

Helping Young Wheelchair Users Build Skills and Confidence

On 17 November 2024, young wheelchair users accessing our Children's Physiotherapy service took part in a fun and empowering Wheelchair Skills Event at Mirfield Free Grammar School.

Organised by Nicola Barber, Engagement Officer, and Karen Palfreyman, Physiotherapist, the event was delivered by Go Kids Go, the national charity committed to building a society where every young wheelchair user is mobile, enabled, and included.

The session welcomed 10 children and young people, along with their siblings and parents. Throughout the day, participants took part in a range of skills-based activities designed to build confidence, independence, and mobility.

Activities included:

- **Racing across the hall to get used to wheelchair movement**
- **Practising movement over ramps**
- **Fire evacuation and navigating stairs in an emergency**
- **Opening doors and managing outdoor slopes**
- **Finishing off with a high-energy basketball game**

Siblings were also encouraged to have a go, gaining a first-hand insight into the experience of using a wheelchair.

The impact of the day was clear to see. One young person said, "I liked the ball game!" while another commented, "It's been so fun!" Parents spoke of the positive difference events like this make:

"We came last year, it was really good. It's good for refreshing skills, especially the fire evacuation practice."

"I wish we could have something like this more often, it's beneficial seeing other wheelchair users and socialising; it helps build confidence."

Providing opportunities like this helps young people develop practical wheelchair skills in a fun, supportive environment. It not only improves their day-to-day independence and safety but also builds resilience, social skills, and self-esteem.

One parent summed it up perfectly:

"It has been brilliant today – being in a wheelchair shouldn't define you. It's inclusive."

We are proud to support projects that promote inclusion, independence, and empowerment for young people.

