



CLUB EDUCATION LINKS



England
Rugby

CLUB - EDUCATION LINKS

This document is intended to provide clubs, schools, colleges and universities with ideas and the tools to deliver high quality links that benefits both partners and the young people involved.

WHAT IS AN EDUCATION CLUB LINK?

A club link is an agreement between a school, college or university and a club to work together for the mutual benefit of the players, club and the institution. England Rugby, along with a number of other key agencies and partners, have invested and developed programmes to help develop sustainable club links – details of which will be provided in this guide.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE CLUB?

- More people playing
- Growing membership numbers
- Promotion of your club
- Shared expertise with education professionals
- Sharing or pooling of resources
- Engagement with wider community
- Better developed players, coaches and volunteers
- Increased and diverse volunteer base
- Use of institution facilities
- Events held at club facilities



WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE INSTITUTION?

Involvement in PE has shown positive benefits for pupils beyond sport that benefit the school. Leaving a legacy of active and engaged individuals involved in sport for life.

- Enhanced PE and sports programme
- More capable, confident developed pupils
- Development for teachers and rugby staff
- Rugby club events/activities held at institution
- Utilising partner facilities or sharing equipment
- Increased awareness of programmes available
- A wide range of volunteering opportunities for students
- Engagement with wider community
- Support from club coaches



WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE PLAYERS?

Through the core values we can help to develop more confident, capable, creative young people who will be better equipped to succeed in education and in life.

- Joined up approach to avoid overplaying
- Healthy lifestyle – a good way to keep fit
- Further develop rugby skills and game knowledge
- Playing, coaching, refereeing or volunteering opportunities
- Strong sense of belonging in the club community
- New life lifelong friendships and bonds



WHO'S WHO?

There are many people who you might work with to develop your club-education link. Whatever their role they will almost certainly be interested in the same outcome – ensuring very best level of quality and opportunity for young people in sport both in and out of education.

CLUB

Clubs will have a number of individuals who may support development of the club link. A number of clubs may well have a specific Club Development Officer or Schools Officer whilst in others it might be the Mini and Junior Chairman, Club Captain or Chairman of the club. Clubs will have the best contact on their website and on the club finder on EnglandRugby.com.

SCHOOL

The main contact at the school will mostly likely be a member of the PE staff, such as the head of PE or head of rugby, however there may another member of staff or teaching assistant who will be the most proactive, especially in the primary sector. A school might also have a School Games Organiser (SGO), whose role it is to support playing opportunities for all pupils across the school and to develop leadership.

COLLEGE

Where applicable, a member of the sports (or PE) staff or programme lead will be the most suitable contact. A number of colleges or campuses may not have a sport department or run a sport programme in which case another proactive staff member might be the rugby lead. A number of colleges will benefit from a full time sports development professional whose role will be to link colleges with community sport opportunities in order to raise the student participation in sport.

UNIVERSITY

Within the university sector the key contact will be either a member of the student club or from the Athletic Union, or both.

- The university rugby club will function in the same way as a community rugby club, with a committee made from the student population and it will be the role of a named committee member to develop links with the local club. Some institutions may have a Director of Rugby who may have responsibility for club links.
- Universities may also have a permanent, or paid position to support the development of sport and community links within the university, either working for the Athletic Union or in a Sport Development Unit

To support the development of links from university to club, university clusters employ cluster officers. Many universities also have volunteer Gamefinders whose role it is to find students a game of rugby, whether that is in university or in a local club.

COUNTY SPORTS PARTNERSHIPS

County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) are networks of local agencies committed to working together to increase participation in sport. CSPs can be useful in establishing contacts within clubs and education establishments, supporting club development, and providing additional local funding to support club-education link activities.



RFU

To support development of club-education links the RFU and Sport England have invested in a number of projects aimed at broadening rugby's reach into new institutions and to help players transition through education and into clubs. The All Schools programme, Focus Colleges and University Partners and Clusters all provide the resource necessary to support effective club-education links.

Use our Club Finder for details and contacts of local clubs. For information on All Schools or Focus Colleges, email schools@rfu.com. For information on University Partners and Clusters, email universities@rfu.com. You can also visit englandrugby.com/education.

HOW DO I GET STARTED IN SETTING UP A LINK?

The following seven step action plan is designed to give you the information and tools to set up and sustain an effective link.

1

Engagement with institution and clubs have shown to be the most successful element of an education-club link so engaging the right people from the start will help achieve a quality and productive link.

TOP TIP: Be patient in finding the right contact – remembering that in most instances that club officials are volunteers whilst those in education will have other priorities.

2

Have a face to face discussion. Establish the overall key objectives and principles with a focus on the needs of the players involved. Be honest and realistic.

3

Consider what you might agree to offer the partnership and what you might want in return – there is no prescribed criteria as each link is unique. Be flexible and empathetic in your approach.

4

Agree what the link will be made up of in terms of activity, timing, resources and people. Make certain you agree timescales, targets and accountabilities and clearly communicate these.

5

Write it down. There are templates for you to record the link agreement below but remember this is just a guide and other creative ideas may be included to suit the needs of your club link.

6

Convert your planning to action by getting your programme up and running. The RFU and partner agencies have people and resources to support you and the education club link.

7

Regular communication and maintenance of the link will ensure sustainability. Once your link has been running, regular reviews of the process will help you measure your success.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

This guide should provide the information needed to get started to develop your club-education link. If you need more information visit englandrugby.com/education



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