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#BEACTIVE
EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT



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European School Sport Day
General Toolkit 2026
Helping you bring European School
Sport Day into your community

Use this toolkit to
get your school on the MOVE!

#ESSD2026

EUROPEAN SCHOOL SPORT DAY®: GETTING SCHOOLS ON THE MOVE!

What if every child could #BeActive in school with sport and play?
What if every school took one day to celebrate sport in Europe? Could it help students to kick-off a lifetime of health and fitness?

We say YES. And we're doing it with European School Sport Day, known as 'the Day' or ESSD.

The European School Sport Day is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

The European School Sport Day is also supported by the European Commission, and is part of the European Week of Sport's #BeActive campaign.

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A group of children are participating in a rope pull activity. They are wearing white t-shirts with the European School Sport Day logo and the hashtag #BeActive. The children are pulling on a thick rope with effort. The background shows a grassy area and a cloudy sky.

1

USING THE TOOLKIT

Together, let's get schools on the move and inspire a lifetime of health among European youth.

Participation requires getting your school to #BeActive for at least 120 minutes by running, playing games, dancing, rope skipping or any other kind of physical activity.

This toolkit provides teachers, administrators, and students with all the information and resources needed to organise a European School Sport Day. Use it to **#BeActive** and move together with over **3.7 million pupils** at more than **15,600 schools in over 40 countries** — and counting.

This toolkit enables you to plan and lead a successful European School Sport Day in your community. It includes ideas and lessons learnt from other schools throughout Europe and the world for inspiration.

The Day is an opportunity not just to encourage students to #BeActive, but to empower students as leaders and advocates for health and fitness. Organising the Day is also an opportunity to engage your community from business leaders and civic organisations to public officials and administrators.

WHAT ABOUT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN YOUR COUNTRY?

Find out using the [2022 Eurobarometer](#), the [2021/2022 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children \(HBSC\) report](#), or the [The Global Matrix 4.0 on Physical Activity for Children and Adolescents](#).

Use this data to generate support for the Day in your community.

2

INACTIVITY CRISIS

Sedentary behaviour' has a cost!

Engagement in sport and physical activity is at an all-time low. In many Member States, this trend is getting worse among students and adults alike.

It is not just people's health and well-being that suffer as a result; it is also our society and economy overall.

Source: *Inactivity Time Bomb*, ISCA



1 in 4 adults & **4 in 5** adolescents across Europe are **not active enough**

Did you know...?

- In Europe, the proportion of people who never exercise or play sport is at an alarming high at 45%. This figure has increased steadily since 2009 (Eurobarometer, 2022).
- Today's children may be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents because of the lack of physical activity ([DesignedToMove.org](https://www.dtmovement.org/)).
- Lack of exercise contributes to diseases that cost Europe over 80 billion euros annually (ISCA/CEBR, 2015 <https://inactivity-time-bomb.nowwemove.com/>).
- The most popular setting to #BeActive is in a park or somewhere outdoors, where nearly half of Europeans (47%) exercise or play sport. This figure has increased since 2017 (Eurobarometer, 2022).
- An alarming rate of boys and girls aged 11-17 spend less than one hour a day doing moderate-vigorous physical [activity](#) (77.6% and 85% respectively) (WHO '[Global status report on physical activity](#)', 2022).

Inspiring your school community to #BeActive can help to reverse these alarming trends. And everyone can do it, regardless of age, background, or fitness level. Jump, dance, swim, run... just move!

WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHY AND HOW?

Do you know the **who, what, when, where, why** and **how** about the Day? Discover the answers below, and use the messages in your communication.

Who organises it?

With the support of their school administration, anyone can propose and organise the Day. This includes students, teachers, parents, civic leaders, and other stakeholders.

Days with the best outcomes include the whole school and are community driven with a broad cross-section of volunteer support.

What is it?

A school sport day held simultaneously across the continent on the last Friday of September every year. We invite schools to #BeActive for at least 120 minutes by running, playing games, dancing, rope skipping or any other kind of physical activity.

The European Week of Sport, along with the European School Sport Day (ESSD), is part of the European Commission's response to the alarming decline in sport and physical activity across all Member States, highlighting sport as an essential part of European identity and promoting more active, healthier lifestyles to millions of people in Europe and beyond each year.

DO ADAPT

While harmonising messages as part of a coherent European movement is vital, you can adapt your European School Sport Day event and its messages to your local context.

When is it held?

25 September 2026. Always on the last Friday of September, following the tradition of the official Hungarian School Sport Day, which inspired the pan-European event. The date can be changed due to national arrangements, as long as it falls within the EWoS eligibility period (1-30 September) or no later than 15 October.

Where?

Wherever possible. Indoors or outside, on a meadow or in water. The focus is on getting children on the MOVE

Why organise the Day?

Plenty of research shows that being physically active makes students healthier and better learners in the classroom. School spirit improves too with fun and inclusive team sport. Here are the top five reasons to organise a Day in your school:

1. Raise the profile of physical education (PE) and sport in schools.
2. Create fun and enjoyment through physical activity for young people.
3. Promote health and wellbeing for lifelong learning.
4. Encourage social inclusion and develop social competence among students.
5. Connect with other European countries.

How to organise it?

Organising the Day is voluntary and requires support from schools and local communities. Participating schools will become part of the #BeActive movement, sponsored by the European Commission. For more information on the “how”, go to the next page.

WHAT MAKES YOUR EUROPEAN SCHOOL SPORT DAY OFFICIAL?



Register your school
at www.essd.eu



#BeActive for 120
minutes or more



Complete a school report
at www.essd.eu

Organising an ESSD event is simple – just follow these steps:

BEFORE ESSD

- Register event on the ESSD website (essd.eu)
- Plan activities and schedule (120 minutes or more)
- Inform school leadership, colleagues, students and parents
- Prepare (space, equipment, safety arrangements)

DURING ESSD

- Implement planned activities
- Ensure inclusion & safety for all
- Take photos/videos to document the event
- Celebrate the movement and enjoy the day 😊

AFTER ESSD

- Submit short report, with min. 2-3 photos/ videos
- Receive certificate
- Share your results within your community, and on social media (#ESSD2026)
- Save the date for next year's ESSD



4

ACTIVITIES



CHOOSE ACTIVITIES THAT ARE A GREAT FIT FOR YOUR SCHOOL

How should you organise the Day in your school? What activities work best in primary and secondary schools? How can you engage and excite students? What about civic groups, business leaders and other stakeholders? Get inspired by tips, insights and examples that can help you lead a successful Day in your community.

Be supportive

Plan activities that can develop the character and social skills of students. Many sports and games can build confidence, inspire a positive attitude and other qualities that underpin creativity, resilience and empathy.

Be appropriate

Make sure that the activities you plan are appropriate for the age, interests and ability of the students. Having fun along the way is just as important.

Be inclusive

Identify the students who are disadvantaged, under-represented or require special attention (e.g. especially unfit or lacking confidence. Create the conditions for students with special educational needs to participate). Design activities that encourage their participation and improve their integration into the community. Check out the videos [here](#) and [here](#).

4.1 ACTIVITIES FOR ALL

- Launch the Day with an **opening ceremony** where everyone gets the opportunity to #BeActive.
‘Run along the year’ (e.g. run 2026 meters in 2026).
- Encourage **active travel** to school by walking, cycling, scooting, skating, skateboarding and more.
- **Introduce a new sport** to your school that is unusual or foreign (e.g. ultimate frisbee or flag-football).
- **Host workshops** with staff and students on the benefits of being active in school and brainstorm about new, creative ways to get your school ‘on the move’.
- **Create a theme for the Day** and get inspired by the current and past focus topic toolkits: [Education through Movement](#), [Joy in Sport and Physical Activity](#), [Going Green in Sport](#), [Healthy Lifestyle](#), [MOVEment Spaces](#), [Mental Health](#), [Healthy Nutrition](#), [Power of Cooperation](#).
- **Invite parents** (even the hardest to reach) to the Day with activities to engage them (e.g. coaching or supervisory roles).
- Encourage **local sports clubs and fitness centres** to support the Day.

TIP!

Connect with school leadership programmes to recruit student volunteers

Student organisers

How can students get involved in organising the Day? Lots of ways! While respecting age-appropriateness, students can:

- ✓ Suggest challenges, games and activities for their class or household
- ✓ Create a promotional poster for the Day
- ✓ Advise on ways to be more active at school

4.2 INVOLVING STUDENTS IN THE ORGANISATION OF ESSD

The organisation and implementation of school sports programmes should not only be the responsibility of teachers. Students can also learn a lot from organising a sport event. As well as contributing to the development of a range of skills, peer-led and peer-organised programmes can also have a motivating effect on participation.

Why is it beneficial to involve students in the organisation?

In the planning, organisation, delivery and evaluation of sport programmes, students develop a range of competences. It also gives students the opportunity to creatively apply the knowledge and competences they have acquired during their studies in real-life situations. The following key competences are expected to develop:

- **Learning competences:** Students can discover their own strengths through the organisation of colourful and varied sport programmes. They can draw on the knowledge and experience gained during their studies to solve problems in different situations. They can also put their theoretical knowledge into practice.
- **Communication competences:** Students use and get to know different channels of information exchange (visual, auditory, digital) and practice how to communicate effectively through them in different communication situations (teacher-student, student-student, etc.). They can practise reasoning and persuading others in real-life situations and make conscious use of the tools and possibilities offered by digital technology.

- **Digital competences:** Gathering the opinions of peers digitally, creating information leaflets and posters to advertise programmes, publicising events on social media, recording programmes on photo or video, possibly making a summary video, etc. all contribute to the responsible and ethical use of digital technologies by learners.
- **Mathematical and thinking competences:** Planning the possible costs related to the event, preparing a time schedule for the planning of the programme, collecting and organising data, critical reflection and decision-making, the need for logical thinking all contribute to the development of this competence.
- **Personal and interpersonal competences:** The planning and organisation of the sport programme is a team effort, which inevitably supports the development of skills such as:
 - following and respecting rules
 - taking responsibility
 - recognizing one's own role in a group, carrying out activities in a team, dealing effectively with unexpected situations

Competences of creativity, creative work, self-expression and cultural awareness: The very act of devising varied programmes supports innovation and creativity.

Employability, innovation and entrepreneurship competences: The programme organisation and design supports the sub-competences related to the named competence, such as:

- openness to entrepreneurship
- the development of initiative and a positive attitude towards new ideas,
- the development of employability skills,
- responsibility.

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN WE INVOLVE STUDENTS IN?

We can involve students in the organisation of ESSD at different levels.

- **Preparation (planning and organisation)**

Let the students plan the activities for the ESSD day! They can do this by conducting a survey (even online) of their peers to find out what activities they would like to participate in. Have the students prepare a precise scenario and a to-do list of activities, and nominate one of them as the student responsible for carrying out the task. On the day of the event, help with unpacking materials and equipment, setting up the room and other preparations.

- **Conduct of the event**

Based on the scenario of the event, students help to implement the programmes. They can accompany each class to the programme stations, take part in explaining each task, but also actively participate in documenting the event (e.g. taking photos).

- **Evaluation of the programme, follow-up**

Joint evaluation of the programme can help to ensure the quality of future school programmes. Once the programme has been completed, students can report back in the form of either a newspaper article or a video presentation. This could encourage their peers to participate in similar events in the future.

TIP!

Let's trust the children and believe that they can take responsibility for planning, organising and running the event!

4.3 PRE-SCHOOLS AND PRIMARY SCHOOLS



Fuelling school spirit

Community members, including parents, can play similar roles to volunteers. Their presence will help to fuel school spirit and strengthen community ties to the school.

Get inspired!

- Invite students to **bring a ball to school** and integrate it into the curriculum throughout the day.
- Integrate **‘wake and shake’** activities before each lesson where students can #BeActive with movement of all kinds.
- In between lessons, encourage students to **walk or run outside with their teachers**.
- **Host a festival** with games of all types (school Olympics) from foot races to football for all skill levels. More ideas at the [Joy in Sport and Physical Activity Toolkit](#).
- Use **team sports** to better integrate disadvantaged or under-represented students into the school community (**‘let’s play together’**).
- **Challenge families** of students to #BeActive with school-wide targets like completing 10 outdoor activities per week.
- **Design a trail** with fun outdoor activities like a treasure hunt, math challenge or exercise based on books students are reading (e.g. Superworm). More examples in the [MOVEment Spaces Toolkit](#).

Superworm in the UK

Superworm is a popular children’s book about how a superhero worm and his creature friends defeat the villainous Wizard Lizard. Based on the book, parks in the UK created trails to take students on an active journey with the super-creatures they know and love. Children run in treasure hunts, hunt for clues, and more with the support of adults. Consider building a similar trail at your school linked to a popular book or math lesson.

“Watch Superworm wiggle! See him squirm! Hip, hip, hooray for Superworm!”

Donaldson, J. (2012). Superworm. London: Alison Green Books.

4.4 SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Motivation matters

In secondary schools, students' motivation to support the Day and #BeActive will vary. Some may be avid athletes, while others may want to lose weight and get healthier. Some may gravitate to leadership roles, while others may be fulfilling a class or club requirement.

Youth organisers

Secondary school students are old enough to take on real leadership roles and responsibilities. Students can:

- ✓ Encourage peers to get involved (e.g. on social media)
- ✓ Coach teams plan or lead an event
- ✓ Target established student leaders to serve as volunteers (e.g. from the student council or popular clubs).

- Launch the Day with a **school-wide activity** in the morning like a run or dance. Close the Day with a school-wide yoga class.
- **Challenge students** to #BeActive for at least 20 minutes before school begins or try a new activity during breaks from class (dodgeball or bubble football). Families can take part in this challenge too.
- Organise **staff vs. student games** with popular spectator sports like basketball or volleyball.
- Gather used **sport equipment** from your community and have students create and play games based on the random equipment received.
- Lead **girls' only activities** that are 'by girls and for girls' with a mix of traditional sports like volleyball and other activities like dancing.
- Adapt **curricula to #BeActive themes** (e.g. biology lessons on exercise or algebra lessons related to sport). Check out the [Healthy and Physically Active Schools Project](#) outcomes for further inspiration.

4.5 ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

TIP!

As organisers, look for ways to appeal to diverse interests and motivations with an inclusive approach. This is key to recruiting and retaining committed volunteers.

How can you engage parents, civic groups, business leaders and other community stakeholders?

- Ask for donations in kind (venues, equipment, etc.) or to finance activities.
- Encourage volunteering before, during and after the Day.
- Ask to promote the Day locally and on social media.

Power of Cooperation

Explore the [ESSD 2025 'Power of Cooperation'](#) toolkit, which provides ready-to-use tools and guidance on how to identify partners, analyse needs, plan and organise activities, and evaluate cooperation and future opportunities with sports clubs and other stakeholders. Reflect on your school's needs and challenges and discover new perspectives to help you find the right partners for your ideas.

5

COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY



- ESSD is not just a one-day event — it is a year-round movement and communication campaign promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles across Europe.
- Each year, the ESSD Communication Handbook is updated to support the organisers with guidance and ready-to-use materials to promote the Day and inspire more schools to participate.
- The handbook includes tools, templates and examples for communication with the public, media and other key audiences at local, national and European levels.
- When sharing your ESSD activities on social media, we encourage you to use the official hashtags #ESSD2026 and #BeActive to connect with the European campaign, to connect with thousands of schools and increase visibility.
- For detailed communication guidance and downloadable materials, please check the ESSD Communication Handbook and the ESSD website (www.essd.eu).

ACTIVE MOBILITY TOOLKIT

- **ESSD is not just a one-day event — it is a year-round movement** promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles across Europe.
- Each year, an **important topic will be highlighted**, and schools are encouraged to include this topic to their ESSD event and to other programs during the school year.
- **Focus Topic Toolkit** created to support the organisers with guidance and inspiring ideas on how to implement the topic in their schools and beyond.
- This year the Active Mobility is in focus.
- The **Active Mobility Toolkit** helps schools encourage children to be more physically active in their everyday lives by promoting walking, cycling, and other sustainable ways of travelling to school. It supports teachers, ESSD national coordinators, and other professionals in creating a school environment that makes active transport safe, attractive, and achievable for students and families. The toolkit also provides practical guidance for organising engaging activities and multi-day events, helping schools experience the health, social, and environmental benefits of active mobility firsthand.
- For fresh inspiration and downloadable materials, please check the Active Mobility Toolkit and the ESSD website (www.essd.eu).

7

EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT AND THE EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK

EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK (EMW)

- always takes place from 16-22 September
- is the European Commission's flagship campaign promoting sustainable urban mobility and encouraging people to choose active travel, public transport, and other clean solutions.
- EMW communication guidebook and branding guide available [here](#).

More information: <https://mobilityweek.eu/>

EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT (EWOS)

- always takes place from 23-30 September
- is the European Commission's flagship campaign promoting the physical, mental and social benefits of sport and physical activity.
- Using the #BeActive hashtag is recommended on all communication channels and materials. #BeActive Communication guidebook and branding guide available [here](#).

European School Sport Day is a flagship event for EWoS, as it promotes the same values of health-enhancing physical activity and a healthy lifestyle. In 2026, due to its focus on active mobility, it will also be strongly connected to European Mobility Week.

Look for cooperation opportunities with the [national EWoS](#) and [EWM coordinators](#) and inform them about ESSD events.

EUROPEAN
MOBILITY
WEEK



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8

HOW TO ORGANISE A EUROPEAN SCHOOL SPORT DAY #WITHOUTWASTE

The Sport #WithoutWaste initiative by BG Be Active aims to promote eco-friendly grassroots sports events and foster environmental responsibility. Through bottom-up education, awareness and policy-making activities, Sport #WithoutWaste helps to integrate environmental dimension into the design of your event and get your target group engaged on the topic of environment.

To organise a waste-free European School Sport Day, the initiative suggests several steps:

1. Define your sustainability priorities based on your context.
2. Collaborate with partners such as municipalities, recycling haulers, or community organisations.
3. Set realistic goals, whether it's an educational event or integrating an environmental dimension into your events.
4. Plan resources such as budget, equipment, and guidelines to support your network.
5. Communicate your green events through various channels and share success stories (use the #WithoutWaste hashtag).
6. Evaluate your goals and collect data on challenges and successes.

BG Be Active offers support in planning eco-friendly events, including consulting, contacts, and inspiration.

Email: beactive@bgbeactive.org
Website: sportwithoutwaste.org

Check our [European Schools Sport Day 2022 – Going Green in Sport Toolkit](#) to get more inspiration for organising an active, educational event focusing on the environment. To integrate an environmental dimension in the design of your event/network's events, you can look into specific tips in [Sport #WithoutWaste – Action Pack](#).

SPORT #WithoutWaste

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For all other enquiries,
contact **info@essd.eu**