

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the study can be summarised as follows:

- Virtually all of the pupils (99%) engage in sport and physical activity for an average of 3.46 hours per day.
- Female children spend less time being physically active per day than male children (Female = 2.68 hours per day, Male = 4.39 hours per day)
- More male children than female children participate in team contact sports such as soccer, GAA sports and rugby. Female children participate more in individual or non-contact sports such as basketball, gymnastics, dancing, tennis, or rollerblading.
- Most schools provide up to one hour for PE class per week to their pupils
- Soccer, GAA games, athletics, basketball and swimming are the most common sports offered both during and after school hours to the pupils.
- All schools have at least one sport's teams and 60% of the pupils participate in a school team.
- The majority of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class primary school pupils use inactive modes to travel to and from school with the journey taking less than five minutes to travel by car.
- Children spend 2.2 hours per day on average watching television and 1.1 hours per day on average playing computer games. Only 39% of the pupils said their parents limit the amount of time they spend watching television or playing computer games.
- Over two thirds of the pupils are part of a sports club or team outside school hours.
- Enjoyment and to keep fit and healthy were the reasons given by the majority of the pupils (83%) for participating in sport or physical activity.
- The majority of schools (80%) provide extra curricular activities for their pupils and over half of the schools (60%) allow the use of their school facilities to the community.

In conclusion the study has shown that children in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class participate in sport and physical activities on a regular basis both during and after school hours. Schools are providing a sufficient amount of activities for their pupils. However, the PE curriculum appears unbalanced with activities provided being predominantly team based sports. The quality of physical education requires improvement to ensure a fair distribution of activities. The study also demonstrates there is no difference in activity participation between city and county schools but it does show that female children are less physically active than male children. This imbalance needs to be rectified.

Following this study, a number of recommendations can be made:

- Children at the stage of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class are quite physically active and efforts should be made to encourage continued participation in physical activity through adolescence.
- It is crucial that activities are promoted which appeal to both boys and girls, especially those entering adolescence.
- Parents need to be encouraged to ensure their children have a balance between time spent watching television, using computers and physical activity.
- Schools need to be encouraged to adopt an “Active school” approach where their aim will be to provide an ethos and environment conducive to healthy physical activity rather than just promoting sport and competition
- The Department of Education and Science need to support the development and delivery of the Action For Life programme along with other health related physical activity initiatives.
- Local Authorities should promote the concept of active transportation by incorporating safe walking and cycling routes into local development plans and provide safe routes to school through improved routes and road junctions and school wardens as required.
- The government should develop initiatives within National Governing Bodies of sport to make sport more relevant to a broader range of people, taking the emphasis from competition to participation.

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## Appendix 1

Dept. of Public Health,  
Western Health Board,  
Merlin Park Regional Hospital,  
Galway.

Phone: 091 - 775721  
E-mail: Joanne\_Shaughnessy@Yahoo.ie

March 2003

**RE: QUESTIONNAIRE ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Dear (Principal),

The Department of Public Health at the Western Health Board is planning research into a possible relationship between physical activity opportunities offered by primary schools both during and after school hours and the physical activity levels of their 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils. Both Dr. David Evans and I are undertaking this research and with your assistance, it is intended to examine primary schools from Galway City and County.

The Department of Education and Science (1997) outlined that 40% of children do not participate in sports organised by their schools. Owen (1994) stated, "There is a greater chance that children will continue to participate in physical activity later in life if they have been exposed to it in school."

The research will require a questionnaire to be filled out by the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in your school and also a questionnaire to be filled by you, the principal. It is also hoped that I may visit the school to distribute and collect the questionnaire in order to ensure its clarity with your pupils.

I would appreciate it if you could let me know whether or not you would like your students to be involved in this study as soon as possible. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above number. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

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Joanne Shaughnessy  
(Placement Research Officer)

## Appendix 2

Phone: 091 - 775721  
E-mail: Joanne\_Shaughnessy@Yahoo.ie  
March 2003

**RE: CONSENT FORM**

Dear Guardian,

The Department of Public Health at the Western Health Board is undertaking research into the physical activity levels of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils in the Western Health Board region. With your assistance, it is intended to examine primary schools from Galway City and County.

Your child is invited to participate in the study because your child is in the age range we are interested in studying. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to allow your child to participate in this study.

If you agree to allow your child to participate, your child will be asked to complete a 30 -answer questionnaire along with the rest of his/her class. They will be asked to include aspects of what activities and sports they play, how long for and where. The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The questionnaires are used only for the purpose of research and will be held in strict confidence. We will have no way of knowing the identity of the children as they are required only to include gender and age for the purpose of the study.

As the principal researcher, I will be happy to answer any queries or concerns you may have and I can be reached at the above number or e-mail address.

Please include your signature below to give consent for your child to participate.

Thank you in advance for your assistance

I hereby (please circle either) ***Give/Do not give*** permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_  
to complete the questionnaire on physical activity for the Western Health Board.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3

Dear Pupil,

I am trying to find out how active primary school 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils are in Galway City and County. I would be very grateful if you could help me by answering the questions attached.

**The questions ask you about physical activity. Physical activity is any activity that increases your heart rate and makes you get out of breath some of the time.**

**Physical activity can be done in lots of different ways like sports, school activities, playing with friends or walking somewhere.**

You answer the questions by putting a circle around the number, which is beside the answer you want to use.

e.g. GAA includes which of the following sports?

Gaelic Football

1

Golf

2

Soccer

3

Hurling

4

The answers you give will only be used by a survey team and no one else. There is no right or wrong answer and there is no need to put your name on it.

Please read the questions carefully and answer them as best you can.

Thank you,

Joanne Shaughnessy.

*Answer the questions by putting a circle around the number beside the answer you want to use. Here is an example of how to answer.*

**Q?** David Beckham plays soccer for Manchester United?

Yes	1
No	2

**Q1** Are you:

Boy	1
Girl	2

**Q2** What age are you? \_\_\_\_\_ Years of age

**Q3** What class are you in?

5 <sup>th</sup>	1
6 <sup>th</sup>	2

**Q4** How do you travel to school?

Walk	1
Cycle	2
Car	3
Bus	4

**Q5** How Long does it take you to travel to school? Hours \_\_\_\_ Minutes \_\_\_\_\_

**Q6** How many hours **per day** do you spend watching television?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Hours

**Q7** How many hours **per day** do you spend playing computer games?  
(e.g. Gameboy, playstation, PC, X-Box etc) \_\_\_\_\_ Hours

**Q8** Do your parents limit the amount of television you watch or amount of time you spend playing computer games?

Yes	1
No	2

**Q9** How many times a week would you eat Fast-food?  
(E.g. Mc Donalds, Supermacs, chippers, Pizza's, Chinese take-aways)

None	1
Once	2
Twice	3
3 – 4	4
More than 5	5

**Q10** Do you play sports or do any other physical activities?

Yes	1	<b>Go To Q11</b>
No	2	<b>Go To Q13</b>

**Q11** Please write how many **hours per day** you play sports or activities? (Include club, team, at school, with friends and other)

Sport or Activity You Play	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Basketball							
Soccer							
Hurling/Camogie							
Gaelic football							
Rugby							
Judo/Karate							
Squash							
Badminton							
Hockey							
Pitch & Putt							
Swimming							
Canoeing							
Tennis							
Horse-riding							
Cycling							
Athletics							
Dancing							
Rowing/Sailing							
Gymnastics							
Hill walking							
Taekwondo							
Volley ball							
Nature Walks							
Windsurfing							
Games for fun							
Olympic handball							
Skate-boarding							
Roller-blading							
Boxing							
Other(s)							

**Q12** Why do you play sport or other activities?  
(Please Circle only **ONE** answer)

I enjoy it	1
My friends do it	2
To Keep Fit and Healthy	3
To meet other people	4
I like to win	5
I want to be a professional player when I'm Older	6
I am made do it by parents	7
To relax	8
All my family play or played before	9
Other(s)	10
<b>Go To Question 14</b>	

**Q13** Why do you **not** play sport or any activities?

No teams to play with	1
I do not like sports or activities	2
There is nowhere near my home to play sport or activities	3
I don't like competition	4
There is no extra curricular activities at school	5
Costs too much money	6
I have no way of travelling to the places its on	7
I prefer other activities than sport	8
I am not good at any sports	9
Other(s)	10

**Q14** Do you have a PE class in school?

Yes	1	<b>Go To Q15</b>
No	2	<b>Go To Q17</b>

**Q15** How much time do you have for PE class per week? Hours \_\_\_\_\_ Mins \_\_\_\_\_

**Q16** Do you enjoy PE?

Yes	1
No	2
<b>Go To Q18</b>	

**Q17** Why do you **NOT** have PE class in school?  
(Please circle only **ONE** answer)

There is no time for PE	1
There is no hall or pitch for PE	2
The weather stops us going outside	3
Teacher doesn't bother	4
We go for swimming lessons instead	5
There is other subjects on instead	6
The Principal doesn't include it	7
Don't Know	8
<b>Other(s)</b>	9

**Q18** Which of these sports or activities do you play **DURING** PE?  
(Circle more than one)

	<b>PE</b>		<b>PE</b>
Basketball	1	Uni hoc	13
Soccer	2	Squash	14
Hurling/Camogie	3	Volley ball	15
Gaelic football	4	Badminton	16
Rugby	5	Dancing	17
Hockey	6	Windsurfing	18
Pitch & Putt	7	Rowing/sailing	19
Gymnastics	8	Canoeing	20
Athletics	9	Nature Walks	21
Olympic handball	10	Other(s) please include	22
Tennis	11		
Games for fun (Catch, Tig)	12		

**Q19** Do you play sports or any other Activities **DURING** Break-times?

Yes	1
No	2

**Q20** Which of these sports or activities do you play **DURING** Break Times? (Circle more than one)

	<b>Break-time's</b>		<b>Break-time's</b>
Basketball	1	Uni-hoc	12
Soccer	2	Nature walks	13
Hurling/Camogie	3	Squash	14
Gaelic football	4	Games for fun (Catch, Tig)	15
Rugby	5	Dancing	16
Hockey	6	Badminton	17
Pitch & Putt	7	Volley ball	18
Gymnastics	8	Tennis	19
Athletics	9	Other(s) please include	20
Olympic handball	10		
Rounders	11		

**Q21** Are there any sports teams in your school?

Yes	1
No	2

**Q22** Do you play for any of them?

Yes	1	<b>Go To Q23</b>
No	2	<b>Go To Q24</b>

**Q23** Who coaches the team?

	Yes	No
Principal	1	2
Parents	1	2
PE Teacher	1	2
Teacher	1	2
Special Coach	1	2
Other	1	2

**Q24** What's more important to you?

Winning a game against another team	1
Having fun while playing the game	2

Q25 Are there sports or activities in your school **AFTER** school hours?

Yes	1	Go To Q26
No	2	<b>Go To Q28</b>
Don't Know	3	<b>Go To Q28</b>

Q26 What sports or any activities are they? (Please Write them)

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Q27 How did you hear about the sports or activities **AFTER** school? (Circle only **ONE**)

Friends	1
Aunts/ Uncles	2
Brother/Sisters	3
Teachers	4
Mother or Father	5
Principal	6
Person who takes care of me	7

Q28 Are you part of any club or team when you are **not** in school?

Yes	1	<b>Go toQ29</b>
No	2	<b>Go to Q30</b>

Q29 What sports or any activities do you do with the club or team? (Please Write them)

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**Q30** What do you normally do if you are **not** playing sport or being active? (Please circle only **ONE** answer)

Play a musical instrument or music lessons	1
Visit Friends	2
Listen to music (Cd's, Tapes)	3
Watch TV/DVD's/ Videos	4
Play computer games	5
Do my homework	6
Read books or magazines	7
Other Lessons (Grinds, Art)	8
Other(s) {Please Include}: _____ _____	9

**Q31** What would you like to have for Sport and Physical Activity in school?

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.**

## Appendix 4

**Please Answer the questions by Circling the number beside the answer you wish to use.**

**e.g. Dublin is the Capital of  
Ireland**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>2</b>

Q1 Please state whether your School is located in Galway city or county

City	1
County	2

Q2 Does your school have a sports hall?

Yes	1
No	2

Q3 Does your school have access to outdoor playing pitches?

Yes	1
No	2

Q4 Does your school provide changing facilities?

Yes	1
No	2

Q5 Have you got a schoolyard on your School grounds?

Yes	1
No	2

Q6 Do you include physical activity as part of your curriculum?

Yes	1	<b>Go to Q7</b>
No	2	<b>Go to Q15</b>

Q7 Which of the following do you use to promote physical activity in your school?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
PE Class	1	2
Extra curricular activities	1	2
Other Physical activity lessons	1	2
School teams	1	2
None of the above	1	2
Other: (Please State)	1	2

Q8 Who is responsible for Physical Activity Provision in your school?  
(Circle more than one if necessary)

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Special Coach	1	2
All Teachers	1	2
Principal	1	2
PE teacher	1	2
Parents	1	2
No one is responsible	1	2
Other (Please State)	1	2

Q9 How many hours of Physical Education does each PE class receive per week on Curriculum? \_\_\_\_\_ Hours

Q10 Which of these activities do you provide for the pupils?  
Please circle whether the activities are offered in PE class or as activities at break times or both.

	PE	Breaks		PE	Breaks
Basketball	1	2	Orienteering	1	2
Soccer	1	2	Squash	1	2
Hurling/Camogie	1	2	Badminton	1	2
Cycling	1	2	Volley ball	1	2
Gaelic football	1	2	Dancing	1	2
Rugby	1	2	Windsurfing	1	2
Hockey	1	2	Swimming	1	2
Pitch & Putt	1	2	Rowing	1	2
Gymnastics	1	2	Canoeing	1	2
Athletics	1	2	Nature Walks	1	2
Unihoc	1	2	Others: <b>Please State</b>	1	2
Tennis	1	2			
Games for fun (tig, rounders)	1	2			
Olympic Handball	1	2			

Q11 Does your school arrange swimming lessons for the pupils?

Yes	1
No	2

Q12 Do you have any school teams for any sport?

Yes	1	<b>Go To Q13</b>
No	2	<b>Go To Q16</b>

Q13 Which of the following sports or activities does your school have teams for?

	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls
Basketball	1	2	Olympic Handball	1	2
Soccer	1	2	Squash	1	2
Hurling/Camogie	1	2	Badminton	1	2
Hockey	1	2	Volley ball	1	2
Gaelic football	1	2	Dancing	1	2
Rugby	1	2	Rowing	1	2
Gymnastics	1	2	Others: <b>Please State</b>	1	2
Athletics	1	2			
Tennis	1	2			
Swimming	1	2			

Q14 How often do your school teams Generally compete?

Every Day	1
2-3 times a week	2
Once a Week	3
Once a month	4
Once every 3 months	5
Once in 6 months	6
Once a year	7
Never	8
Don't know	9
<b>Go To Q17</b>	

Q15 Why do you **NOT** include Physical Activity as part of your curriculum?  
(Tick more than one if Necessary)

	Yes	No
No Facilities to provide Physical activity	1	2
Feel other subjects are more important	1	2
No teacher is qualified to do so	1	2
No funding for equipment	1	2
Lack of parental enthusiasm to promote it	1	2
I don't feel its necessary	1	2
The children get enough Physical activity outside school hours	1	2
No time in the day for Physical activity	1	2
Other	1	2

Q16 Does your school run any extra-curricular Physical Activity programmes for the school children **AFTER** school hours?

Yes	1	<b>Go To Q17</b>
No	2	<b>Go To Q18</b>

Q17 Please state the extra curricular activities that you provide **AFTER** school hours?

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Q18	Is your school open to community groups for activities after school hours?	Yes	1	<b>Go To Q19</b>
		No	2	<b>Go To Q20</b>

Q19 Please Specify what activities your school is used for after school hours?

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**Go To Q21**

Q20	Why do you <b>NOT</b> open your school to the Community after school hours?	Insurance reasons	1
		No facilities to offer	2
		Board of management decision	3
		Lack of Local Interest	4
		No Space	5
		Other	6

Q21	Are you aware of the “ <i>Action For Life</i> ” programme?	Yes	1	<b>Go To Q22</b>
		No	2	<b>Go To Q24</b>

Q22	Have any of your teachers received the training for the “ <i>Action for life</i> ” programme?	Yes	1
		No	2

Q23	Was the “ <i>Action for life</i> ” programme ever implemented in your school?	Yes	1
		No	2

Q24 Any other comments.

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**Thank you very much for your assistance.**