

Frequently Asked Questions for Active School Flag – Post Primary

What is the Active School Flag?

The Active School Flag (ASF), launched in May 2009, is a non-competitive initiative which aims to improve physical activity provision in schools.

What are the aims of the Active School Flag initiative?

The Active School Flag initiative aims to:

- Raise awareness of the value and importance of Physical Education and to recognise best practise in this area
- Acknowledge the central contribution of the physical education programme as the driving force of co-curricular physical activities
- Generate the support of management, teachers, parents, national governing bodies and the wider community towards improving the provision of physical activity in schools
- Acknowledge the creativity, initiative and commitment of schools in working towards the goal of a physically educated school community

Is every school eligible to apply for Active School Flag accreditation?

In accordance with the Department of Education and Science Rules and Programmes for Secondary Schools (2004-2005), all second level schools must provide Physical Education as part of the curriculum. The recommended provision across all year groups is two hours per week.

Post-primary schools wishing to apply for ASF accreditation must:

- Provide a minimum of a double period of Physical Education per week for all class groups and all students.

What do schools have to do in order to be awarded with an Active School Flag?

In order to be awarded an Active School Flag schools must:

- Commit to a process of self-evaluation in terms of the Physical Education and physical activity opportunities that they offer to their students.
- Plan and implement a series of actions that will result in improved physical activity provision in their school.
- Complete and submit their review and action plan documentation to the ASF screening committee.

What are the areas that schools will be asked to review?

Schools will be asked to review 17 specific areas as outlined on the review document. They are organised under the following headings:

- Curriculum planning
- Co-curricular activities
- Additional promotion of physical activity
- Links with the community
- Qualifications, training and resources

Schools should refer to the prompt document prior to engaging in their own review process.

What sort of actions need to take place in order for a school to be awarded the Active School Flag?

Physical activity provision in the school should be noticeably improved as a result of participation in the Active School Flag initiative. Therefore, the actions that schools undertake should be both practical and observable. Concrete evidence of these

actions has to be provided to the accreditor on the day of their visit. Schools should refer to the sample action plan on this site for guidance.

Does the action plan have to be complete before accreditation can be awarded?

No. Some of the tasks of the action plan may be on-going in nature.

Is there a necessity to provide support materials such as photographs and DVD's to accompany the action plan submission?

No. The ASF review and action plan submission documentation should be accompanied by paperwork only. The paperwork requirements are specified in the checklist found in the Application Process section.

All other forms of support material should be shown to the ASF accreditor on the accreditation visit.

Is there an adjudication process?

There is no adjudication process as this is not a competitive event. There is an accreditation process instead. When schools submit their review and action plan documentation it will be forwarded to the ASF steering committee. They will screen each school's submission and **once it is has met the required standards** an accreditor will be assigned to the school and an accreditation date will be set.

Will some schools be refused the Active School Flag?

The ASF screening committee has to be satisfied that the applicant school has met the required standards prior to assigning an accreditor. Every possible help will be given to schools in order to successfully complete the process and achieve ASF accreditation.

What happens on the accreditation day?

When the accreditor visits the school he/she will meet with the school principal and ASF co-ordinator. Schools will be required to present the accreditor with the evidence that shows that the action plan has been put in place. Evidence can be presented in many different forms:

- Written e.g. policy documents
- Visual e.g. posters, photographs, power point presentations
- Audio-visual e.g. DVD recordings
- Interviews e.g. ASF committee members
- Performances
- Tour of facilities

Is the accreditation visit anything like a subject inspection?

No. The accreditation visit is for the purposes of reviewing the evidence that proves that the action plan has been put in place.

How long will the accreditation visit last?

The accreditation visit will last for 2-3 hours. The schedule for the visit will be agreed between the accreditor and the ASF co-ordinator prior to the visit.

Will schools be told whether or not they have been awarded the Active School Flag on the accreditation day?

No. The accreditor must report back to the steering committee first and a report will be compiled.

How many flags will be awarded?

The number of flags awarded will be limited to 150 per year. The names and locations of schools that have been awarded the flag will be illustrated on this web site.

How long does an Active School Flag last?

Once the school has been awarded a flag it remains valid for a period of 3 years. After that the school must reapply and go through the application process once again.

Will there be any distinction between the types of flags awarded?

No.

Is there a closing date for applications?

No. There is no closing date for applications. Schools create an action plan to suit their own unique context and timeframe.

What happens when a school has been awarded an Active School Flag?

Once a school has been accredited:

- An Active School flag will be sent out to the school. The flag will remain valid for a period of three years.
- A celebration pack will also be sent out to the school with advice on how to set up a celebration day
- The school will be added to the ASF locations map on line

Are there any guidelines available to help schools through the application process?

The following items can be found on this web site:

- Details on the application process
- A post-primary prompt document
- Sample action plan priorities and accompanying tasks for post primary schools
- A sample Active School Week timetable

Schools are strongly urged to refer to these documents prior to commencing work in their own schools.

What will schools gain by partaking in the Active School Flag initiative?

Partaking schools will ensure that by action planning in this manner the provision of PE, physical activity and sport in their school will be improved.

The initiative raises awareness of the importance of PE and physical activity within the school and wider community.

It also celebrates and rewards imagination and initiative as no two school contexts will be the same. The action plans of each school will reflect their own priorities at any given point.

It will also contribute a 'positive whole school climate and atmosphere' as outlined in the SPHE curriculum.