



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

Sport's Guide for working with schools

This information is provided to help community sporting organisations promote their junior programs by developing better links and partnerships with schools.

The first step is to work out what your club wants to achieve by working with schools and whether it can cope with the extra demands on the club that may result. For example, if you are aiming to recruit new junior members, will the club be able to cater for the extra numbers (*consider junior programs, volunteers, administration, resources*)?

Some Handy Things to Know About Schools

- All schools are different.
- Get to know those closest to your club.
- Schools have different interests, priorities and resources in respect to sport.
- Decide what sort of support you can offer schools (*e.g. clinics, equipment loan, facilities, coaching, volunteers*) before approaching them to find out whether they would be interested in what you have to offer.
- Schools are bound by policy, curriculum, reporting and learning outcomes.
- Find out about these and consider whether what you can offer can support these in any way.
- If you can demonstrate support for these you are more attractive to schools.
- All schools have a nominated contact person for sport and/or physical education.
- This is your best contact point, particularly if you can address him or her by name.
- Schools are busy places and teachers are stretched to fit everything in to the school day.
- Find out what the school is currently doing and discuss how you could help them.
- Teachers generally plan their programs ahead.
- Term 4 is usually a good time to discuss opportunities for the following year.
- Schools receive a great deal of information to distribute to families.
- Find out how each school prefers information to be presented, and keep it simple.

- Schools are required to ensure visitors/volunteers working with students meet certain requirements. E.g. appropriate accreditation/experience for the role, possibly police checks. Find out what the requirements are for your involvement in the school.

Successful Links with Schools

Better links between schools and clubs result when:

- Schools have evidence that the club is a 'child safe' environment.
- Face-to-face discussions are held between school and club personnel.
- Club proposals are flexible and cater for school needs.
- Teachers can see the benefits for their students.
- The club link adds value to the school sporting program. (*e.g. teacher training, resources and ongoing club-school links*).
- Any additional workload is rewarded by the benefits to the club and the school.
- The club provides quality programs.

Opportunities Clubs Could Offer Schools

- Use of venues or equipment.
- Discounted club memberships for staff and students.
- Invitations to interested teachers to attend club coaching courses.
- Information about programs/resources offered by State Sporting Organisations.
- Provision of club volunteers to speak at assemblies, conduct clinics, help at school sports days, umpire/coach school teams.
- Club support for student community projects e.g. research on a club, development of club website, marketing project, and student leaders.
- Club involvement in the donation and/or presentation of student sports awards.
- Lunchtime or after-school activities conducted by the club.
- Special club activities such as Come 'n' Try Days to complement school sport units.
- Ongoing information about club activities that are relevant to students.
- Support for school sport leadership programs e.g. assistance with leader training, provision of out-of-school sport leadership experiences for students.

Remember to be realistic and consider the quality of what you are offering. If you do not have enough adequately accredited volunteers at your disposal, consider other ways in which you can support the school.

Making Initial Contact with Schools

- Target the schools you wish to work with. A good rule of thumb is those located within about 5km of your club. (*Take into account the schools your members currently attend.*)
- Search the phone book for general contact details for targeted schools.
- Contact the regional office of the State Department of Education for a list of government school principals in your area.
- Contact the State Coordinator of the Schools Network for details of member schools in your area.
- Ring each school to establish the best contact person and method of contact.

Remember that teachers, principals and school office staff have an enormous amount of paperwork and constant phone calls to deal with. Making personal contact with an interested person works best.

Getting Started

- Establish what you want to achieve from a club-school link and what your club can realistically offer.
- Organise a telephone discussion or face-to-face meeting to explore opportunities for working together.
- Find out what involvement the school already has with your sport and how you might build on this. (*e.g. Is your sport already part of physical education and/or sports programs at the school? If not, what is needed for it to be included?*)
- Discuss ways in which the school can support and promote your club and its junior activities.
- Provide a calendar of club events e.g. registration days, season dates, special club activities.
- Leave details of a club contact person.

Initial Questions for your School Contact

- What is the best way for our club to promote its activities to students and their families?
- Can we include club information in the school newsletter, on notice boards or at assemblies?
- Are there school facilities and equipment available for club use?
- Can club registration/recruitment days be held at the school?
- Can we use the school office as a point of registration for club programs/activities?

- Can we cooperate to synchronise school sport programs with the start of club seasons?
- Is it possible to work together to prepare students for coaching/officiating roles in school and club programs?
- Are there opportunities to work together to develop new opportunities for your students in our sport (*e.g. lunchtime sessions*)?
- Are there other ways in which students might become involved with our club (*e.g. helping to develop our website, tree planting, design of posters or flyers, sponsoring a support system for disadvantaged players*)?
- Does your school conduct any VET (Vocational Education Training) Sport and Recreation courses or leadership programs (Duke of Edinburgh) that we could be involved with?

Where to from Here?

Once contact has been established, consider ways to further develop the relationship. For example:

- Follow up on any ideas generated by your discussions.
- Keep your school contact informed of changes to club contact details.
- Keep your school contact up-to-date with what is happening at the club, e.g. Put him or her on the mailing list for the club newsletter.
- Invite your school contact to visit the club to see its facilities and junior activities.
- Invite school staff to your coaching courses or professional development activities.
- Seek further opportunities to support or involve the school.