

Fit4life

Obesity rates among children are rapidly increasing. This has serious health implications for children and their well-being not only now but into adulthood. Fit4life specifically targets the issue of obesity and physical activity engagement in order to contribute to making changes to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

The National Child Measurement Programme 2008/2009 found that in England 18.3% of children in year 6 (aged 10-11) were obese (and an additional 14.3% overweight).

The NOO e-atlas child obesity maps show that, for the same period, 20.77% of children in Rushmoor aged 10-11 years were obese. This figure is worse than the above national statistics, and also compares poorly, to 16.02% in the South East region.

Fit4life primarily targets the issue of obesity and physical activity participation. Previously Fit4life has successfully run in Wavell, Connaught and Samuel Cody. Fit4life is now operating in local primary schools targeting 8 to 11 year olds aiming to demonstrate a similar success.

Aim: to engage disadvantaged overweight and obese 8 to 11 year olds to make positive lifestyle changes and encouraging them to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

This scheme is not only targeted at overweight pupils. Pupils who are underweight or just needing to take part in an extra hour of physical activity can also be referred onto the scheme.

Primary Targets:-

- Maintenance/reduction in BMI
- Reduction in weight from baseline
- Increase in number of participants that are physically active by an hour or more a week

Secondary outcomes will include:

- Improved short and long-term health
- Increased physical fitness
- Improved weight control
- Increased awareness of healthy lifestyle issues for participants and their families
- Increased self-esteem and self-confidence
- Reduction in anti-social behaviour
- Reduction in destructive behaviour
- Improved school results

The project focuses on increasing exercise levels, improving diet and increasing self-esteem. The aim of the sessions are to be fun and to engage the children into making a healthier change to their lifestyles using various approaches.

The project will work with those children whom it is felt will benefit most from the project in terms of the potential health improvement that they are likely to gain from making healthy lifestyle changes and reducing health related measurements such as their BMI.

Fit4life sessions run every week using a combination of methods. One to one sessions aim to give children the opportunity to learn various ways of increasing their physical activity participation and choosing healthier food options. Before school group sessions occur fortnightly during this session children interact with all other 'Fit4lifers' completing various games and challenges. After school sessions are run in conjunction with the School Sport Partnership (SSP) on a new programme called Active lifestyles. The aim of Active Lifestyles is to increase the time children spend on physical activity by an hour or so. These sessions are fun and active comprising of an array of team games and activities based around a bag of sports equipment.