



# Connect Charter School:

## A Leader in Physical Literacy



Regular physical activity is an essential component to health and wellbeing as an adult. At a young age, children learn the fundamentals of movement and develop a positive attitude towards physical activity and sport. By enforcing positive habits and skills at a young age, individuals can gain the skills, experiences and attitudes to take part in physical activity and sport throughout their lives. The World Health Organization recommends that children should be active for 60 minutes per day. Given the positive

cognitive effects that physical activity can have; it is imperative that each child is given the opportunity to be physically active for both physical performance (in sport) and also cognitive performance (in school).

At Connect Charter School, we ensure that students are consistently meeting their daily physical activity needs. Every day, the students either have physical education classes or DPA, which stands for daily physical activity. During PE students follow the indented curriculum for their grade by learning specified physical skills through sports and other game activities. DPA is usually run by homeroom teachers on days where students do not have DPA classes. DPA could either be playing on the outdoor playground, going on a skating trip or even biking around Calgary. Connect Charter School's unique physical activity programs helps students maintain consistent levels of being active while achieving new skills and learning new sports.



The physical activity programs at Connect Charter School were designed with physical literacy in mind. Dean Schmeichel, Physical Education Specialist, and John Cadman, Physical Education and Outdoor Education Specialist, both understand the importance of physical literacy as it becomes more top of mind in the world of sport and exercise. Mr. Schmeichel defines physical literacy as “the development of fundamental movement skills which lead to fundamental sport skills in various

decision making scenarios in a variety of environments.” An article written by Sports 4 Kids (2016) expresses that “through the development of physical literacy, children have the necessary skills and attributes to go on to further develop physically and compete at a high level of sport, but also to remain physically active for the rest of their lives and have a good quality of life.” It is proven that when children are acquiring a basic foundation of fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, and throwing at a young age, they are more likely to participate in physical activity throughout their life.

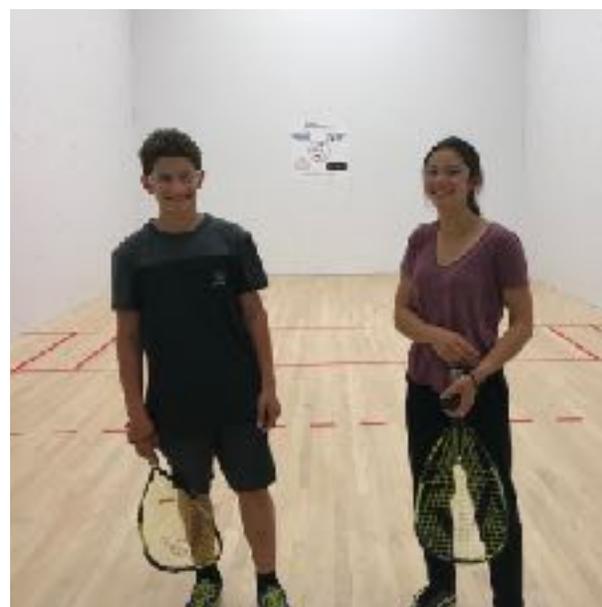
Mr. Schmeichel and Mr. Cadman are committed to helping students acquire the 12 fundamental movement skills that make up the building





blocks to movement, which range from balancing to catching. The main activities and units that Mr. Schmeichel and Mr. Cadman use to develop our students physical literacy include:

- A fleet of 65 bicycles for our Grade 6-9 students which are used for an activity in itself as well as a means to access other community activity opportunities (ex. swimming).
- A fleet of 52 Longboards are used for a stance and balance unit as well as a means to access the community.
- A fleet of 28 Scooters are used for stance and balance and also to supplement the longboards for our students who aren't capable of long outdoor rides on the longboards.
- The school's full bouldering wall is used for a unit based on proprioception(the unconscious perception of movement and spatial orientation), muscular strength and muscular endurance.
- Full sized wrestling mats are used for the combative and gymnastics units. These units promote proprioception, flexibility, muscular strength and muscular endurance.
- Circus equipment is used for a circus unit developing manipulative skills.



- Cardio equipment (7 spin bikes, 4 treadmills, 1 rowing machine and 1 elliptical) is used for developing components of fitness including cardiovascular endurance.

“I really like using all the different equipment and going outside,” shares a grade 6 student, “I’m not the best long boarder, but I really like scootering!”

“These activities are used as vehicles to a greater understanding” explains Mr. Schmeichel, “as an example, we are not teaching students how to be great long boarders, we are teaching them stance and balance through a longboard.” Overall, Mr. Schmeichel and Mr. Cadman design their units to be short introductions to activities, so that students get a wide range of experiences in team based activities, individual activities and fitness based activities. Not only does the exceptional planning and dedication of Mr. Schmeichel and Mr. Cadman promote physical literacy, but it also helps prepare our students to become extraordinary and healthy future citizens.

