

## CASE STUDY

School: St Leonards CEP Academy  
Focus: Engaging Families in Physical Activity.  
Headteacher: Marie Burgess



*During the 2018/19 academic year, St. Leonards CEP Academy introduced a Personal Challenge Award (PCA) programme.*

*Personal Challenge is a programme introduced through the Youth Sport Trust's School Games, designed to offer pupils self-led opportunities to attempt to improve physical performances. Challenges are personal to the pupil and are only competitive against yourself – you are trying to become the best you can be. [Watch Personal Challenge in action at St. Leonards CEP Academy.](#)*

*After implementing the programme at school to much success, the school decided to implement a version of the programme to encourage activity at home too. Here follows an interview with St. Leonards CE Primary Academy Headteacher Marie Burgess.*

### Why did you decide to introduce the Personal Challenge Award at your school?

The Personal Challenge Award came about for several reasons. We noticed that children were fully engaged in PE and sport at school but there was inactivity at home. Children came to school sport clubs but only the sportiest children engaged in clubs outside of school.

We unpicked what the children loved about PE and Sport at school and found that they liked the personal challenge element. They liked that they were competing with themselves and not each other. The children also kept asking for PE homework!

I went away thinking about how we could incorporate all of these elements and what could be the hook to get them interested - the children at school like rewards, praise and recognition.

I also thought about my own journey with running. How I was motivated, what structures I followed and what kept me engaged.

All of those things together added up to the Personal Challenge Award.

### Can you describe how the Personal Challenge Award operates at your school?

£1000 was allocated from our Primary PE and Sports Premium to support the initiative. This went towards the hook to engage children and families: badges, certificates and T-Shirts.

Social media is used to promote the PCA and celebrate achievements. We also have challenge newsletters, a display board and an awards assembly.



*Personal Challenge Award Celebration Assembly*

Parents have to sign their children up for the award on our school app. This way the parents are aware and will hopefully get involved too.

A booklet is then sent home that details what you need to do for your Bronze Award (There are now 5 levels of award). The booklet also contains a diary sheet so children can record their activity.



### **Bronze Award—certificate and bronze badge**

45 minutes a week, spread over at least 3 sessions. That is 3 x 15 minutes. If you already attend a club that is active, you can record it but it doesn't count towards your award. This must be **15 minutes of new activity**.

### **Silver Award—certificate and silver badge**

1 hour 30 minutes per week. This can be broken down however you want but could be 6 x 15 minutes or 3 x 30 minutes. Can you extend some of the activities you have started during the BRONZE Award? This activity must be maintained for 4 weeks.

### **Gold Award—certificate and gold badge**

10 x 15 minutes or 5 x 30 minutes per week. Can you extend some of the activities you have started during the BRONZE and SILVER Award? Could you join a new club? This must be maintained for 8 weeks.

### **Platinum Award—certificate, badge and t-shirt**

Evidence of a further 4 weeks of activity to show when active living is a lifestyle. 20 weeks total activity.

### **Platinum Plus – Certificate and T-Shirt**

24 weeks of activity showing you have an active lifestyle. During this phase you have to coach/support someone else to take part in the personal challenge award who has to achieve Silver+.

## **How did you promote the Personal Challenge Award initially?**

We launched the PCA in January to coincide with New Year resolutions. There was a big build up prior to the launch in assemblies and on newsletters. We dropped hints and 'watch this space' type messages.

On Twitter staff started posting comments about their personal challenges before the launch with hashtags #personalchallenge #active2019. This got parents and children asking.

## **What has been the impact of the Personal Challenge Award?**

We have been blown away by the impact of the PCA on staff, children and parents.

With the initial introduction we had 90 children, parents and staff signed up (60 completed the bronze).

We currently have 150 individuals taking part all at different stages of the programme. 16 have already completed all awards and are now on Platinum Plus.

Who was signing up and taking part was interesting. Initially we thought that it was the children that were already demonstrating healthy active lifestyles but, when reviewing the data, we noticed that over 80% were children and families that didn't attend sports clubs or represent the school at sport. We were attracting a different audience and it was our target audience.

Parents have been positive about the impact of the activity on their health. They have reported feeling healthier and more confident. Staff and parents have reported that they feel more energised and focused. They have said they feel mentally stronger. Several of our families have reported weight loss for adults and children.

We also have a parent who has been seizure free for over 8 months now. She has had seizures for most of her life and her son has never known her to not have them. She had up to 5 seizures a day. She says that being active is definitely a contributing factor to being seizure free.



## Why do you think the Personal Challenge Award has been such a success at St. Leonards CEP Academy?

The children and staff at St. Leonards are always up for a challenge! It has been particularly successful because it is accessible for all at, whatever fitness level you are. We have a Team GB athlete on staff as well as marathon runners and they have taken part at their level, adding more activity to their training. We also have parents and children that have taken part who have started from scratch from no activity to doing 2.5 hour plus per week.

We have also used it as a way to engage hard to reach families. Twitter has been brilliant for this. It has been a positive tool to share what we are all up to and keep children, parents and staff motivated.



## Could you give some top tips to other schools looking to establish something similar?

- Use Twitter – less negative than Facebook.
- Get staff involved.
- Celebrate all achievements however small.
- Talk about it.
- Lead by example.



We are happy to share this resource. Don't reinvent the wheel! It is there to be used, we just ask that St. Leonards CEP Academy is credited on the award sheet.

We have recently set up a Twitter account ([@PCASTLens](https://twitter.com/PCASTLens)) to connect schools that are doing this so we can share achievements and successes.

## St Leonards CEP Academy Twitter Contacts:

[@StLensHead](https://twitter.com/StLensHead) – Marie Burgess, Headteacher

[@Stlenssport](https://twitter.com/Stlenssport) – Sean Ray, Sports Coach

[@StLensForest](https://twitter.com/StLensForest) – Joel Fraser, Forest School Leader

[@PCASTLens](https://twitter.com/PCASTLens) – Personal Challenge Award

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[Find out how PE, sport and physical activity has also had a significant whole school impact at St. Leonards CEP Academy](#)