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sportsheet

Developing School-Club Links

Introduction

Schools and sports clubs both aim to provide a variety of opportunities for young people to participate in sporting activities. Both may have access to resources, facilities, expertise, coaching and competition that could be shared to improve and increase the opportunities available for young people to take part.

High quality links between schools and clubs enable young people to:

- Make the most of their experiences in both settings
- Feel comfortable in a club setting and, as a result, be more likely to continue participating once they leave school
- Try out new sports

DfES/DCMS, High Quality PE & Sport for Young People, 2004

There are great opportunities for schools and clubs to work together, for the benefit of young people and the community – but how exactly can they go about doing so?

Building school-club links how?

Schools:

- Through out-of-school hours activities
- Through parents & peers, who are already club members
- Create a club partnership group, linked to the school
- Through pupils, who are already members
- Contact Sports Development Officers and National Governing Bodies for club contacts

Clubs:

- Through out of school hours activities
- Through parents & peers, who are already club members
- Through pupils, who are already members
- Through existing use of school facilities
- Contact Sports Development Officers and School Sport Partnerships for school contacts
- Outline what is available for and required of schools



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Benefits Of School-Club Links

Young People:

- More opportunities to take part in sport
- Greater access to a wide range of sports that are less familiar in a school setting
- A healthier lifestyle as a result of taking part in regular physical activity
- The opportunity to develop their talent and progress in their sport
- The opportunity to work with experts with specialist knowledge of a particular activity or sport
- Confidence to pursue their sport in their own time and after leaving school
- The opportunity to develop leadership skills, learnt in school, through coaching, officiating and organising in community sport

Schools:

- The ability to offer young people the opportunity and encouragement to take part in a greater range of sport and physical activity
- Support development of young people beyond school
- Potential funding opportunities e.g. NGB School-Club links projects, Awards for All funding
- Support from other organisations to fill gaps in their provision in the form of:

*shared use of facilities and equipment
additional coaching opportunities
funding and other in-kind resources*

Clubs / sports organisations:

- Identify a pool of talent for the future
- Develop young people into the coaches, officials and administrators of the future
- Increased membership
- Share school facilities, expertise and equipment
- Enable access for all to participate
- Potential funding opportunities e.g. via School Sport Partnership programmes, Awards for All funding

Local Authorities / National Governing Bodies:

- Contribute to reaching participation level targets
- The opportunity for National Governing Bodies to promote their sport
- The opportunity to identify, nurture and develop talent
- The ability to ensure that physical activity and sport are accessible to all
- Develop capacity of local sport

How can schools & clubs Link

Providing Information

Schools can:

- Distribute leaflets & handouts on club activities (e.g. through PE classes or tutor groups) either as a group or individuals
- Provide information on sporting organisations e.g. booklets, posters, PE notice board, website, newsletter
- Arrange for sporting organisations to visit the school to talk during an assembly, PE class or out of hours
- Utilise ICT within school

Clubs can:

- Develop appropriate and attractive promotional material, include information on details of session, costs, venue, contact details etc
- Distribute promotional material to schools
- Visit schools, by arrangement with teachers, to offer further information
- Develop club website
- Provide information via sports development programmes e.g. Kent Club Development Officer, local authority sports development



Example of good practice: Ashford Hockey Club...

...use existing links "Several of our junior coaches and players are school teachers - they form an automatic link into schools and encourage children to start playing outside school. Parents promote the club in schools by displaying fliers on school notice boards. One parent is also a local school governor and initiated an after school hockey club."

...produce a regular newsletter

...are friendly! "Being friendly is also terribly important. We encourage parents to accompany children, have a 'try it and see' approach, provide equipment free, have a very supportive coaching philosophy based around fun, and encourage younger children to bring their friends."



Helping Each Other

Schools can:

- Facilitate direct contact with sporting organisations through assemblies, form/tutor periods and PE lessons
- Facilitate individual contact with sporting organisations by providing appropriate contact details
- Enable clubs to use school sport facilities
- identify specific clubs as exit routes from school-based activity
- Share good practice e.g. Gifted and Talented support, use of ICT in coaching and teaching, differentiation to aid inclusion

Clubs can:

- Provide schools with relevant information about their organisation and arrange to contact young people through their teachers
- Arrange for their coaches to support out-of-hours activities, enabling young people to experience club coaching in familiar surroundings
- Provide taster sessions with opportunities for young people to pursue follow-up activities within the sporting organisation
- Enable schools to use club facilities

Example of good practice: Aylesford Clubs Partnership...

- ... has been set-up by Aylesford School as part of their Sports College Community Development Plan
- ... aims to build a strong local network, working towards the creation of a Malling Sports Association
- ... supports club development such as Clubmark accreditation and increased school-club transition
- ... sees Aylesford School act as a hub for volunteer and coach education
- ... has an agreed development plan and is developing formalised partnership agreements between school and club

Working Together:

Schools can:

- Deliver leadership programmes to young people e.g. Step into Sport
- Involve teachers in running activities
- Promote events such as coaching sessions and come and try days
- Provide opportunities for primary and secondary schools to work together
- Act as a coach education centre for local clubs
- Engage in joint development programmes with clubs

Clubs can:

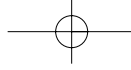
- Organise and/or support school tournaments
- Provide updates on sport specific skills and rules
- Notify schools of young people's achievements
- Help provide placements for young people taking part in leadership training e.g. Community volunteering
- Provide additional sporting facilities
- Engage in joint development programmes with schools



Example of good practice: Faversham Strike Force and East Kent Coastal School Sport Partnership

- ... developed a relationship through a Football Association School-Club Link project
- ... provided taster sessions for girls from Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School's family of primary schools, delivered by coaches from Faversham Strike Force, an FA Charter Standard Development Club
- ... followed by an 8-Week coaching programme delivered by the club at QE Grammar School
- ... culminating in a festival involving all the Primary Schools organised by sports leaders at QE Grammar School
- ... with the outcome of this development work being the creation of a girls section at the Club

This project has since been used nationally and internationally by the FA as an example of good practice



What makes a successful link?

- Continuity – smooth transition from school to sports organisations
- Good communication – regular contact, mutual respect, shared approach
- Involving all young people – what are their ideas?
- Individuals working in schools – sport specific coaches from clubs to form effective link
- Shared standards – teachers & coaches reinforce good practice, share expertise and maintain standards
- Forward planning – co-ordinating coaching and competitions, understanding wider links with other sporting and community organisations
- Achievements – recognised and celebrated

Ensure the club provides a quality experience?

- Minimum operating standards for sporting activity
- Clubmark / NGB accreditation requires contact with a least one local school
- Bear in mind that club administrators and coaches are usually VOLUNTEERS and have full-time work commitments.
- Child protection policy, appropriate insurance, equity policy etc
- Contact Kent Club Development Officer for further advice and support for clubs to meet minimum operating standards



Develop a formal partnership agreement

An option for clubs and schools is to draw up a written agreement, which sets out agreed commitments and responsibilities of both parties. Key principles should include:

- School commitment e.g. promote club, provide young leaders, enable club use of school facilities
- Club commitment e.g. provide qualified coaches to support school activity, enable school use of club facilities
- Roles & responsibilities e.g. identified liaison officers/points of contact
- Programme e.g. 5 weeks of coaching after-school, annual mini-festival
- Resources e.g. facilities provided, equipment involved, publicity
- Review regularly e.g. ongoing communication

Summary / Top Tips

- Remember – club organisers, coaches and administrators are usually VOLUNTEERS
- Remember – teachers primary concern is TEACHING and they have many other work areas to consider
- Clear, concise communication with all partners
- All partners and ultimately the young people to benefit from the partnership
- Ensure all partners provide a quality sporting opportunity
- Further training: Developing sporting partnerships and junior clubs workshop (Running Sport)
- Further information: www.kentactivesports.org; www.kentsport.org; "Why is it important to have effective school-club links?" in 'High Quality PE & Sport for Young People' (DfES/DCMS, 2004)



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