

## School Club Links

### **“Review of research and documentation regarding School- Club Sport and Recreation Links.**

#### **Introduction**

The following review investigates literature and research on the School – Club Link. It also summarises some research on why teenagers drop out of sport. Information has been gathered from a variety of documents from around New Zealand, Great Britain, Australia and Canada. The data has been summarised into the following areas:

- What is a School-Club Link?
- Why should we make a club - school link
- What makes a club - school link effective and successful?
- Who else can assist with developing club-school links?
- Strategies - How Can School/ Club Links work? What do you do to create a Club?
- Benefits – School Club Links

The information gathered is anecdotal evidence of clubs and schools forming links to promote their sport. The evidence provided comes from case studies and examples of individual clubs and schools implementing a successful school club link.

It must be noted that there is limited empirical data which supports the positive evidence provided by the large number of sources quoting success. It also must be noted that there is limited data on failed club – school links, so information provided is of examples of what has been utilised to create a successful school club link.

The variety of structures, goals, personnel and environments that different school and clubs exist in suggest that to find a successful school club link, the parties must communicate and work together, and experiment with a variety of strategies to promote a ‘win-win’ situation for each other. Once this situation is found, both parties must continue to improve this situation through the fluctuating environments they may endure.

It can be assumed through the large number of examples of success, that successful club – school links help promote participation, development and encourage more youth to continue to play organised sport. The health and community benefits of this increased participation are significant, as well as the personal development of individuals physically, mentally and socially.

Harbour Sport is looking to develop this information into templates for use by the schools and club in the region. Further examination and qualitative research will be investigated to help further progress some models that sports can adopt that will lead to further participation and help reduce the ‘teenage drop out’.

## What is a School-Club Link?

- “Club-School links” is a term often used in strategic documents, grant applications and general discussion within Sports Development/PE and School Sport and National Governing Body Organisations.
- It is becoming more and more used and there is a great need for schools and clubs to work more closely together - if only just in communication!

## Why should we make a club - school link

- Establishing School-Club links gives young people the opportunity to continue participating in worthwhile sporting and physical activity throughout their lives. It allows youngsters to make the most of their experiences in both settings, to try out new sports, feel comfortable in a club setting and as a result makes them more likely to continue participating once they leave school.
- Most communities do not know what clubs are in their area - personal contact is the best way to promote your club. Posters are not enough!
- Youngsters are more likely to get involved if they know what they're dealing with- if they have already seen club coaches in the familiar surroundings of their school they are more likely to attend the club! (As they already know the coach!)
- Unless young people know where opportunities exist to take part in different sports, they will never engage them.
- Schools and clubs can work together to promote local sporting opportunities much more effectively.

## What makes a club - school link effective and successful?

When a school and sports club are working well together, they:

- Talk to each other regularly
- Communicate well with young people and parents
- Respect each other · Have a shared vision and approach
- Find ways of enabling young people to take part in club activities
- Agree expectations and goals
- Build on what young people learn in both settings
- Recognise, share and celebrate achievements
- Share and develop teaching and coaching expertise
- Share facilities, equipment and resources
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies that contribute to and support the school - club link

## Who else can assist with developing club-school links?

Other organisations in the community can also be of value to clubs:

- RST - E.g. Harbour sport - Active School, Project interactive.
- These officers can support the club in a number of ways: ·
  - Keeping clubs informed of wider sporting opportunities that are taking place locally and nationally ·

- Providing training opportunities for coaches, administrators and other club personnel
- Helping with applications for funding
- Creating links with schools (“foot in the door” or referrals with schools)
- Sourcing facilities or accessing time in facilities
- Linking with other sports and community programmes
- Supporting club promotions
- Establish effective partnerships with clubs, community groups and other organisations at a local and national level.
- Lead the recruitment and ongoing training of coaches, leaders and volunteers (in particular, young people) whilst providing ongoing training opportunities
- Disseminating information on sport and physical activity.
- Working as a facilitator between schools and clubs

### Strategies - How Can School/ Club Links work? What do you do to create a Club?

- ***“GOOD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BOTH PARTIES IS THE MAIN CONTRIBUTING FACTOR FOR A GOOD SCHOOL/CLUB LINK”***
- It would help initially if a meeting takes place between the school and club to develop an understanding of the Club -School links programme and to provide a mutual commitment to the way forward and the development of the link
- A programme of regular meetings between the school and sports club is a good way to review the effectiveness of the link
- Work with RST Active Schools Facilitators
- Utilise their contacts, resources & skills to build links

### Club Strategies

- Provide the school with information and promotional material about the club
- Assign a liaison contact to liaise with and provide info to the schools
- Run a festival/display at the school · Run a club open day/fun day at the school
- Provide coaches to assist with the extracurricular clubs (even if it’s just once per term)
- Link with the School’s to help assist links with primary schools
- Run a satellite club on the school site during a term where the club goes to the school (familiar surroundings for the children) then after that the children attend the normal club night and venue. (The would have time to become familiar with the type of training and the coaches by then)
- Tell the schools about their pupil’s achievements (e.g. in a school newsletter)
- Advise school of relevant events and activities that might attract youngsters to the club
- Provide officials for some school fixtures /tournaments
- Make school visits
- The club provides the school with letters of support for funding applications
- Focus for Juniors in Club Development Plan
- Work Hard to Establish link with schools - key find benefits for both parties
- Sit on School sports committee
- Aid in School Team selection, Training, Event Management.

### School Strategies

- Promote the Club within the school - maybe immediately after a unit of work that matches the sport or during after school clubs.
- Utilise Club members on School Sport Committee.
- Provide facilities by offering the school site for the club to run sessions · Nominated a club liaison representative is identified to liaise with the clubs schools liaison officer
- Offer the same sport as an after school club in order to introduce the children to the sport in a familiar surrounding
- Distribute any promotional material that the clubs may have
- Invite club coaches to speak about their club in school assemblies/PTA meetings so that everyone is aware of what's on offer
- Dedicated a notice board of other point of notice to the sports club
- Provide advice to pupils about getting involved
- Provide the club with letters of support for funding applications
- Regularly communicate local club opportunities and information to parents

### Issues to Consider in Building School-Community Collaboration

Collaboration may entail power struggles e.g. Who makes the decisions? Who owns the agenda? Whose interests are being served? When building school community relationships:

- be clear about the motivations of the schools and question whether your motivation is
- beneficial to collaboration
- clarify the motivations of the organisation and question whether their motivation is
- Beneficial to collaboration.

### How School-Community Collaboration Occurs

- Find out what students are most interested in participating in
- Review the personnel (teachers, support staff, existing parent coaches) within the school willing and able to support the sport and recreation opportunities students want to participate in.
- Consider the range of sport and recreation organisation available to your school (your RSD should be able to help you with this) in the sport and recreation opportunities students want to participate in.
- Arrange a meeting with the relevant sport and recreation organisations available to your school to gauge their willingness to collaborate.
- Share your goals in relation to student learning
- Share the advantages you see in collaborating together
- Find out what motivates the organisation to work with the schools
- Consider ways you could work together
- Identify some long term goals/targets for the collaboration
- Develop a partnership agreement
- Work through a realistic action plan (towards the goal) for 1 year and review at the end of the 1 year.

### Benefits – School Club Links

“Creating partnerships between schools and clubs helps to create continuity between school sports and sport in the wider community”

### Benefits for Young People

- Increasing knowledge and understanding of variety of sports available to them
- Enabling lifelong participation, making new friends, and developing skills
- Increased awareness of how to join and regularly participate in community clubs
- Extending their learning and trying new skills
- Developing talent and progressing in their sport
- Providing access to participate in their local area
- Increasing confidence to pursue sport after leaving school
- Gaining access to quality training (coaches and facilities)
- Progressing into clubs which should ensure a safe and friendly environment
- Developing leadership skills e.g. coaching, officiating.
- Improved opportunities to access sport in their local community
- Opportunity for their talent to be identified and nurtured
- Wider range of sporting opportunities
- Opportunity to develop coaching and leadership skills
- Understand how their experiences in school and at the club compliment each other
- Recognise how PE prepares them for their involvement in clubs at junior age and beyond
- Introduction to healthy living
- Feel comfortable with a range of people from different backgrounds and of different ages
- Choose club programmes that are suited to them

### Benefits for Clubs

- More young people in the club
- Increased participation and membership for the club
- Raised base level participation in club
- Opportunity to identify talent of the future
- Raised profile within the sport
- Raised profile within the community
- Financial opportunities
- Opening up club access to wider community
- Increase the potential to recruit new volunteers
- Co-operation, support and resources from other partners
- Pool of young leaders, coaches and officials of the future
- Increasing awareness of what schools are providing
- Enhancing potential to recruit new members
- Increasing numbers and membership of young people
- Supporting the development of young people beyond the school
- Providing the opportunity for young people to develop both as players and as leaders e.g. volunteers within the club
- Sharing facilities and resources
- Providing support for specialist physical education teachers

- Enhancing opportunities for grant applications
- Improving access to more training and resources.

### Benefits for Schools

- More active, and ultimately healthier, pupils
- Raised profile within the community
- Increased funding opportunities
- Community Links
- social benefits
- Pathways for sport - easy exit routes for children into ongoing involvement
- Increased standard in school teams due to increased coaching received by pupils
- Recognition as an institution that supports development beyond the school environment (Value Added)
- Support and assistance with extracurricular teams/activities
- Enabling transition for young people into lifelong participation
- Sharing facilities and resources (hire charges for school facilities)
- Enabling more supporters and deliverers to provide sport for students
- Healthier, fitter pupils
- Increased training for teachers by working with quality clubs and coaches
- More skilful students able to display higher standards in teams.

### Local Authorities / National (and regional) Sporting Organisations benefit through:

- Developing schemes linked to the NZ sport and recreation pathway
- Promoting the benefit of a physically active lifestyle
- Encouraging club modernisation
- Supplying a vibrant and growing membership and volunteer base
- Identifying and developing talent
- Improving retention in sports participation beyond school leaving age
- Enhancing opportunities for grant applications
- Embedding the principles of equality through delivery of club links
- Ensuring quality controls in place to raise standards
- Developing capacity of local sports clubs including training of coaches.

### SPARC's Stay and Play Research 2006

This research gives some useful insight into the importance and usefulness of School Club links into reversing or reducing the Teenage drop off in sport.

***The following information is based on SPARC's stay and play research 2006.***

### There are three key influences that underpin teenage sports participation:

- Friends and Social Life - Sport is not limited to what happens during the game. There is so much more happening on and off the sports field. Friends and active participation in a sporting environment ultimately has the power to enrich teenagers' social relationships and improve their social skills.

- Success - Success is not limited to winning. Success is also about achieving personal goals and performing above expectations.
- Talent - Talent is not limited to identified talent and increasing representative honours. Talent is also about personal development and continuous improvement.

“70% of kids who participate in sport drop out between 13 & 17; 62% of kids who play sport

indicate they are highly likely to drop out of sport; 50% of kids don't do any sport.

### Why do teenagers drop out of sports?

Students have a range of excuses for dropping out of sport e.g.:

- sport is no longer important anymore because I can drop it at school
- it's too time consuming
- sport is boring
- and sport means I miss out on parties and socialising.

### ***But the real reasons why students drop out of sport are:***

- Their friends have dropped out which breaks up teenagers' social circles
- Too scared to play because of the threat of injury
- It's intimidating – being laughed at for lack of ability or making mistakes
- Sport is too competitive (see below)
- Seeing unfair play or unsporting conduct.

### Student distinctions between competitive sport and non-competitive sport

#### Competitive sport

For teenagers sport is currently seen as competitive with a primary goal of winning. 20% of students are motivated by winning. Winning is not the primary motive for 80% of students.

#### Non-competitive sport

Sport that is seen as non-competitive is highly rated by teenagers. What distinguishes non-competitive sport is the primary goal of getting together, doing the best they can, and ultimately having fun. In non-competitive sport the rules can be changed to suit the participants and environment to ensure everyone can play and that no one is excluded. For many students non-competitive sport fits within the domain of recreation.

#### Administrators of sport and recreation

Efficient sport and recreation management is about the organisation, facilitation, and supervision of sports. For example students are in the right place, at the right time, against the right opposition, with appropriate uniform and equipment, and dedicated officials. Good organisation (management and administration) is critical to maintaining participation – kids who witness disorganised events and training walk away from sport. Effective sport and recreation management ensures sport and recreation experiences meet student's needs.

#### Parents

Parents are the key influencer on student participation. If a parent is into sport as a participant or a fan, then the teenager is more likely to keep participating. Effective sport and recreation

coordinators influence parents to support or deliver positive student experiences. For example: help manage, administrate, coach, or be officials for school sport sight and agree to a fair play charter value participation rather than winning.

### **Managers / coaches**

Managers and coaches who encourage and show their players respect provide the best results. Effective sport and recreation coordinators influence managers / coaches to communicate positively to students. For example: interactive communication where all parties listen to each other using respectful language commonly used in the school system talking to the whole team rather than singling out one person ensuring all team members have a meaningful role and level of participation. Providing positive and explicit performance feedback.

### **Sport and Recreation Organisations**

Sport and Recreation Organisations who implement a child and young person-centred philosophy provide the best experiences for students. Effective sport and recreation coordinators can influence local sport and recreation organisations. Example are provided in Section 7 (School community collaboration).

### **Financial barriers**

The payment of sports fees can be a hardship, which some families cannot afford. The cost of sports uniforms, footwear and equipment can also be a drain on a family's financial resources.

### **Possible solutions**

Sports fees will be paid for any student who arranges to work for the college in lieu of payment. Students do errands at lunchtime (i.e. blowing up and marking balls, cleaning the equipment shed, hanging up uniforms, running errands for the Sport and Recreation Co-ordinator etc) and are paid at a nominal rate per lunchtime. Families are given the opportunity to —drip-feed|| the payment of sports fees. Students are given the opportunity to raise money through sale of fundraising items, e.g. flowers, to pay for their sports fees. Transport to and from practices/games can be arranged with a student who lives nearby to minimise transport costs.

### **Work Commitments**

Some students need to hold part time jobs, while others choose to. The hours of part timework can interfere with training commitments and games, requiring the student to choose between work and sport.

### **Possible solutions**

Encourage students to work with their employers to find hours that suit practices and fixtures. A phone call from the school can assist in this regard. Ensure lengthy warning is given re: starting dates of competitions and training times. This means students are not left trying to change their hours at the last minute. Liaise with coaches where appropriate to encourage flexibility with training commitments and times.

### **Transport**

Some families may not have transport available, others may live a long way from the school or sports grounds. For many the rapidly increasing fuel costs are a barrier to travel to interschool fixtures.



### **Possible solutions**

Encourage car-pooling within teams, or with students who live nearby each other. Use roster systems if appropriate. Utilise the coach, manager or teacher in charge wherever possible to help transport students. Promote greater intra-school events or inter-school events with geographically closer schools.

### **Post-school participation pathways**

Sport for teenagers is currently seen as something you do while at school'. This perception may lead to a reduction in post-school sport participation. Trying to find somewhere to play sport post-school can be difficult and is seen as too hard for some students.

Effective sport and recreation coordinators influence pathways for post-school participation in sport and recreation. For example, by: developing memorandums with local sport and recreation organisations (see Section

### **School community collaboration**

- maintaining and publishing list of local sport and recreation clubs and contact people
- facilitating local sport and recreation organisations to contact school-leaver
- participants.

### **Summary**

To assist SPARC achieve its mission Sport and Recreation Coordinators have a significant role. Following are a sample of strategies to maintain (or increase) participation in sport:

- Providing communication that standardises expectations of treatment and conditions across ALL teams regardless of skill level
- Increasing the use of social leagues amongst teenagers, especially 15 – 19 year olds
- Facilitating parental involvement.
- Recognising and supporting teenagers who don't want to be in the top team yet still want to participate
- Developing databases of players and sharing them with codes and clubs thus creating an easy transition to post-school sport and recreation
- Using new information and communication technologies to enhance student ownership. For example encourage text messaging, regularly update school sports websites with results, and encourage youth 'ownership' through blogs, pictures, etc
- Keep mates together – outside the top 20% of participants sport is a social vehicle rather than an achievement vehicle.

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