



IMPROVING PE FOR MUSLIM GIRLS



MADE FOR
This Game





Supported by The FA and Nike, this resource has been developed by the Youth Sport Trust and Muslim Sports Foundation to support schools to improve their PE, sport and physical activity provision for Muslim girls. Informed by research and girls' voices, it will help you to better meet their needs.

WHY DO WE NEED TO DO BETTER?

Sport, especially football, has the power to inspire people, unite communities and build confidence, but for many Muslim girls the opportunity to take part is still out of reach. Despite a strong enthusiasm for sport and physical activity, barriers rooted in perception and access continue to limit their involvement.

Only 54% of Muslim girls in Years 7-11 enjoy PE.

Girls Active, Youth Sport Trust, June 2024

Only 40% of Muslim girls in mainstream schools feel comfortable participating in physical activity.

The FA and Nike report, Sept 2024

Muslim girls have a lower average of active minutes across the week.

The FA and Nike report, Sept 2024

Fewer than 25% of Muslim girls are involved in clubs outside of school.

The FA and Nike report, Sept 2024

As a statutory subject within the curriculum, PE is the foundation for participation in physical activity, sport and healthy, active lifestyles. By making PE an enjoyable, engaging and meaningful experience for all Muslim girls, we can help to dismantle the barriers.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO KNOW?

Based on research conducted in autumn 2024, The FA and Nike report identifies barriers to and opportunities for increasing Muslim girls' participation in PE, sport and physical activity.

IT HIGHLIGHTS FIVE KEY POINTS.

Muslim girls...

...are not all the same – but do share common experiences.

...mostly have a positive view of activity and want to be active.

...face a mix of gendered, faith-related and cultural barriers.

...lack support to access modesty-appropriate sports kit and hijabs.

...need safe and understanding spaces.

Muslim girls say...



Part of the reason why I do sports is because it's part of Islam. We're meant to be healthy and we're meant to do exercise and take care of our bodies.

Because I'm a Muslim girl, I want to see more Muslim people play sport. If I see a Muslim girl who plays sports, I'll just be really happy and proud of them.

I wish we could play sports without having to worry about people judging us or being in a male space.

I think a big thing for a lot of people is modesty...



HOW DO WE MAKE PE BETTER FOR MUSLIM GIRLS?

Purpose

Principles

Process

Practice

Muslim girls are not a monolith – but their needs reflect shared experiences, shaped by their gender, faith and cultures.

Solutions will vary for different girls and schools, but using this framework will help you to create a more positive PE experience for your girls.

Girls' needs...

Purpose	Recognise that physical activity is a part of the Islamic way of life.
	Focus on: • Care of body • Care of self • Community belonging

Principles	Reflect Muslim values within physical activity provision.
	Focus on: • Conduct • Environment • Clothing

Teachers' responses...

Process	Increase teachers' understanding of gender, faith and different cultures.
	Focus on: • Awareness of general issues through learning and networking. • Empathy for girls through youth voice and leadership.

Practice	Implement solutions that are co-created with the girls.
	Focus on: • Confirmation • Security • Flexibility • Comfort

This brief guide provides some practical tips and examples that reflect the above framework.

It will be followed by a comprehensive toolkit that explores the framework in depth and provides information, guidance, examples, templates and girls' voices. It will be supported by an e-learning module.

The toolkit will be launched in October 2025.

It's really good to do a sport, or go to a club, because you'll find people that you have something in common with.

WHAT MIGHT 'BETTER' FEEL LIKE?

Imagine PE from the girls' perspectives. What will they see, hear and feel if provision meets their needs?

PURPOSE: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE AND IS ROOTED IN THE SUNNAH. The Sunnah encompasses a body of practices that provides a model for Muslims to follow. Within PE, it focuses on care of self, body and others (belonging).

Purpose

I can explain how taking part in PE boosts my confidence and emotional wellbeing. I know that this is inspired by the Sunnah, which encourages positivity, mindfulness and mental strength.

Body

I recognise how PE helps me to respect and care for my body. I know that this aligns with the Islamic value of preserving health.

Belonging

I feel proud of my identity as a Muslim girl and can connect with friends and classmates through PE, without fear of judgement. I know that Islam encourages friendship and teamwork.

PRINCIPLES: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REFLECTS THE CHARACTER TRAITS THAT ARE ENCOMPASSED BY ADAB. Adab describes the character virtues and good manners expected of Muslims. Within PE, it may be expressed through the girls' conduct, clothing and environment.

Conduct

I can take part in team sports to have fun and make friends instead of playing aggressively.

Conduct

I can celebrate personal improvement in PE without needing to outshine others.

Environment

I can take part in girls-only sessions during lunchtime and after school.

Environment

I can take part in PE in groups that make me feel comfortable, e.g., single sex.

Clothing

I can wear modest attire that is safe for PE but is not too loose, too tight or too warm. This may include wearing a suitable hijab.

🏠 Islam is a huge part of me. It defines my personality and my actions and everything that I do. 🏠

WHAT COULD YOU DO?

Firstly, take time to increase your own understanding of how gender, faith and culture combine to affect Muslim girls' participation in PE.

PROCESS: PE TEACHERS HAVE INCREASED UNDERSTANDING.

Increase your **general awareness** of the issues through...

Professional learning

Use the forthcoming toolkit and complete the e-learning module.

Networking – colleagues

Share challenges and solutions with colleagues in other schools.

Networking – families

Involve the girls' families through taster sessions or events.

Networking – community

Connect with community providers to gain support and/or signpost the girls.

Build a relationship with and develop **empathy** for **your girls** through...

Youth voice – consult

Consult your girls to understand their specific needs and interests.

Youth voice – co-create

Collaborate with your girls to co-create solutions to their barriers.

Youth leadership – role models

Celebrate Muslim girls as positive role models.

Youth leadership – peer influencers

Develop and deploy your girls as peer-influencers and peer-leaders.



Girls carry a heavy mental load when they feel like they need to do a lot of explaining to teachers about their needs.

They could be the shy girls who don't want to take part, but they can be the best leaders.

I wanted to encourage other girls to not go through what I went through and to help them to get involved.



WHAT COULD IT LOOK LIKE?

Co-creating solutions with your girls is more effective than transplanting ideas from elsewhere: the process of valuing their experiences is as important as the change you make.

These are examples of solutions that you might create together.

PRACTICE: SOLUTIONS ARE CO-CREATED WITH YOUR MUSLIM GIRLS.

Confirmation – approval

Communication with families reinforces the aspects of PE that reflect Islam, i.e., care of body and self.

Confirmation – role models

PE noticeboards feature Muslim women and girls as active role models for both elite and everyday sport.

Security – groups

Girls have opportunities to take part in girls-only groups in PE and girls-only extra-curricular clubs.

Security – spaces

Girls' sessions take place in spaces that are not overlooked by others, e.g., other classes or passers-by.

Flexibility – delivery

Teachers select different activities to meet the learning outcomes instead of sticking to tradition.

Flexibility – participation

Girls play games in different ways to suit their goals, e.g., a focus on fun and friendship not just on performance.

Comfort – PE kit

Girls choose kit that is comfortable for them, within parameters agreed between school and parents/carers.

Comfort – changing

Girls wear their PE kit to school on PE days to avoid the need for changing within lessons.



My PE lessons are very fun and energetic, and the teachers will always make sure you're included. You understand what's happening and they make sure that you're not left out.



REMEMBER: For further support, watch out for the detailed toolkit in October 2025!





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