

Healthy Active Learning

National Evaluation Summary July 2022–March 2023

Healthy Active Learning is a joint government initiative between Sport NZ, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and Health New Zealand – Te Whatu Ora. It supports schools and kura to improve the wellbeing of tamariki and rangatahi through healthy eating and drinking, and quality physical activity (PA).

Three components of Healthy Active Learning



Ministry of Health | Health NZ – Te Whatu Ora

A health promotion workforce to support schools, kura and early learning services to create healthy food and drink environments. This includes the development and implementation of healthy food and drink policies.



Sport NZ

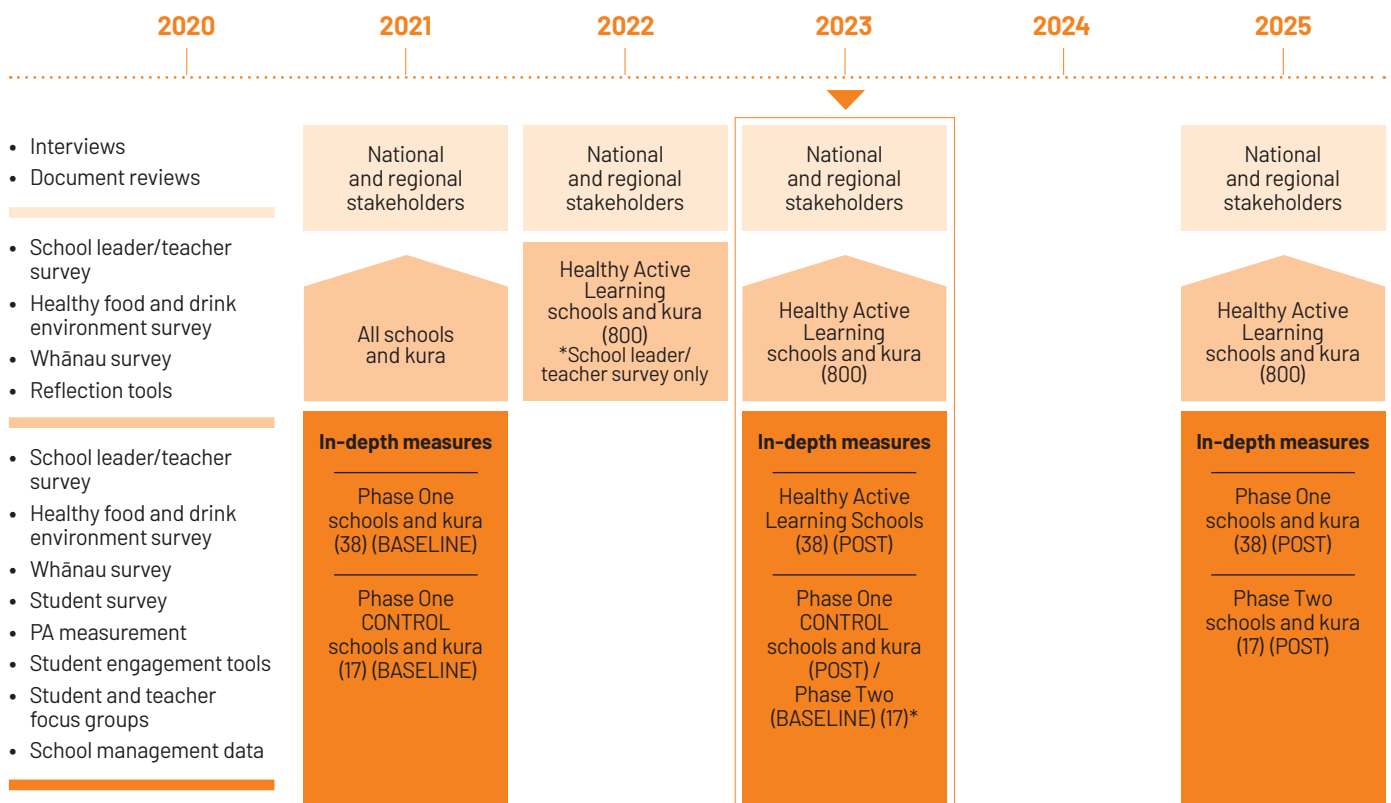
A physical activity workforce to support primary and intermediate schools and kura to create healthy and active learning environments, and better connection to their local communities.



Ministry of Education

New Health and Physical Education and Hauora Curriculum resources to support schools and kura to enhance the planning and delivery of Health and Physical Education and physical activity.

What is being evaluated from 2020–2025?



*Phase One control schools become the Phase Two intervention schools

Method/samples

The Healthy Active Learning evaluation findings summarises and compares data collected at baseline (DC1 - August 2020–March 2021) and at mid-point of the evaluation (DC2 - August 2022–March 2023). Findings are based on data collected from:

- a sample of schools and kura in Aotearoa New Zealand (which includes all Phase One* and Phase Two** Healthy Active Learning schools and those involved in in-depth measurement)
- interviews with national and regional stakeholders and surveys with school and kura leaders and teachers.

* 300 schools and kura started in 2020.

** 500 additional schools and kura started in 2022.

Data collection one (DC1) Data collection two (DC2)

Student

3359
3307

Engagement with learning surveys

4008
4035

PA surveys

3501
3478

PA and motivation surveys

1245
729

Accelerometry (physical activity measurement)

97
82

focus groups

School/Community

1079
2428

Whānau surveys

564
1164

Teacher surveys

53
45

Teacher focus groups

168
155

Sociogram (number of classrooms)

144
86

Food policies and practice surveys

46
98

Food availability surveys

National/Regional

46
45

Key informant interviews



Key process and implementation findings

Healthy Active Learning continues to be well managed and implemented, and is progressing as expected. Strengthening key relationships will increase the likelihood of achieving outcomes.

National governance and management

- Healthy Active Learning continues to be well managed with Sport NZ providing valued leadership.
- Relationships between the central lead agencies have remained consistently strong and collaborative.
- Agencies are committed to Healthy Active Learning and it is adequately prioritised by the agencies.
- Governance and management structures are appropriate.
- Equity is firmly at the forefront.
- Agencies are responsive to insights and learning.

Giving effect to Te Tiriti

- Aspirations of Māori are acknowledged.
- Māori representation could be strengthened at a governance level.
- Regional agencies are developing their cultural capability and responsiveness.
- Customised support for the workforce who identify as Māori is provided – Kahui Māori group is now well established.
- Mātauranga Māori is valued and applied by the physical activity workforce.

Regional implementation

- Equity is firmly at the forefront of Healthy Active Learning partners.
- Regional workforces receive varying levels of support:
 - The physical activity workforce is well supported.
 - Support for the health promotion workforce has improved but continued and additional support is required.
- Engagement and relationships between regional workforces are improving but could be further developed.
- Regional and localised approaches are well embedded.
- Healthy Active Learning is supporting improved alignment and connectivity between other programme and initiatives.
- Covid-19 has impacted Healthy Active Learning, with engagement with schools and kura returning to 'normal' in 2022.

“ I think the great joy Healthy Active Learning has been the regional responsiveness. ”

National stakeholder

“ The workforce learning, and the capability build that has been an absolute fundamental part of that, is driving a greater sense of bicultural cultural competency through the workforce... ”

National stakeholder

“ The relationships that now exist between regional health agencies and regional sports trusts, I'd say they've never been stronger. ”

National stakeholder

Key considerations

- Improve the representation of national agencies at the governance level, including Māori.
- Ensure commitments to Te Tiriti o Waitangi are embedded at national, regional and local levels.
- Enhance communication and further clarify the roles and responsibilities of the regional agencies and workforce.
- Increase the focus on improving the healthy food and drink environments in schools and kura.
- Enhance regional leadership and improve systems and structures that promote collaboration.
- Prioritise workforce retention.
- Continue to strive for improved alignment and connectivity between nationally led programmes and initiatives.
- Increase focus on improving physical activity intensity and type.

Outcome findings

Healthy Active Learning is achieving most of its intended short-term outcomes, and positive changes towards achieving medium-term outcomes are emerging.

Healthy food and drink environment

Schools and kura continue to highly value healthy eating and drinking as part of student wellbeing and their culture – this has remained stable over time. While little change has occurred overall there has been greater improvement in Phase Two schools and kura. The introduction of the Ka Ora Ka Ako initiative (in 53% of schools sampled) is thought to have had a positive impact as it is reported to help the promotion of healthy food and drink consumption within schools, making it easier to implement healthy food and drink policies.



% of teachers agree that:	DC1		DC2	
	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase One	Phase Two
we uphold our policy to sell and provide only healthy food and drinks at our school/centre	69%	42%	62%	59%▲
we uphold our policy to sell and provide healthy food and drinks for activities outside of school (e.g., class trips, athletics day, school camp)	61%	45%	61%	55%▲
healthy food and drinks are promoted at our school/centre	77%	68%	76%	79%▲
the school seeks student input into healthy food and drink policies	33%	27%	41%	34%
healthy foods are the main type of food sold or provided at our school/kura	69%	42%	62%	59%▲
% of teachers agree that:	DC1		DC2	
our school/centre did not use food and beverage companies for fundraising initiatives	59%		73%▲	

Impact of Ka Ora Ka Ako

Ka Ora Ka Ako was reported to help with encouraging healthy food and drink consumption within schools, making it easier to implement school healthy food and drink policies.

“ I think that in the last year it has improved greatly because of our shift. We’ve got free lunch in school, we’ve got breakfast for the students, and that is all based around very balanced healthy food and the children are only allowed at school to have water or milk. ”

Teacher focus group, rural school, Southland

Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions posed numerous barriers in promoting and supporting healthy food and drink environments. The health workforce was most impacted by COVID-19 due to being re-assigned during the pandemic.

“ Covid spoiled it all, we had to stop eating together, sharing food and things like that. Hopefully, for next year, we can get back in the kitchen and start cooking again. ”

Teacher focus group, urban school, Auckland

Food insecurity

Persistent food insecurity among families provides a challenge in promoting healthy food options. Many families simply cannot afford to provide nutritious lunches for their children.

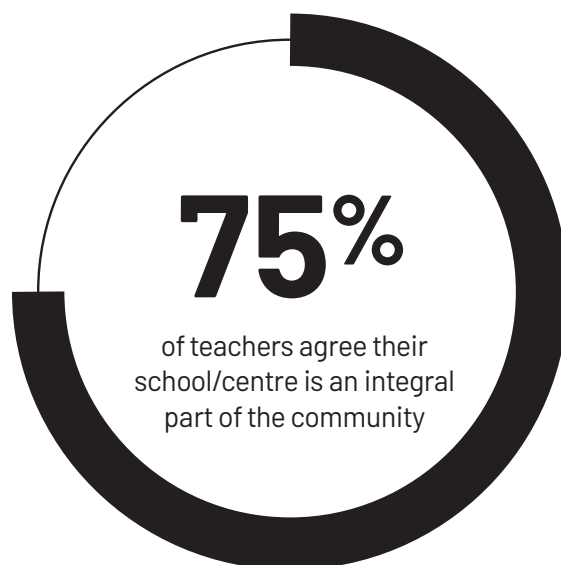
“ I think you do see some families, some children with large amount of packaged food but you can’t bring shame to them. They don’t make those choices about what food is often provided for them. ”

Teacher focus group, urban school, Auckland

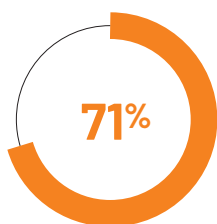
Whānau, school, and community connection



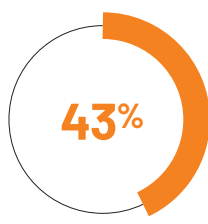
Schools and kura continue to be seen as an integral part of their local community and work effectively with whānau and community providers. Overall, there has been little change from 2019. Opportunities remain to strengthen these relationships; through working with external providers, consulting with parents and whānau in planning, and parents and whānau supporting connections with mana whenua and iwi.



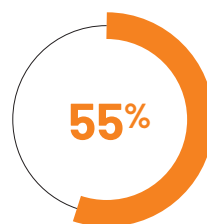
Whānau agree that:



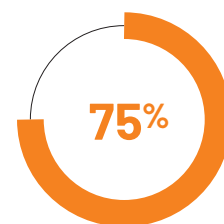
their school/kura use community resources (e.g., funding and volunteers) to expand the range of PA opportunities



they are consulted in the planning of PA experiences

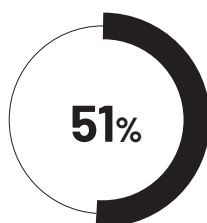


community leaders work with their school and whānau to encourage PA

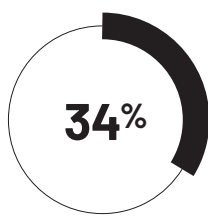


their school/kura communicates effectively about a range of PA that their child can take part in

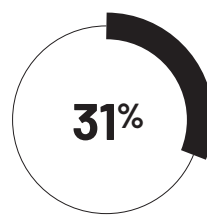
Teachers agree that:



parents and whānau actively provide support for PA opportunities



our school consults with parents and whānau in the planning of PA experiences



our school/kura has a strong connection with mana whenua and iwi and we include them in decision making



Quality physical activity opportunities

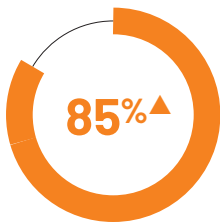
Teachers, whānau, and students believe schools and kura provide PA opportunities that meet the needs of tamariki. Teachers have reported an improvement in PA, and sporting opportunities and events meeting the needs of all students and reflecting the interests of whānau, however, there has been little change in the perceptions of students and whānau.

Qualitative data from the teacher survey indicates how teachers are thinking about inclusive PA as a result of Healthy Active Learning.

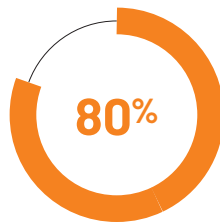
“ [The school] is adapting events to be more inclusive, supportive and promote involvement. ”
Non-urban, mid-career, Teacher Survey

“ [The school is] hosting whole school events that cater to the needs of all students. Events are well planned and are very inclusive. ”
Non-urban, mid-career, Teacher Survey

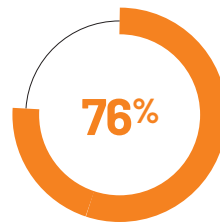
Whānau agree that:



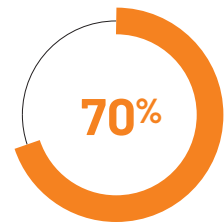
their school/kura has a wide range of quality facilities (places and spaces) for tamariki to be active



that their tamaiti/tamariki are given many different PA opportunities within the kura/school setting



that their school/kura offers PA that my tamaiti/tamariki is interested in



that their school/kura ensures that PA experiences are suitable and meet the needs of all tamariki (including those with special needs)

Teachers agree that:

our school/kura provides quality sporting opportunities that meet the needs of all students

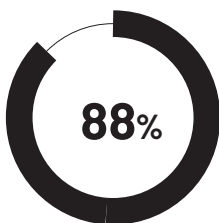
at our school/kura we make sure our events are inclusive for all abilities (e.g., changing cross-country to meet the needs of all students)

our school/kura has PA opportunities that reflect the interests of whānau

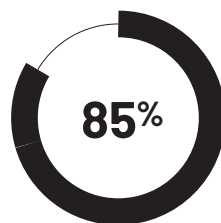
our school/kura ensures that all PA experiences are suitable and meet the needs of all students (including those with disabilities)

	DC1		DC2	
	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase One	Phase Two
our school/kura provides quality sporting opportunities that meet the needs of all students	65%	67%	85%▲	84%▲
at our school/kura we make sure our events are inclusive for all abilities (e.g., changing cross-country to meet the needs of all students)	68%	65%	79%▲	80%▲
our school/kura has PA opportunities that reflect the interests of whānau	46%	49%	65%▲	65%▲
our school/kura ensures that all PA experiences are suitable and meet the needs of all students (including those with disabilities)	64%	57%	77%▲	77%▲

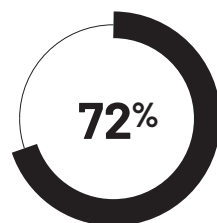
Students agree that:



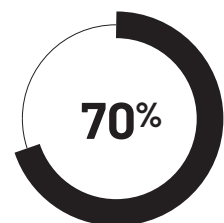
most of my PE involves playing sports (like football, basketball, Kī o Rahi)



at school/kura there are lots of different sports and active things I can try out



at lunchtime we are encouraged to play in lots of different ways (like making up games, climbing, running)



at school/kura there's lots of active events we can do (like sports tournaments, Kapa Haka competition, Kids TRYathlons, Polyfest)

Teaching Health and Physical Education (HPE)

Healthy Active Learning continues to enhance the quality of physical education (PE) delivery. Teacher confidence in PE, HPE, and PA has remained relatively stable over time.

Teachers confidence

Overall, teacher confidence in HPE, PE, and PA has not changed over time. Mid- and late-career teachers from Phase One schools showed the greatest improvement in confidence in PE teaching and learning. Otherwise, Phase One schools remained somewhat stable, other than an increase in overall confidence to plan and teach HPE. The confidence levels of Phase Two teachers showed a decrease.



73%

of teachers are moderately or very confident to plan and teach HPE

HPE	DC1		DC2	
	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase One	Phase Two
Teachers feel confident in:				
providing feedback about how students are progressing with HPE learning	67%	74%	68%	62%▼
incorporating HPE into day-to-day teaching	67%	73%	68%	63%▼
PE				
Teachers feel confident in:				
drawing on students' cultural backgrounds and life experiences to support their PE learning.	55%	58%	53%	45%▼
supporting students to make up their own games, rules, strategies, or movement patterns.	69%	72%	67%	58%▼

Despite teacher confidence overall remaining stable, qualitative data from the teacher survey highlighted areas where confidence has improved.

“ Being involved in the Healthy Active Learning programme has really raised the confidence and competence of our kaiako, to plan in a more integrated way ensuring that HPE is intentionally incorporated to enhance the learning of our Ākonga. ”

Urban, early career, Teacher Survey

Teachers practices

Healthy Active Learning continues to improve a range of teaching practices in the delivery of PE, particularly in Phase Two schools. However, there was a significant reduction in the number of teachers reporting they integrate PA across other curriculum areas. Little change was evident of delivery of HPE. There remains room for considerable improvement in the delivery of HPE and PE.



PE	DC1		DC2	
	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase One	Phase Two
Teachers agree that:				
I integrate PE with other learning areas	46%	39%	44%	48%▲
my students often learn about games, dance, sports or movement from a range of cultures (e.g., Māori or Pacific games)	32%	27%	39%	39%▲
I use PA to support teaching and learning in a range of curriculum areas (e.g., movement in maths)	51%	54%	45%	42%▼

Teachers agree that:

39% **41%▲**

I assess how students are making progress in PE learning

30% **36%▲**

I have students who do not participate in the physical component of PE

20% **23%**

my students often make up their own games, rules, strategies, and movement patterns

■ DC1 ■ DC2

HPE

Teachers agree that:

27%

I have adequate time to plan and teach HPE

40%

I integrate te reo Māori/tikanga into my HPE planning and teaching (e.g., karakia, explanations, activities, commands)

60%

I have better access to a range of resources and equipment to support planning and teaching HPE

54%

I can effectively involve less interested students in HPE

Physical Activity

Teachers report:

55 minutes
61 minutes ▲

Number of weekly minutes spent on fitness activities per class

48 minutes
55 minutes ▲

Number of weekly minutes spent on PE learning per class

■ DC1 ■ DC2

“ Participating in Healthy Active Learning has helped us to see how we can integrate PE into other areas of the curriculum. For example, a biking-inquiry focus with stationary and smoothie bikes. ”

Urban, late career, teacher survey.

Value, culture, and processes of HPE and PA

Schools and kura continue to highly value PA as part of their school culture. There has been improved visibility of PA in school charters and annual plans, and school processes are supporting the improved provision of HPE and PA.

Value and culture of PA and HPE

Schools and kura continue to highly value PA as part of student wellbeing. In 2023 there was an increased focus on PA in schools and kura charters and annual plans. The change was greater in Phase Two schools.



Teachers report that:

46%

54%[▲]

89%

80%

77%

PA is visible in their school charters and annual plans

PA is a key contributor to student wellbeing in their school/centre

HPE learning area in the school/kura curriculum is medium/high priority

PLD in PE is medium/high priority

■ DC1 ■ DC2

“ [We] developed a new Health and wellbeing curriculum through consultation with our community and the next goal is to embed this and ensure it is being upheld. ”

Urban, mid-career, teacher survey

“ Wellbeing is now in our charter and annual plan. ”

Urban, mid-career, teacher survey

Process for quality HPE and physical activity

School leaders and teachers reported their school is providing sport and PA opportunities that better meet student needs, improved planning and delivery of HPE, and integration of HPE and PA across other curriculum learning areas. The greatest impact has been on mid- and late-career teachers, and those from urban areas.

	DC1		DC2	
	Phase One	Phase Two	Phase One	Phase Two
School leaders agree that:				
our school has a plan for how PE, breaktime physical activities, and school sport work together to build students' skills and competencies	53%	46%	63%	54%
our school has a formal process for consulting students about new PA and sports they would like to try	29%	20%	34%	39%[▲]
at our school, HPE is integrated with other learning areas or themes	57%	40%	71%[▲]	65%[▲]
Teachers agree that:				
HPE was being integrated with other learning areas and use of class skills	50%	44%	59%	59%[▲]
our school has a plan for how PE, breaktime physical activities, and school sport work together to build students' skills and competencies	49%	37%	45%	56%[▲]
our school has a formal process for consulting students about new PA and sports they would like to try	28%	18%	37%	35%[▲]

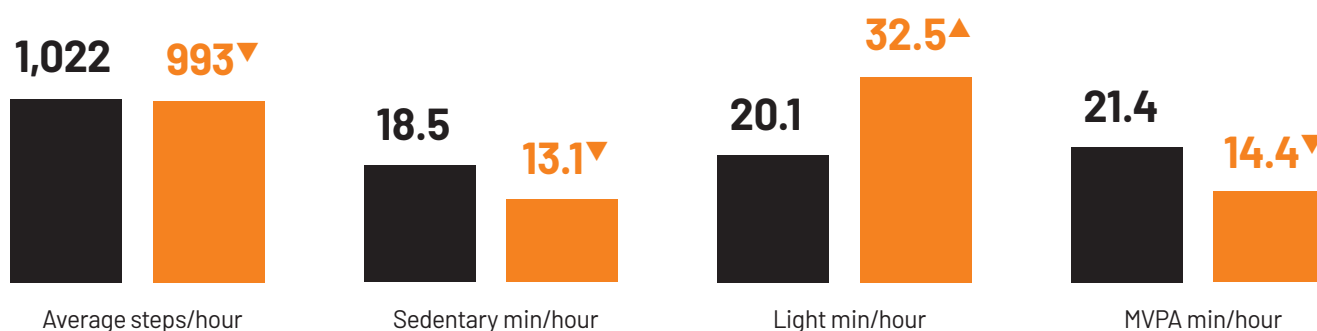
Physical Activity

Overall, Healthy Active Learning positively contributed to a reduction in sedentary activity and increase in light PA but also a reduction of moderate-vigorous PA (MVPA). Furthermore, there was no change in self-reported PA or PA behaviours (for example, active transport to school, activity before, during, and after school).

An increased focus on more frequent and intensive PA in the school day and actively promoting participation in PA is recommended.

Accelerometry*

■ DC1 ■ DC2



* accelerometry: accelerometers measure physical activity in three dimensions whilst being worn on the wrist for a period of 7 days.

Variable	In-school		Out-of-school	
	DC1	DC2	DC1	DC2
Average steps/hour	1,199	1,191	972	935▼
Sedentary min/hour	12.4	6.9▼	20.5	15.2▼
Light min/hour	23	36▲	19	31▲
MVPA min/hour	24.4	16.8▼	20.7	13.9▼

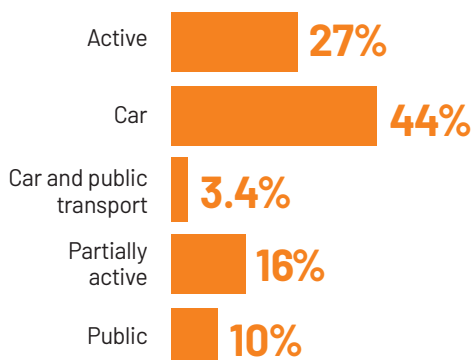
Student Survey

34%

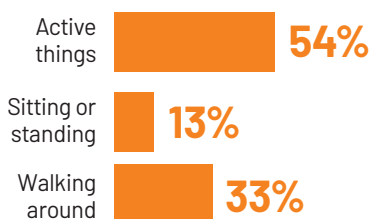
of tamariki (years 4-8) were physically active for a total of least 60 minutes per day.



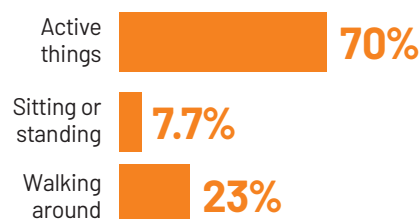
Tamariki usually get to kura/school by...



In the last week, which activities have you done before kura/school?



In the last week, which activities have you done during morning tea or lunchtime?



Social connectedness

Students in the majority of classrooms (65%) have a moderate level of connectedness but Healthy Active Learning has not had a noticeable impact on the levels of connectedness in classrooms.



19 classrooms (12%)

High level of social connectedness

- Zero children socially excluded
- Low ratio of children with reciprocal connection to another person

100 classrooms (65%)

Moderate level of connectedness - two to four main social groups evident

- Zero to one child socially excluded
- Low to moderate ratio of children with no reciprocal connection

36 classrooms (23%)

Low level of social connectedness - five or more distinct small groups evident

- Zero to five children socially excluded
- High ratio of children with no reciprocal connection

Student engagement and experiences



Most students continue to be positively engaged in learning and enjoy school and has remained stable over time. Whilst many engagement areas are very high (80-90%) and unlikely to see change there is still a quarter of students who don't like PE and don't feel included in PE.

Students' feelings about school

90%

Learning at school is important

88%

It's important to understand what I'm taught at school

83%

What I learn at school/kura is useful in the future

Students' feelings about PE

72%

I like doing PE at school

69%

I feel included and don't get left out in PE

68%

I feel I learn lots during PE

Students' feeling about PA (physical literacy)

Students continue to have positive attitudes towards being physically active. Overall, there is little change as a result of Healthy Active Learning but Phase One schools showed a greater increase in agreeing that PA was good for them.

75%

I am good at lots of different physical activities

76%

I feel confident to take part in lots of different physical activities

90%

I understand PA is good for me

84%

I enjoy being active

80%

I want to take part in PA

71%

People in my life encourage me to take part in PA

"We've learnt more like life lessons than we have actual sporting lessons. "

Student focus group, urban school, Auckland

"I really like moving round and I practice sports at my house 'cause we live on a farm, and I have lots of room to run around. "

Student focus group, urban school, Bay of Plenty

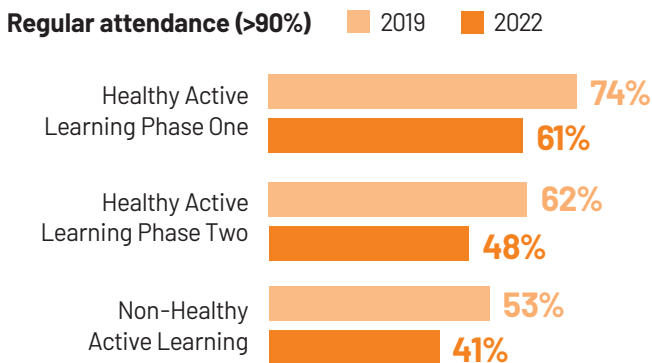


Attendance data

Positive effects from Healthy Active Learning student attendance and unjustified absences are seen in the context of year level and school decile rating and are more evident in Phase One schools/kura.

Attendance

The rate of regular attendance has decreased from 2019 to 2022. However, there was a smaller drop in regular attendance for students at Phase One schools compared with Phase Two and non-Healthy Active Learning schools/kura. This was primarily observed in year 1-4 students in deciles 5-10 schools/kura.



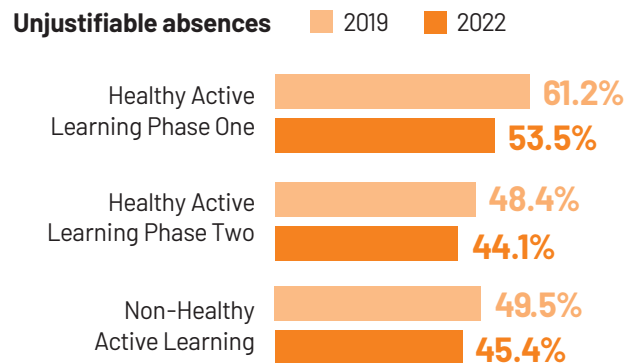
Year level 1 to 4	P1 v P2	P1 v non-HAL	P2 v non-HAL
Decile 1-2	-0.3	-3.9	-3.6
Decile 3-4	2.7	-1.0	-3.7
Decile 5-6	2.6	5.2	2.6
Decile 7-10	2.1	3.9	1.8

Year level 5 to 8	P1 v P2	P1 v non-HAL	P2 v non-HAL
Decile 1-2	-3.1	-6.0	-2.9
Decile 3-4	-1.4	-5.0	-3.6
Decile 5-6	5.6	3.2	-2.4
Decile 7-10	5.6	0.4	-5.2

- A significant increase between school types, that is a favourable effect of Healthy Active Learning.
- A significant decrease between school types, that is a less favourable effect of Healthy Active Learning.

Unjustified absences

The rate of unjustified absences decreased from 2019 to 2022. Moreover, younger students in Phase One schools/kura with decile ratings of 1-2 or 5-6 had lower levels of unjustified absences in 2022 compared with 2019. Older students in higher decile Phase One schools/kura showed an increase in the proportion of unjustified absences.



Year level 1 to 4	P1 v P2	P1 v non-HAL	P2 v non-HAL
Decile 1-2	-2.7	-1.9	0.7
Decile 3-4	-3.0	-1.9	1.1
Decile 5-6	-7.5	-8.8	-1.3
Decile 7-10	-0.2	-1.5	-1.3

Year level 5 to 8	P1 v P2	P1 v non-HAL	P2 v non-HAL
Decile 1-2	-4.4	-5.6	-1.2
Decile 3-4	0.6	-0.3	-0.9
Decile 5-6	0.9	-4.0	-5.0
Decile 7-10	5.2	7.3	2.1

- A significant increase between school types, that is a less favourable effect of Healthy Active Learning.
- A significant decline between school types, that is a favourable effect of Healthy Active Learning.