



Dear Parent,

Between 2013 and 2014 your daughter took part in a National Institute for Health Research funded study called Active7 (run by the University of Bristol). Active7 was a dance-based study for Year 7 girls, examining whether dance could increase physical activity levels. The project is now complete.

### **Why did we run Active7?**

Government guidelines recommend that children do at least 60 minutes of activity that leaves them slightly out of breath and slightly sweaty (moderate-to-vigorous physical activity) each day.

Many girls become less active as they move from primary to secondary school. Often the physical activities available do not interest them. To improve the health of this group it is important to find activities which they enjoy. Dance is one such activity and following a successful pilot study in 2011, Active7 focused on providing after-school dance for Year 7 girls.

### **What did Active7 show us?**

571 girls took part in the study from 18 secondary schools. Nine schools received a series of after-school dance sessions that ran twice a week for 20 weeks. The other schools continued as normal (control group).

At the end of the project, the activity levels of girls who received the dance sessions were not different to those who did not (the control group). This means that the dance sessions did not increase the physical activity of the girls who took part. Whilst on the surface this is not what we hoped for, we have gathered lots of information about how the project was experienced. This can be used to improve our research and promote physical activity in future:

- Girls enjoyed the dance sessions.
- Girls who attended had higher physical activity levels on the days they attended compared to when they did not (around 15 minutes more light activity and 4.5 minutes more moderate-to-vigorous activity).
- Sessions provided opportunities to make friends, develop team work and leadership skills, and take ownership over activities.
- Some girls felt that they were better dancers, more confident and fitter as a result of the programme. The dance teachers agreed.
- Girls like choice in their activity and value choosing dance styles and music.
- Dance can be an affordable after-school activity (and it is not affected by the weather!)
- Attendance was low. Of the girls taking part in dance sessions only one third regularly attended. Whilst girls enjoyed the sessions, their attendance was impacted by other commitments.
- Feedback suggested it would have been better to run just one session per week.

Thank you for allowing your daughter's involvement in Active7 – supporting our research makes a real difference.

Yours sincerely,

[Active7 Trial Manager]