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What is a School to Club Link?

A *School to Club Link* is the development of a pathway from School Sport to Community participation. This is an important way of increasing the range of sporting opportunities available to pupils both inside and outside of school. It allows pupils to actively engage in a number of roles including as participants, coaches, volunteers and officials.

School to Club Links can be mutually beneficial to both Community clubs and schools and should be characterised by:

- **Effective Communication** - both the School and Club should be in regular contact with each other through a designated person.

- **Structured Support** - activities that involve the club should have clear outcomes for pupils, such as being involved in a coaching session or helping to officiate at a competition.

- **Increased Participation** - opportunities must be available for pupils to participate in club activities; either as players, coaches or volunteers.

*GB Athlete Martyn Rooney helped Irchester Community Primary and Park Juniors celebrate their School Games Mark Gold Award 2013/14*
The School Games are part of a national framework of competition designed to inspire young people through competitive school sport. The School Games are delivered nationally across three levels:

- **Level 1: Intra School Competitions** - the chance for all pupils to compete against each other in a school based competition (eg Inter-House)
- **Level 2: Inter School Competition** - the school team will compete in a competition against other local schools, within a partnership area (eg District)
- **Level 3: County Finals** - the winning teams from Level 2 Competitions will be selected to represent the partnership at the Northamptonshire Winter or Summer School Games.

The Partnership works to deliver up to 65 Level 2 School Games Competitions throughout the year in a range of different sports. This provides Schools and Clubs with the perfect place to meet and begin to develop a School to Club Link.

Clubs can get involved with the School Games by:

- Helping Schools to prepare and train teams
- Offering facilities and helping to run competitions
- General promotion of the club and flyers/posters with exit routes for pupils
- Training/providing volunteers to assist with running a competition.
Benefits to Clubs

- The opportunity to attract potential new players to the club.
- The opportunity to attract and develop new coaches, officials and volunteers.
- The chance for club coaches to develop their skills by delivering sessions to a number of different children with different ability levels.
- Promotion of the club to the local community.
- Potential access to additional facilities for use during club sessions.

Benefits to Schools

- Support with specialist coaching in a variety of different sports.
- Extends the range and opportunities of sports on offer to pupils (including extra curricular clubs).
- Support and competition preparation to deliver and attend Level 1 and Level 2 School Games Competitions.
- Helps to support School Games Mark Applications.
- Extend and challenge able and talented pupils.

Benefits to Young People

- New opportunities and introductions to new sports.
- Developing confidence and life skills.
- A link to a local community club to continue their participation.
- Safe environment to develop their interests.
- Social hub outside of the school environment.
- Provides a transition and familiarisation as they move to a club.
- Access to high quality, sports specific coaching.
How to Link: Schools

There can be a number of benefits for Schools linking with Clubs, however there are a number of things Schools should consider first.

1 - Audit your current provision
Establish your strengths, weakness, what you currently provide and what sports your pupils enjoy. This can help to identify areas that you would like clubs to support. Establish what type of link you would like to develop, for

2 - Find a suitable Club
Once you have established your sport there are a number of way of finding a Community Club. Consider which staff members play/coach for local Clubs or do you know parents who coach and may be interested in creating a link? If you do not have local connections then use the Club finder tool on the Northamptonshire Sport website - www.northamptonshiresport.org/find-a-club.

3 - Consider what you can offer
This is a two way process, therefore consider what you can offer a Club in exchange for their support. This could be a regular slot in assembly, additional training venues or the opportunity to attend other events. Ensure that you have confirmed these in advance where required.

4 - Approach your Club
Using your contact details make contact with your identified Club. If they are interested in creating a link then arrange a suitable time to meet and discuss how you can develop a more formal partnership.
5 - Check and confirm suitability

When linking with a Club it is important to check they meet minimum operating standards to ensure they are a suitable Club to introduce your pupils.

Please consider the FANTASTIC Coach principles.
- Are coaches Fully qualified (level 2)?
- Adequately insured
- Are they aware of the National curriculum.
- They must be Trained in safeguarding
- Appropriate to work with children
- Check they are Skilled and competent when delivering sessions.
- If you are paying them check Their employment status is correct
- Provide them with an Induction
- Ensure the Checklist is completed.

For more information and to sign up to FANTASTIC Coach visit www.northamptonshiresport.org/fantastic.

It is important to check the Club have the capacity to take on new members at the appropriate age groups, and are accessible for children with a disability.

Clubs that are working with children and young people should also have achieved Club accreditation, called Club Mark or NGB accreditation.

6 - Establish the Link

Once the Club has completed the checklist, it is recommended that you formally establish the School to Club link.

Draw up a School to Club Link form (an example is available on page 12) or a signed letter detailing each partner’s roles and responsibilities.

7 - Monitor the Link

Once the link is established it is important to ensure that it is working. Ask the Club to keep a record of children that attend from your School. For example ensure that you have regularly updated information to provide to pupils. Organise an annual review to ensure that both partners are happy and you are both meeting the agreed points established in your completed School to Club link form.

Always suggest changes if they are required.
How to Link: Community Clubs

There can be a number of benefits for Clubs linking to Schools, however there are a number of things Clubs should consider first.

1 - Audit your current provision

As a Club Committee audit your current provision within your club. Consider where you have you additional capacity to develop your provision. Ensure that the Club are aware of your plans to develop and that you have the Coaches and volunteers with the correct skills to move forwards.

2 - Consider what you can offer

Linking is a two way process and while Schools are usually happy to promote local activities they do receive a lot of information to send home. Could you offer a regular coaching session? Or perhaps several tasters for different ages, support for a School Games Competition or regular assemblies.

7 - Establish the Link

Following an initial meeting, and agreement of a mutual benefit to the School and Club, it is a good idea to formally establish the link.

The best way is to complete a School to Club Link form (an example is available on the back page) or a signed letter detailing each partner’s roles and responsibilities.

8 - Monitor the Link

Once the link is established it is important to ensure that it is working effectively. Organise an annual review to ensure you are both meeting the agreed targets established in your School to Club link form.

Always suggest changes if they are required. Speak to club members and parents to ensure they are receiving any information that is sent out. Also be prepare to provide Schools with the number of young people joining the Club.
3 - Check your standards

Schools should be checking any external coaches that work with their pupils so it is important that Clubs ensure all qualifications and standards are up to date.

Are all of your Coaches qualified to the correct level? As a minimum you should have a Level 2 (or higher) Coach running a session. Do adults working in the School have an up to date DBS check and valid safeguarding qualification? Do you have your NGB Accreditation/Club Mark certificate (or this currently in progress)?

If any of your Coaches are paid ensure that their employment status is correct and it is clear who is paying them. Also check that the Club’s insurance is up to date and covers School coaching sessions.

4 - Find a Local School or Schools

Once you have identified the section you would like to develop and have established the capacity for new members exists, you need to identify which School/s you would like to work with. Establish where current links are in place, such as coaches/parents who work in local schools and Schools you have previously worked with. Alternatively find your local School/s by searching the School Database on the Northamptonshire County Council website, or contacting your local School Sport Manager.

5 - Approach your Local School or Schools

Make contact with your identified School or Schools. If they are interested in linking then arrange a suitable time to meet and discuss how you can develop a more formal link.

6 - Arrange a Meeting

Ensure you have all the documents required to hand when meeting the School. This should include, qualifications, DBS checks, insurance and information about Junior Club sessions.

You may also provide a written copy of what the club can offer and what you would expect from the School - ie 1 coaching session a week.

The School should provide you with any information you may need to plan sessions or promotional information.
How does the School Sport Partnership Link with Clubs?

The Wellingborough & East Northants School Sports Partnership works with a number of local Clubs in a range of sports, to support the delivery of Level 2 School Games Competitions. This includes excellent facilities to provide a high quality and memorable experiences, supporting the training of Young Leaders and providing assistance at competitions.

Best Practice - Diamonds Gymnastics

For the past 5 years, the Partnership has linked with Diamond Gymnastics Club to help deliver the School Games Level 2 Gymnastics Competitions. Diamond Gymnastics is a very active Club within the local community and provides a range of opportunities from introductions to infant gymnastics and adult sessions to County level competitions.

Diamonds Gymnastics provides a purpose built competition venue and ask club members to judge and support the running of the competitions. This allows participants the opportunity experience competition in a state of the art facility. The competitions also offers the Club the chance to identify talented gymnasts and provide those competing with an immediate exit route.

Diamond Gymnastics also works with several local Primary Schools, helping them to develop gymnastics within their PE Curriculum. These include Irthlingborough Infant and Nursery School, winners of the Northamptonshire School Games (KS1) in 2014 and 2015.

Best Practice - Wollaston Cricket Club

The Partnership holds several School Games Kwik Cricket Competitions and Cluster Festivals at Wollaston Cricket Club supported by a large number of schools each year. The Club facilities provide the perfect setting for young people to be introduced to the game, with access to the Clubhouse and changing rooms free of charge.

Young Leaders from Wollaston Secondary School traditionally support the Primary Kwik Cricket Competitions. An overseas player from the Club is usually in attendance to support Young Leaders officiating and provide information about the Junior Club section.
**Best Practice - Wellingborough Rugby Club and Rushden & Higham Rugby Club**

Tag Rugby has proved to be one of the most popular sports in the Partnership Calendar with 25 Primary Schools signing up to compete in October 2015. Due to the popularity the Partnership runs two Primary School Games competitions, each hosted by a local rugby club.

Wellingborough Rugby Club and Rushden & Higham Rugby Club both provide excellent facilities to host the competitions. Many of the Young Leaders that support the competitions play at the Rugby Clubs. Wellingborough RFC is supported by the RFU directly as part of the All Schools Programme.

**How to find out more..**

For Schools or Clubs that are interested in finding out more about developing School to Clubs Links you can contact:

*Hannah Hore - School Sports Manager, Wellingborough & East Northants*

Email - hhore@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Mobie - 07834 006316

http://www.northamptonshiresport.org/wellingborough-and-east-northant

http://www.northamptonshiresport.org/clubs
School - Club Link Agreement 2015/16

This form sets out the commitments that the School and Club agree to as part of the School - Club Link. The agreement should be reviewed annually as a minimum. Club Name: ______________________________

The School Agrees to...

Provide a main point of contact
Offer the sport as part of the PE Curriculum to the (appropriate year group) eg Year 3/4 & Year 5/6
Offer the sport as an extra curricular activity (to appropriate year group)
Ensure teaching staff are present at taster / coaching sessions
Sign up to compete at relevant School Games Competition
Promote volunteer opportunities to parents/staff
Invite Club to attend a School Games / Celebration Assembly
Display posters/ distribute flyers to promote the club

The Club Agrees to...

Provide a main point of contact
Provide coaching support for PE curriculum activities
Help to run/deliver extra curricular clubs (with support from School)
Provide up to date posters/flyers for School Games noticeboard
Assist with transition from School to the Club (players/leaders)
Provide the School with details of volunteer opportunities
Provide Schools with relevant documentation

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Agreement renewal date: _______________________________