On this page

1. National strategy(ies)

2. Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people

3. Physical education in schools

4. Collaboration and partnerships

National strategy(ies)


The vision of Estonian sports policy is that:

1. in 2030, the mental and physical balance and welfare of the Estonian people correspond to the level of Nordic countries and Estonia has a living environment contributing physical activity together with accompanying services that support people’s healthy life expectancy and self-fulfilment, as well as economic growth,
2. exercise and sport have a significant and growing role in increasing the vitality of the Estonian people, creating a diverse living environment, and creating a good reputation for the Republic of Estonia.

There are four priority goals:

1. a majority of the population exercise and are engaged in sport,
2. exercise and sport is a significant economic branch and employer with strong organisation,
3. exercise and sport are the carriers of spirit, coherence and positive values,
4. Estonia is represented in an effective and dignified way at international level.

The measures specifically targeting children and young people:
1. to boost exercise and sporting activities, a support system for recreational activities is developed and introduced for children and young people,
2. safe and age-appropriate sporting conditions are ensured for children and young people,
3. the priority of the development of achievement sport is regular, diverse and planned training of children and young people in sports clubs and sports schools,
4. the Government values targeted sports activities of children and young people and supports this field in a systematic way; regional and nationwide study and training centres are to be created and developed.

In the preamble of the document it is noted that „sports and exercise are healthy, educational, entertaining and social activities of all demographic and social target groups, diversifying cultural and youth work“.

No specific target groups within the youth population are identified.

The connection to EU Physical Activity Guidelines is not specified in the document.

The government authority responsible for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the strategy is the Ministry of Culture.

No evidence-based monitoring/assessment/evaluation of the implementation of the strategy has been conducted yet.

The document has not been revised or updated since its introduction.

**Promoting and supporting sport and physical activity among young people**

*Support for coaches and instructors of children and youth sports*

Since 2015 (ongoing), the government has supported the salary of coaches and instructors working with children and youth with a fixed additional support sum in order to increase the variability and accessibility of sports for young people.

In 2016, approximately 1 200 coaches working with more than 37 000 children and young people received this support. In 2017, the total amount of the support was 4 448 600 euros.

*Support for hobby education*

In 2017, the government proposed and the parliament decided [2] to finance additionally hobby education and hobby activities [3] including sport from state budget with an aim to increase access to and the variety and quality of hobby education and activities for young people between 7-19 years old. The annual budget is 15 million euros. It is divided into local government budgets based on the number of young people, taking into account the problems young people are facing in the municipality (the formula includes the number of young people with special needs, financial capability of local government and the ratio of the number hobby opportunities and number of young people). In order to use the support, a local government (or a group of local governments together) has to draw up a plan on how to increase access to and the variety of hobby education and activities provision. The first deadline to submit the plans was 1.09.2017. A vast majority of the municipalities (a total number of 199 from 213 in Estonia during that time, in 2018, there are 79 local municipalities in total in Estonia as a results of the administrative reform) submitted the plan, of which were 53 in a cooperation group.
Learning to swim

The programme is designed to support primary school students swimming lessons. Main objectives are connected with healthy lifestyle promotion and prevention of accidents and death connected with poor swimming skills. In 2017, the programme was reformed and since 2018 the amount of the state funding is 1 230 082 euros.

School Olympic Games [4]

School Olympic Games is an educational activity, encouraging useful sports that unites students, teachers and parents, and follows the principles of the Olympic Charter in its mentality, essence and rituals.

According to the School Olympic Games idea proposed by the Estonian Olympic Academy, it is not simply sports competitions that are held under the Olympic flag. A very important aspect of School Olympic Games is the relevance of the Olympic education period that precedes the competitions and during which, in different subject classes, children are given different knowledge about the idea and history of the Olympic movement and have a chance to use this knowledge in different contests. The aim of School Olympic Games is to introduce the Olympic idea and popularize sports by making sports life in schools more colourful. At the same time, School Olympic Games is not a national event in which only the best that have been selected in previous competitions can participate.

The amount of public funding is not available.

TV 10 Olümpiastarti [5]

The Estonian Athletic Association has organised for more than 45 years a competition for general education students, TV 10 Olümpiastarti, wherein around 10 000 children and young people participate. As the event is connected with the Estonian National Broadcaster, the programme supports the promotion of youth sports.

There are no specific mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation established for the programmes listed.

The connection to EU Physical Activity Guidelines is not specified in the programmes listed.

Physical education in schools

National curriculum for upper secondary schools defines „physical education“ as compulsory. The purpose of teaching physical education in upper secondary school is to develop students’ physical education competence, i.e., the ability to recognise the value of physical activity and healthy living as a part of one’s lifestyle; the ability to assess one’s physical fitness level in an objective manner and to use suitable means and methods for developing physical abilities; to practice suitable sports or form exercise; to recognise the value of cooperation in sports/exercise and of knowledge about Estonian and world sports events.

Teaching physical education is aimed at the upper secondary school graduate having developed the capability to:

- value life, understand the importance of physical activity to people’s health and enjoy exercising/practising sports,
master knowledge, skills and experience to practice recreational sports/exercise independently both indoors and outdoors,
follow regulations and personal safety and hygiene requirements while exercising/practising sports and know how to act in emergency situations that may occur while practising sports,
be able to objectively assess their level of physical ability and to use proper means and methods for improving it,
exercise/practise sports respecting fellow students and preserving the environment,
be cooperative and able to guide fellow students to perform simple physical exercises,
know about the sports and dance events held in Estonia and around the world,
master knowledge about the development of physical culture in Estonia and in the world and understand the role of physical culture in modern society,
know the necessary physical fitness regime for service in the Defence Forces.

Physical education is taught in five compulsory courses and two elective courses. Compulsory courses include gymnastics, athletics, games (basketball, volleyball and football) of which the school has to select at least two, dance movement, navigation and winter sports (skiing and skating) of which the school has to select at least one.

The elective courses are “Physical abilities and exercise skills“ and “Exercising outdoors“. The passing of compulsory and elective courses helps to develop the competences of the subject field, while also preparing students for the physical readiness test of the Defence Forces (this applies in particular to male students, supporting their individual development, while female students can opt for this on a voluntary basis). The volume of presentation of different sports in the courses and the number of lessons dedicated to particular sports are specified in the school curriculum.

In 2015, a manual for teachers of physical education was published and is distributed free of charge to all the schools.

The initiative Movement Laboratory [6] is a research group of physical activity for health at the Institute of Sport Sciences and Physiotherapy in University of Tartu, which designs school-based interventions, and their aim is to promote physical activity in whole community, as sufficient physical activity supports mental, physical and social well-being.

The research group is a permanent research unit in the structure of the University of Tartu.

The unit develops several tools and ideas to be used in schools both in and outside of classrooms.

Collaboration and partnerships

There is no obligatory or policy framework for partnerships between formal education providers, youth workers and health professionals in order to promote youth fitness and physical activity among young people. Cooperation between different stakeholders may occur at the local, regional or national level; however, it is not guided centrally.