

Clubs and Schools Working Together

The local community plays a significant role in providing opportunities for young people to participate in sport and recreation activities. Schools and clubs must work together to bridge the gap between school experiences and community club programs.

Working together ensures junior players have access to high quality sport and recreation programs and facilities.

Clubs

Sport and recreation clubs and associations play a key role in the provision of junior activities. As well as providing expertise in a particular activity, clubs provide a framework for young people to continue participating in sport beyond their school years.

How can clubs make initial contact with schools?

It is a good idea for clubs to identify a club development officer who is responsible for initiating and maintaining contact with schools.

After deciding what the club can offer schools, it is best to make initial contact with school principals to discuss in detail what the club can offer and what the school hopes to achieve through a partnership.

How can clubs enhance school programs?

Clubs can be of great assistance to teachers in providing resources and information on particular activities and issues, including:

- Providing coaching as part of an expo/come-and-try program at the school.
- Providing assistance with coaching school teams.
- Providing advice on how to modify activities for different ages and abilities.
- Providing printed resources and/or practical demonstrations to advise teachers about how to conduct a particular activity.
- Providing information on appropriate equipment and where to obtain it.
- Providing assistance to organise sport and recreation events and training programs.
- Contributing to discussions and projects, for example history of sport in the area.
- Sharing the use of facilities.
- Talking to students about a particular activity and/or sporting opportunities within the sport.
- Providing information about club activities and available coaching courses.

Current as at August 2019



Schools

Schools are in the unique position of being able to introduce young people to a range of physical activities, allowing students to identify activities they particularly enjoy.

Schools play an important role in giving students the basic skills and confidence needed to explore community-based sport and recreation options. They can also play an active role in encouraging students to join sport and recreation clubs.

How can schools make initial contact with clubs?

Give thought to how the school can link with community sport and recreation organisations, outline what is required from them and then make contact.

The first point of contact is usually the state sport or recreation organisation. Most have a designated contact who is able to provide a wealth of information about their activity and may be able to provide contact details for local clubs.

What can schools do?

It is important for schools to communicate their protocols and priorities to clubs and consider ways in which they can work together.

The following are suggestions about what schools can do to work effectively with clubs:

- Nominate a school-based contact person responsible for establishing and maintaining contact with local sporting organisations.
- Design and circulate a booklet to students detailing the sport and recreation activities available in the area and how to contact the organisers of these activities.
- Discuss with clubs, internally or with parents about how schools and community sporting clubs can work together to improve sporting opportunities for young people in the area.

- Consider how the school can assist young people make the transition from participating in school sport to club sport.
- Encourage community sporting organisations to use school facilities so that facilities are used efficiently and students can participate in a familiar environment.
- Talk to sporting associations about coach accreditation, identifying how schools can work with club coaches to encourage participation.
- Consider engaging an athlete to speak at school presentations and speech nights, ensuring their message and delivery is appropriate to the audience and aligned with school values.

Schools and Clubs

Be prepared to work together to achieve the best results.

Teachers who are provided with the opportunity to work with development officers can use it as an opportunity to learn more about the activity which may result in more sustainable outcomes in the future for all parties involved.

Before working together, it is important the club representative and teacher discuss the following:

- Children's age.
- Number of students taking part in the session.
- Current skill level of the children, especially in the particular activity.
- Whether there is sufficient equipment to cater for participants, and if not, where additional equipment can be sourced.
- The club representative's experience with children of this age.
- What the teacher hopes to achieve by working with the club representative.
- What the club representative hopes to achieve by working with the school.



Evaluate and provide feedback

There are important things to be learned from evaluating activities and providing feedback to those involved. Teachers may wish to ask themselves, the students and the representative:

- What the students learnt.
- Whether the students enjoyed the activity and why or why not?
- Whether the club representative enjoyed the activity and why or why not?
- Whether they have ideas for follow-up sessions and other activities with the school.

It is important for schools to provide feedback to the club as well as to evaluate for their own purposes.

Similarly, it is important for the club to provide feedback to the school about students' skill levels and provide information about other available programs.

Community and Club Use of School Sporting Facilities

In many locations there are insufficient sports grounds and facilities to meet the demand of sporting clubs. However, many schools have extensive grounds and buildings which are ideally suited for community based sport and recreation activities, which are often under-utilised outside of school hours.

How does it work?

It is up to clubs to contact local schools directly to enquire about the availability and suitability of the facility, the booking process, fees and other relevant information.

Other opportunities might be available to build an effective partnership between the club and the school to the benefit of both parties, for example 'come and try' sessions or other incentives which

encourage the involvement or participation of school students and/or local community members.

Benefits of a school/club partnership

- Assists in meeting facility needs of sporting clubs.
- Increases the usage of school facilities outside of school hours.
- May build stronger social networks between the school, club and community.
- Less opportunity for vandalism at the school through usage of facilities outside of school hours.
- Opportunities to encourage community involvement and increase participation at the club through events and initiatives involving school students and families.

Where can I get more information?

Sport Australia's *Sporting Schools* initiative is designed to help schools to increase children's participation in sport and to connect them with community sporting opportunities. For more information visit the *Sporting Schools* website <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/schools>

In 2017, Sport Australia partnered with La Trobe University to conduct a research pilot project into Youth Participation (13-17 year olds), including tips to developing the sport-school relationship.

https://origin.sportaus.gov.au/youth_participation