

The role and value of *co-curricular sport*



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Sport, play and physical activity provide a variety of benefits for children and young people; supporting the development of their physical literacy skills, building social connections and promoting positive physical, social and mental health.

Through intentional scheduling of time throughout the school day for co-curricular activities, sport can be utilised as a catalyst for improving behaviour, building a sense of belonging and increasing pupil's concentration which will positively affect their academic progress and readiness to learn, (Youth Sport Trust, 2023a).

This is reinforced by the Department of Education (2012) who emphasise that "Children with higher levels of emotional, behavioural and social wellbeing on average achieve higher levels of academic achievement and are more engaged in school both concurrently and in later years."

Unfortunately, pupils are facing a barrage of adversity which is heightened for those individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In recent research, it was highlighted that **one in five (19.6 per cent) parents in England report that their primary or secondary school children do no enrichment activities in an average week, and this drops to one in four of those in the lowest social grades.** (The Centre for Social Justice, 2021)

This is concerning as recent research suggests that children and young people would like to participate in co-curricular activities as it makes them feel happy, healthier, and well, therefore creating these broader opportunities is essential. This lack of opportunity has had a direct impact on young people's activity levels with recent data highlighting that less than half of children (47.2%) are active with 2.2 million children participating for less than 30 minutes a day. With the Chief Medical Officer recommending 60 minutes a day, young



people from low affluence families are risking falling through the net with 42% of young people categorised as less active.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF, 2021) recognise that co-curricular activities are a potential solution to this problem highlighting that extended school time is often linked to a range of benefits for low-income students, which include increased attendance at school, improved behaviour, and better relationships with peers.

With the increased reference of a narrowing curriculum, the increased cost of activity and sport in the community – it could be argued the place and need for an inclusive, accessible, and meaningful sport and physical activity enrichment offer has never been stronger. Alongside the rising pressures and challenges facing the education sector; it is

time to reconsider the position of co-curricular sport which is far greater than simply participation for sports sake.

Co-curricular activity can be transformational in tackling inequalities through bringing pupils together to build a sense of belonging, building back healthier, happier children and levelling the playing field within our communities.



Yet recent research from the Youth Sport Trust highlights that the amount of co-curricular activity decreases as pupils get older, (Youth Sport Trust, 2022). A broad and deep enrichment offer can provide all young people with the opportunity to develop their confidence, resilience, and knowledge, so they may keep themselves physically and mentally healthy; and the schools role in consistently providing personal development of pupils ensures they are able to access wide, rich experiences beyond the curriculum. **Every child has the right to play and experience the joy of sport as this passion can have a positive impact on how children feel about school, and how they feel in school.**

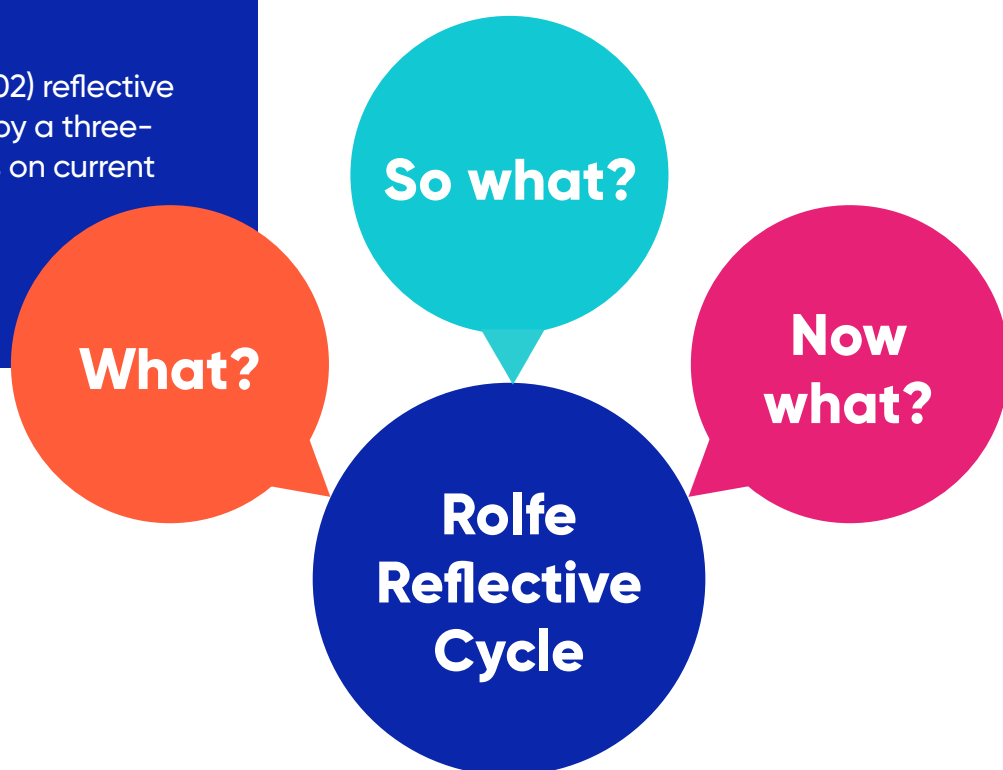
To combat this crisis, it is critical for schools and key stakeholders to collaborate, sharing best practice and innovation to support children and young people to access the opportunities they deserve and unlock their potential. This document aims to raise awareness to the barriers that schools across

the country are facing when implementing co-curricular sport, but most importantly demonstrates ways of how to overcome these barriers. These schools have also highlighted the additional benefits they've achieved through adopting regular co-curricular activities including positively impacting school culture, improving pupil behaviour, and supporting a variety of subjects through cross curricular activities. As a result, this document draws together key learnings from these case studies to support schools in prioritising the utilisation of co-curricular activities.

Each case study that follows is positioned against the Rolfe Reflective Cycle (2002) shown in Figure 1 considering the national context and barriers facing schools; what each individual school has been doing around overcoming these barriers when it comes to co-curricular sport, the difference it has made, and the subsequent actions implemented. Each case study ends with suggestions and questions for other schools to reflect upon.

Figure 1

Figure 1 identifies Rolfe's (2002) reflective cycle which is underpinned by a three-stage process which reflects on current practices, evaluating these practices before creating a strategy for future considerations.



[Department of Education \(2012\) 'The Impact of Pupil Behaviour and Wellbeing on Educational Outcomes'.](#)

[Education Endowment Foundation \(2021\) 'Extending school time'.](#)

[Rolfe, G. \(2002\) 'Reflective practice: Where Now?' Nurse Education in Practice. 2 \(1\) pp. 21-29.](#)

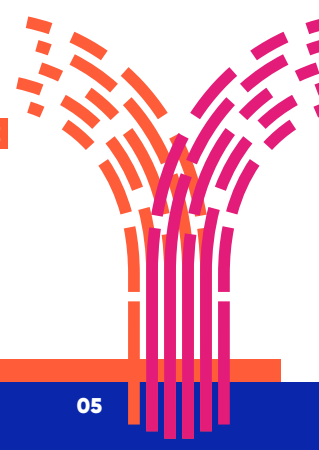
[The Centre of Social Justice \(2021\) 'A level playing field'.](#)

[Youth Sport Trust \(2022\) 'PE Provision in Secondary Schools'. \[Accessed 16/08/23\]](#)

[Youth Sport Trust \(2023a\) 'PE and School Sport: The Annual Report 2023'. \[Accessed 16/08/23\]](#)

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1. Cost of Living Crisis and Co-curricular Sport

Wright Robinson College: An outstanding 11-16 college situated on the outskirts of central Manchester. (North West / SLIDACI: 3 / PLIDACI: 6)

St Michael's Catholic School: A school in Buckinghamshire offering Catholic education for children aged 3-19. (SLIDACI 6/ PLIDACI 9)

What?

A continued barrier for the delivery of co-curricular activities revolves around the limited funding to participate and fuel the resources required for these sustainable activities, (HM Government, 2023). With teacher vacancies on the rise and the cost of living increasing, the addition of co-curricular activities is not currently seen as a priority in some schools.

So what?

Wright Robinson College have had a firm commitment to seek out the talents of their wider school staff beyond their Physical Education department. Utilising teachers from across the school, Wright Robinson College invited staff from multiple departments to deliver co-curricular sport alongside their current timetable. To build a sense of belonging within their community, each teacher received a branded sweatshirt from the PE department for delivery. The commitment from the teaching staff has resulted in a positive shift in the culture within the school, uniting the teaching team to ensure that pupils of all abilities had access to a wide range of opportunities to access the benefits of participating in physical activity.

This approach to resource has also successfully been adopted by St Michael's Catholic School who have witnessed a positive impact of the relationships built between the staff and teachers:



It's a two way street both kids seeing you in a different context and you seeing them when they are actually enjoying school

SCIENCE TEACHER WHO LEADS ON SIXTH FORM SPORT.



My relationship with certain students has been greatly impacted by taking them in PE clubs and PE Cover. Some students who find the traditional classroom-based subjects more challenging, can exhibit totally different behaviour in PE. They see a different side to me also and that helps with a more positive relationship in the classroom.

COVER SUPERVISOR WHO LEADS ON GIRLS' FOOTBALL.



I think expectations at fixtures and afterschool are still high and the students have to meet certain standards in behaviour but at the same time the environment is completely different. As a head of year students can have a bit of fun with me and understand the passion I have for sport and at the same time gives students a chance to showcase their strengths, particularly the weakest in the traditional classroom environment. They can be given a stern talking to/be involved in a meeting with me and their parents in the morning, but then have a muck about and a bit of fun in the same day in the afternoon!

HISTORY TEACHER AND HEAD OF YEAR WHO COACHES BOYS' FOOTBALL.

St Michael's Catholic School also run interhouse competitions and award houses more points when teachers from that house show up to get involved and support (this doesn't need to be for long- even 5 minutes counts!). Relationships are hugely improved, and it goes a long way to create that community spirit. To eliminate potential cost barriers, PE kit is also provided to those teachers volunteering to run clubs, to support with that team culture.

When considering the cost for students, Wright Robinson College have supported the cost of resource in other avenues, removing the barrier of a rigid, expensive kit for pupils, and instead allowing access with a simple 'bring your trainers' policy. Through labelling these opportunities as 'Let's Play Clubs', students were able to develop their physical literacy skills whilst connecting with friends and supporting their mental wellbeing in a positive, learning environment. These clubs did not always contain a set structure, with pupils able to sign out equipment under the observation of the teacher and play creatively under supervision. To support the ongoing cost of living crisis, Wright Robinson College have supported students and their families by establishing a "boot room" for students, which is stocked with graduated students

donated kit which can be loaned to any student. A sustainable option to support both the continuation of accessibility and supporting the environment.

Now what?

After reviewing the actions, secondary schools could consider the following actions to support their development of co-curricular activities:

1. Consider how the wider staff workforce could be engaged to deliver co-curricular activities to increase opportunities within the timetable. With recruited staff, ensure a full induction, kit and continual professional development opportunities are offered. A range of available opportunities can be sourced from the [YST website](#).
2. Consider flexible clubs to allow for students to have choice in the activity on offer in a safe, supervised space. Encourage a 'Let's Play' system where only trainers are required providing Health & Safety is not compromised.
3. Implement a boot room system to provide support for students with cost of kit by encouraging year 11 leavers to donate unwanted items.



2. Co-curricular activity for girls chosen by girls

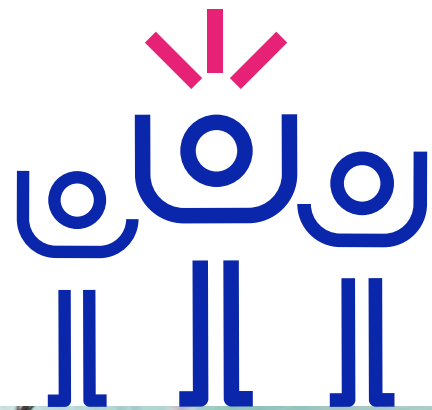
Orchard Manor School- a special school with an outstanding residential provision that caters for nearly 200 students aged 3-19. Orchard Manor provides education and care for pupils with communication and interaction difficulties, Autistic spectrum conditions and learning needs. Pupils attend as day pupils or residentially from Monday to Friday.

(South West / SLIDACI: 3 / PLIDACI: 6)

Haslingden High School – a secondary school located in Haslingden, Rossendale, England. (North / SLIDACI: 7 / PLIDACI: 6)

What?

A recognised barrier within co-curricular provision is the inequality of provision for disadvantaged young people inclusive of age, sex, disability, and socio-economic groups, (Women in Sport, 2022). With the imbalance of equality of participation between boys and girls highlighted as a pivotal requirement in the latest government strategy, choice and access remain critical elements to reducing the gap in participation. If girls are not engaged at a young age, each student will only add to the rising number of women aged 16 and over not currently active enough in the United Kingdom which is currently sat at 39%, (Sport England, 2021).



So what?

A school determined to eliminate this barrier is Orchard Manor School who added an informal inclusive girls club to their co-curricular timetable which any pupil can attend each week. By adding a flexible club to the programme, this removes the fear of formally committing to signing up for the club adopting a drop in approach. This informal, drop in club not only provides the girls with a sense of belonging through connecting with new and current friends, but also empowers them to lead physical activity to their peers. With no requirement for a specialised coach, this cost-effective club can enhance the confidence of young girls and provide them with choice within sport and physical activity. This club had sustainable attendees by allowing a variation of activities with the girls choosing their equipment and activity each week creating a positive environment where pupils have choice of participation whilst socialising with peers.

A similar approach was considered at Haslingden High School to target inactive girls through codesigned co-curricular activities. Haslingden High formed a pupil led girls group that designed each co-curricular block for their peers which had to include a focus of fun, be non-competitive, promote socialisation with peers, relax anxieties and include enjoyable music. Some of the types of activities identified were dance, Zumba, circuits, boxercise, dodgeball and benchball which were led and delivered by experts within the school

and local community (whilst all playing music!). The project also encouraged this group to visit local facilities at the leisure centre to experience climbing, a spin class, a gym induction and laser tag which has encouraged 12 girls to join this centre and regular participation in the activities as a team. As a result of the confidence gained from co-designing and participating in these activities, the girls presented their experiences back to the entire school in an assembly, highlighting the importance of being physical active and finding something you love – “you don’t need to be ‘sporty’”.

Now what?

With these ideas in mind, to increase co-curricular activities at secondary schools, a school could adopt:

1. A girls' only club onto the timetable of activities to provide choice of activity and promote inclusion within this club. If a female teacher is available, consider the use of this resource to support those restricted in participation based upon religion. There is further support on implementing female only programmes within the Girls Active network with Youth Sport Trust which can be found at <https://www.youthsporttrust.org/programmes/targeted-interventions/girls-active>
2. A 'drop in' session policy to remove the fear of commitment but promote the opportunity for students to trial a range of opportunities.

[Sport England \(2021\) 'Gender'. \[Accessed 10/08/23\]](#)

[Women in Sport \(2022\) 'Reframing sport for teenage girls: tackling teenage disengagement'. \[Accessed 16/08/23\]](#)

[Youth Sport Trust \(2023b\) 'Girls Active'. \[Accessed 16/08/23\]](#)



3. Tackling Behaviour through Co-curricular Activities – A Whole School Approach

Djanogly City Academy – a secondary school in Nottingham and part of Djanogly Learning Trust (East Midlands / SLIDACI: 3 / PLIDACI: 2)

What?

Sport and physical activity do not only impact an individual's health and wellbeing but can also act as a catalyst for positive change in behaviour and culture within a school environment, (HM Government, 2023). There is strong evidence to support that physical activity and increased fitness levels have a positive correlation with overview academic performance in children and young people, (Cervello et al. 2022).

So what?

Djanogly City Academy are a leading example of why investing in co-curricular activities can support the development of pupils. Through revolutionary changing their school day timetable to finish at 3:45pm instead of 4:30pm, all students can access an co-curricular activity within their day. This alteration within the school day has observed a positive shift in the behaviour and culture within the school with attendance in co-curricular sport significantly increasing. To encourage student behaviour, the school have adopted a 'graduate coin' programme across the entire school where students must achieve a set number of coins each week inside and outside of class to support their studies and contribute towards their school community teams. A fun method of collection for students for collecting these coins is through attending co-curricular activities which has been regularly opted for by students. Friday morning running clubs are an addition to this offer, rewarding

students with a day in their PE kit, graduate coin, and breakfast as a team for their attendance. An exciting opportunity for students to build community within a club whilst mentally preparing them for their school day is just one of the benefits the school are seeing.

With an open access policy and no genders connected to each individual club, students feel empowered to select their sport based on their own motivations. A highlight of this was the netball club which resulted in a full team of boys competing in inter-competitions through high interest and attendance. Equally, the girls are engaging with the clubs too through a student voice panel operated by underrepresented females within Year 10 students. This panel created and investigated the requests of physical activity within the school and has since selected a dodgeball session for the timetable from this youth engagement. Djanogly City Academy have truly embraced student engagement into their programming by inviting a student mentor from each year group to share students' ideas for the co-curricular timetable during a scholar leadership team meeting. This whole school approach has positively impacted attendance and behaviour of the students creating a community through sport and physical activity.

Now what?

As a result of Djanogly City Academy's proactivity to combat wider school issues through sport and physical activity, wider schools could consider:

1. Exploring the possibility of including co-curricular activities within the school day.
2. Consider the links between food and activity- and providing food as part of the activity or within incentives for engagement.
3. Implement a reward scheme for pupils which awards sport and non-sporting activities, focusing on a reward for process rather than outcome.
4. Consider the equality of offer, the value of open access and also specific provision for either sex.
5. Providing an opportunity for youth engagement with the co-curricular timetable.
6. Consider timetabling co-curricular activities prior to school starting to cater for young people who cannot attend an evening slot.



[Cervello, E. M., Pastor, D., & Moya-Ramon, M. \(2022\) 'Sport Participation and Academic Performance in Young Elite Athletes'. International Journal Environmental Research and Public Health. 19 \(23\).](#)

[HM Government \(2013\) "School Sport and Activity Action Plan Update". \[Accessed 28.07.23\]](#)

4. A Network of Opportunities

Somercotes Academy – member of the Tollbar Family of Academies and a mixed secondary school in North Somercotes, near Louth in Lincolnshire. It draws its pupils from largely deprived rural and coastal areas within a 20 mile radius, with many travelling by bus for over an hour each way to and from school. (East Midlands / SLIDACI: 5 / PLIDACI: 4)

What?

The Chief Medical Officer recommends that children should be active for at least 60 minutes a day across the week but currently 30.1% of children are classed as less active achieving less than 30 minutes a day, (HM Government, 2023). This is concerning with 23.4% of children moving into secondary school at obese and a further 14.3% are overweight, (Baker, 2023). Schools have a duty of care in supporting young people to achieve this goal. Therefore, co-curricular sport is a fantastic way to increase a young person's activity levels and contribute to the recommended daily total. A critical barrier for many schools is the uncertainty of where to start.

inspiring students to trial new sports and meet role models within community provision in the safe environment of their school. Whilst participating in co-curricular activities, students developed their physical literacy skills with a reward system in place to recognise skill-based achievements, sports man, and woman values in addition to a player of the match. By reframing competition in co-curricular activities, students' regular engagement and attendance has positively impacted their life skills and character.

So what?

Somercotes Academy are a great example of a school who have recognised this barrier and actively undertaken methods to reduce this problem through connecting with their School Games Organiser. A School Games Organiser is an individual invested in tackling inactive young people by connecting a network of organisations together to provide opportunities for young people to be active. Somercotes Academy and their local School Games Organiser facilitated a range of community provision through afterschool co-curricular activities to increase activity levels of students whilst bridging the gap to community provision. Local offerings of Louth Football and Grimoldby Cricket were among the opportunities offered for young people



Now what?

To replicate and learn from the success Somercotes Academy has had, secondary schools could consider:

1. Identifying the local [School Games Organiser](#) and collaborating with them to identify local community links to support the delivery of co-curricular activities within the school.
2. Invite 'in' the community so students have the safety of the school environment when trying new sport and meeting new people; before transitioning out into community settings.
3. Identifying a reward system for pupils to engage with, to support their life skill development.
4. Reframe what competitive school sport currently looks like; and work with students to create inspiring, accessible and meaningful opportunities to fulfil their potential.
5. Review the existing School Games formats found on [here](#) and test some new activity for new audiences.



Baker, C. (2023) 'Obesity Statistics'. [Accessed 10/08/23]

HM Government (2013) "School Sport and Activity Action Plan Update". [Accessed 28.07.23]

School Games (2023a) 'Taking Part'. [Accessed 16/08/23]

5. Reaching out for support

All Saints Academy- a Church Academy based in Cheltenham for 11-19 years. (South West / SLIDACI: 2 / PLIDACI: 3)

What?

With a restriction in budgets within schools, there is an increasingly difficult challenge to deliver an enriching timetable of co-curricular activities as a result of limited resources from a physical and human perspective. With community sport facilities continually being squeezed and facing challenges due to the cost of living crisis, the collaboration between school and community could provide a solution to providing opportunities for young people.

So what?

All Saints Academy has tackled the challenge of limited resources by accessing a Department for Education investment programme that aims to meet the goals of the Government's School Sport and Activity Action Plan. Alongside investing in their facilities, the school have connected with their local organisations including Move More* to source specialised teachers to broaden the opportunities on offer for young people to build their physical literacy skills, improve their health and wellbeing and unlock their full potential.

To encourage the attendance of young people to these co-curricular activities, staff at the school have reached out to parents and students through an Edulink which provides easy access to sign ups from home. Through involving parents and guardians within the process, this communication informs key stakeholders of the opportunities available at school to encourage them to attend and participate.

Now what?

By sharing All Saints Academy's practices, secondary schools looking to overcome similar challenges could consider:

1. Building relationships with pupil's parents and families as an influential stakeholder, increasing their awareness of opportunities available at school and their importance.
2. Creating an easily accessible method for booking onto co-curricular activities. This will reduce resource time by adding bookings automatically.
3. Considering accessing the Opening Facilities funding to renovate the current space within the school to provide wider opportunities for disadvantaged young people. Further information and the application to get involved can be found [here](#)
4. Creating a relationship with local partnerships through the School Games Organiser to provide specialised resource for delivering co-curricular activities.

*Move More is an external charity incorporated organisation (CIO) dedicated to delivering the provision of PE and Sport School in every primary school across Cheltenham and Tewkesbury, (Move More, (2023).

[Move More \(2023\) 'Our Charity'](#). [Accessed 15/08/23]

[We Sport \(2023\) 'Opening School Facilities Fund'](#). [Accessed 16/08/23]



6. Creating a community through co-curricular activities

Wilmslow High School- a mixed sex 11-18 comprehensive school in Wilmslow, Cheshire, England. Wilmslow is a large school with approximately 2000 students on roll. (North West / SLIDACI: 10 / PLIDACI: 6)

What?

Through participating in sport and physical activity in co-curricular activities, it is recognised that pupil engagement in schools can increase by developing a sense of belonging within the school community and representing their school. This is critical as since the pandemic there has been a 35% increase in the number of children and young people feeling lonely even with access to social media, (Mental Health Foundation, 2021). Therefore, these clubs have the opportunity to create social connections and develop lifelong skills for children and young people in addition to being physically active.

So what?

Wilmslow High School proves the importance of bringing students together through co-curricular activities through recognising and rewarding students for their commitment to attending and their values demonstrated whilst participating. Valuing the importance of teamwork, staff are minimizing isolation by building a community within each co-curricular club on offer within their timetable through rewarding regular attendees with fixtures and providing trophies and awards for demonstrating sportsmanship values.

With an end of season celebration evening available for attendees, clubs are committed to both individual and team development in a safe environment after school. To support the attendance of students, the school's timetable is structured to allow for Physical Education lessons to be scheduled for the end of the day with taster sessions integrated to encourage students to 'give it a go'. Through placing the sessions after school, the school is endorsing the safety of young people encouraging young people to participate in a safe supervised provision and in positive activity after school. This concept is critical as [national research](#) has shown pupils are fearing for safety after school and also the rise in stabbings of under 16s in the 4-6pm window.

Wilmslow High School staff understand the importance of creating a sense of belonging for pupils, going the extra mile by leading the school teams in Saturday morning fixtures to provide the opportunity for children and young people to represent their team and compete. Alongside creating a positive competition experience for the pupils, this investment of time has positively impacted the relationship between staff and pupils particularly with pupils on the verge of exclusion: channelling their behaviour towards a positive outlet.

Now what?

To broaden the sense of belonging for all children across secondary schools, schools can consider:

1. Exploring the link between curriculum and co-curricular provision- i.e., consider implementing taster sessions within Physical Education lessons to promote the opportunities available in co-curricular activities.
2. Work with senior leaders to consider where timetabling of PE at the end of the day could aid opportunities for young people to stay after school.
3. A focus of creating a community within co-curricular activities to ensure students want to attend, and also implement a school wide reward scheme to recognise individual achievements that are not solely performance based.



[Mental Health Foundation \(2021\) 'What is the current state of loneliness in children and young people?'. \[Accessed 10/08/23\]](#)

7. Physical activity options outside of elite sport

St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy- a mixed secondary school and sixth form which is part of the Newman Catholic College Collegiate. (West Midlands / SLIDACI: 1 / PLIDACI: 2)

What?

Since the pandemic young people have had increased levels of anxiety, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to face challenges such as high rates of exclusion and poor mental health. This is supported by The School Health Research Network (2021) who highlighted that 18% of children aged 7-16 have a probable mental health disorder.

So what?

St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy is tackling this barrier by ensuring their co-curricular timetable is inclusive for all their young people. By reframing competition to include multiple teams, there is greater opportunity for more young people to represent their school at intra and inter school competitions suitable for all ability levels. This inclusivity promotes a sense of belonging for individuals without isolating a young person by their ability. In addition to traditional clubs, a social club is also offered to encourage participation in physical activity by empowering the young people to choose their sports weekly. With a host of opportunities for young people to also lead, this club promotes the development of leadership skills for young people alongside developing their social connections with peers. These behaviours support the young person both inside and outside of sport encouraging their engagement in lessons and within the school environment.

Now what?

To reduce the anxiety of young people within schools through the provision of co-curricular activities, schools can consider the following to promote success:

1. Create multiple competitive teams within each club to provide the opportunity for more pupils to represent the school at different ability levels; drawing upon young leaders and wider staff.
2. Reflect on the Reframing Competition Resource found [here](#) to consider new formats to adopt to promote positive competition, i.e., rolling subs to be considered within teams to reduce isolation.
3. Implement the principles of reframing competition within co-curricular activities to ensure young people are awarded for the process rather than the outcome.
4. Review the timetable to ensure that there are a range of opportunities for young people on the co-curricular timetable which can include multi sports or social clubs.
5. Consider the role of older students who could adopt leadership/team manager roles which would reduce pressure on PE staff as well as developing leadership skills.

[School Games \(2023b\) 'Reframing Competition'](#).
[Accessed 16/08/23]

[School Health Research Network \(2021\) Student Health and Wellbeing in Wales: Key findings from the 2021 School Health Research Network Primary School Student Health and Wellbeing Survey.](#)



8. Lunch Time Sport Leaders

Anthony Gell School; an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school based in Derbyshire. (East Midlands / SLIDACI: 5 / PLIDACI: 8)

What?

A critical barrier faced by schools is around the school workforce; particularly the limited staffing resource available for co-curricular activities. This challenge has a direct impact on the quantity of co-curricular clubs available at a school limiting the opportunity and choice of activity for young people.

So what?

A new initiative created by Anthony Gell School sought to resolve this barrier whilst providing the opportunity for young people to develop their leadership skills and confidence through physical activity. Lunch time sports leaders is a weekly co-curricular activity for students, led by students to provide physical activities for peers at lunchtime. With no specialised knowledge required from the supervisor, setting up a successful lunch time leaders club has encouraged targeted young people to be active whilst encouraging their development of life skills.

When students were asked if they felt more confident leading people and whether they'd developed leadership skills, some of the key responses were:



I have more confidence talking in front of people. Before I started coming to lunch time leaders, I used to be scared of talking to people in front of them because of all of the eyes...I'm still a bit scared but it's helped.



I think it's helped me develop my confidence in leading younger kids and just

experience with leading and being more confident with other people" and "ordering people to do things, not yelling at them, just asking them a few times and waiting until they do it and involving everyone (participants) and trying to keep everyone together.

Through the implementation of a student led co-curricular activity, students can develop social connections whilst engaging with their physical literacy skills. As a free of charge activity integrated into the school day, this activity is accessible to young people in a safe learning space. Students leading activities were also rewarded with the opportunity to represent their school at primary school sports event throughout the year where they can deliver sports activity, officiate, and involve themselves in the scoring and setting up of the sporting event.

Now what?

With this initiative in mind, secondary schools can consider the following:

1. Implementing a student led activity into the timetable to relieve specialised PE resource and promote leadership skills and confidence within the student population.
2. Reflect on the leadership opportunities that currently exist for students, and how these can be intentionally planned throughout a school year to support with provision.
3. Consider an informal approach to activity such as providing a range of equipment and encouraging students to create their own games.

9. Tackling crime in the local community through engaging young people in co-curricular sport

Stephanie Selsby – School Games Organiser at Ursuline College, Westgate-on-Sea

What?

A concern within today's society is the dramatic increase in violent crime from young people. In 2022 there were 19,555 proven offences for possession of a knife or offensive weapon with 18% of those offenders aged 10-17, (UK Parliament, 2022). The increase in crime is now having a negative impact on children and young people with one in ten children missing school in the last six months due to feeling unsafe, with those in minority groups more likely to report concerns with their safety, (Children and Young People Now, 2023).

So what?

These increased crime rates were noticed by the School Games Organiser for the Ursuline College area with the number of thefts increasing in Thanet by 6.3% and with a violent crime rating of 'high'. As a result, the School Games Organiser met with their local primary and secondary schools in the area to identify potential solutions to increasing the safety of children and young people and their trust and motivation to attend school. The success of these meetings culminated into a newly formed partnership with the local Clip and Climb centre. Through the choice of students and a strong networking team, the Clip and Climb centre provided a co-curricular activity for schools in the local area to utilise as a safe space to be active. This activity also utilised a targeted approach

inviting those from disadvantaged backgrounds with limited opportunities to be active to the centre. To create a sustainable club for the young people, the school pupils were offered discounted codes for climbing in the school holidays to encourage further climbing and offer a safe space outside of school.

To analyse the progress of these sessions, a survey has been conducted within schools following the course of clubs to identify how students have felt following the activities of which 100% of which has been positive. 21 schools are now engaging with this local centre and as a result of which the venue is seeking to host the next half term activity camp to support the community further.

Now what?

With this initiative in mind, it is clear to observe the impact co-curricular clubs can have on young people's safety in addition to their fitness and health. Secondary schools could adopt this approach by:

1. Contacting their local School Games Organiser to build networking connections within the local community.
2. Utilising student voice within each year group to observe what activities the students would like to engage with.
3. Commit to finding co-curricular clubs within the community to signpost students on to in order to maintain safety and participation.

[Children and Young People Now \(2023\) 'Pupils from minority groups more likely to feel unsafe in schools, research warns'](#). [Accessed 10/08/23]

[UK Parliament \(2022\) 'Knife crime statistics'](#). [Accessed 10/08/23]

10. Engaging the whole staff community in co-curricular provision.

Chelsea Academy – a coeducational Church of England secondary school and sixth form with academy status, located in the Chelsea area of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London. (SLIDACI 6/ PLIDACI 3)

Cockermouth School- a coeducational secondary school academy and sixth form located in Cockermouth in Cumbria. With scenic views and plenty of fresh air all students and staff are encouraged to get outside where possible. (SLIDACI 8/ PLIDACI 7)

What?

With 80% of teachers considering leaving the profession, it is imperative that the workload of teachers is shared where possible, to ensure opportunities of children and young people are not sacrificed, (Youth Sport Trust, 2023). Within Physical Education alone, there has been a decline of 8.8% of PE teachers across the last 10 years, (Youth Sport Trust, 2023). By identifying the wider skill set of the staff, alternative individuals beyond the Physical Education team can deliver co-curricular provision which can support the wellbeing of both staff and pupils.

So what?

A successful example of utilising the skills of the staffing team is Chelsea Academy. From analysing each staff member's skills and interests, the leadership team are able to work with a wide range of their staff to ensure that the co-curricular sport teams 'managers' are non PE specialists (currently from the English, RE and Science departments). These members of staff are valued by the Physical Education team and students appreciating their colleagues going above and beyond to improve the pupil experience. Dependant on the interests and confidence of staff, this can provide a wider pool of opportunities for

pupils, with Chelsea Academy able to offer football, Jiu Jitsu and American Football.

To unite the workforce, staff leading activities are highlighted and celebrated on display boards (as shown below) and are recognised as being positive role models for their students. Where there are concerns around time commitments, the PE team ensure all equipment is ready to be picked up at the end of the school day and support with registers to ensure the after school club runs as seamlessly as possible. This collaborative approach shares the workload between staff; all committed towards the same goal of creating positive experiences for sport, play and physical activity for their students. All staff involved have reported improved relationships with students who attend their clubs. This supports with behaviour management in the classroom.

This whole school buy in has also been successfully demonstrated in Cockermouth School where the PE department have made a conscious effort to build relationships with wider staff within the school and encourage their involvement in co-curricular activities. Some excellent examples of this practice are:

A new member of staff in the maths department is supporting the Year 10 football club. After experiencing a challenging group in the classroom, this

co-curricular sport activity has provided a fresh environment to develop rapport with positive relationships formed between staff and students.

Additionally, Cockermouth School have a head of year delivering a weekly running club, a history teacher leading girls' football and a teaching assistant support Key Stage 3 hockey. These success stories are the result of the PE staff investing their time into building relationships with the wider staff team to create an excitement for sport.

To eliminate further barriers to attendance of the co-curricular sessions, the school also allows students to participate in their school uniform (all they need is trainers). A further incentive considered by Chelsea Academy was to allow pupils to wear their PE kit to school and to encourage and reward their attendance.

Now what?

It is clear to observe that shifting the culture within a school to take a whole school approach to increasing co-curricular opportunities has many benefits inclusive of improving behaviour, building relationships between pupils and students, whilst increasing opportunities. Secondary schools could adopt this approach by:

1. Contacting the whole staff workforce to identify skills and interests of each individual to fill gaps within the timetable.
2. Utilise space within school display boards to recognise staff role models and opportunities within the co-curricular timetable.
3. Review the requirements for sports kit in co-curricular clubs to create an inclusive environment for all.



11. Promoting co-curricular sport as an alternative activity to crime!

Manchester Communications Academy – a secondary school based in Harpurhey Manchester and part of the Greater Manchester Academies Trust. (North / SLIDACI: 1 / PLIDACI: 1)

What?

Youth crime is tearing through our communities with 27,000 children self-identified as gang members and a further 313,000 knowing someone in a gang prior to the pandemic, (Children's Commissioner, 2021). These increasing statistics are still an immediate problem within our communities today with half of under 16 stabbings occurring in the 4-6pm window of the school day.

So what?

A solution to tackling crime within children and young people is by finding a sense of belonging for these individuals so that the opportunity for this crime to occur is removed. Manchester Communications Academy have invested into solving this problem by working with local community groups to create 24-hour access of their school facilities to provide a continuous safe space for children and young people to attend. In a new initiative, this school have offered their facilities to clubs within their local community free of charge in agreement to house 50% of their attendees to pupils from the school per club. This agreement not only provides pupils with a range of co-curricular activities to select from but also offers specialist instructors to resource each activity, a safe environment for pupils to access physical activity whilst preventing from children from feeling isolated after school and resulting to crime.

To build these activities into pupil's weeks, the Academy outlines an expectation that pupils must attend two co-curricular activities a week to encourage an appetite for further attendance.

Now what?

This initiative highlights the importance of collaboration within the community, bringing clubs together to tackle inactive pupils whilst developing a lifelong passion for physical activity by integrating regular participation into their daily lives. Secondary schools can adopt a similar approach by:

1. Identifying their current School Games Organiser who can connect each school with local clubs and organisations that can deliver co-curricular activities within the timetable.
2. Seek support from the Opening Facilities Fund to upskill current facilities to build safe learning environments for activities both inside and outside of the school timetable.
3. Consider adding expectations for pupils to attend co-curricular activities to create lifelong habits within pupil's daily lives.

Children's Commissioner (2021) 'Children will keep dying on our streets until there is a joined up public health response to gangs'. [Accessed 16/08/23]

CNN Health (2018) 'Children have the highest risk of being stabbed on the way home from school, study finds'. [Accessed 16/08/23]

12. Promoting Mental Wellbeing through Co-curricular Sport

Durham Trinity Sports College – a special school educating pupils 2–19 years of age, with autism or profound, moderate, severe or complex learning difficulties. (North / SLIDACI: 10 / PLIDACI: 3)

Biddenham International Sports College – a secondary school based in Bedfordshire. (South / SLIDACI: 9 / PLIDACI: 5)

What?

As previously identified within these case studies children and young people are not engaging with the 60 minutes of physical activity a day. This has impacted the mental health of children and young people with 1 in 4 suffering with poor mental health, (NHS, 2022). With a high percentage of young people suffering with this internal trauma, it is the duty of schools to identify methods to reduce the stress on pupils, of which providing additional co-curricular activities can play a key role.

So what?

Durham Trinity Sports College have identified a yoga co-curricular activity club as a supportive option for both developing physical literacy of young people but also supporting their mental wellbeing. Through focusing on breathing exercises and calming down, this club educates pupils in managing their behaviour and controlling emotions alongside becoming physically active. Since implementing yoga into the programme, the school has noted a shift in pupil behaviour and their ability to reflect on their emotions.

An alternative co-curricular option identified by Biddenham International School and Sports College was a mindfulness club. This creative idea supports pupils to engage in physical activity through mindful walks and creative drawing in outside spaces. This low impact activity provides an alternative option for pupils, building healthy habits into their daily routine whilst supporting their

ability to manage their emotions. This co-curricular activity also encourages pupils to connect with each other building a sense of belonging through a school community. To build these activities into pupil's weeks, the Academy outlines an expectation that pupils must attend two co-curricular activities a week to encourage an appetite for further attendance.

Now what?

From acknowledging both activities adopted by each school, it is clear to observe that co-curricular clubs can be structured in a variety of ways with a range of levels of intensity. Key considerations that can be applied into wider secondary schools are:

1. Identifying a lead for these activities outside of the Physical Education department: this lead may be already connected with supporting the mental wellbeing of pupils.
2. Providing a club which opens a safe space for pupils to be active and reflective, sharing thoughts and feelings with fellow pupils.
3. Consider the outdoor spaces that can be occupied with physical activity that do not require specialist resources.

[NHS \(2022\) 'Mental health of children and young people in England 2022 – wave 3 follow up to the 2017 survey'.](#) [Accessed 14.08.23]

13. Student Led Co-curricular Society Clubs

Theale Green School – a coeducational secondary school and sixth form with academy status located in the village of Theale, Berkshire. (South / SLIDACI: 8 / PLIDACI: 6)

What?

A critical barrier in creating co-curricular clubs within secondary schools is the justification of resource due to the limited attendance of young people. A solution for combatting poor attendance could be involving young people within the process of selecting the timetable. Youth engagement is an active process which allows pupils to have a voice, expressing their views and experiences to influence future decisions. Through implementing pupil voice into the structure of an co-curricular programme, it can provide children and young people with confidence with new people and comfortability discussing feelings, in addition to developing their communication skills, (NSPCC, 2023).

So what?

Theale Green School have considered the use of pupil voice within their co-curricular activities thinking outside of the box when deciding the selection within their programme. Through considering the importance of play, the school have allowed pupils to add to the timetable with their own club ideas inclusive of a gardening club, ultimate frisbee club, dungeons and dragons and Duke of Edinburgh club. Alongside the traditional sports offer, these student-led activities propose an alternative option for physical activity promoting creativity and play to create positive experiences for children and young people to connect. With no specialist teacher required, students can be supervised within a safe environment

to referee their own activities and play for fun. The school has seen an increase in attendance and health and wellbeing of pupils since implementing this co-collaborated timetable shifting to a positive school culture and ethos.

Now what?

A key message to observe from this case study is that sport and physical activity has no defined structure. It should be encouraged that:

1. Schools co-collaborate with their pupils to identify what activities they would like to participate in even if these stray from the traditional sporting options.
2. Consider the School Games 'physical activity' and multi-sport as alternative options for co-curricular activities which can still contribute to the 60 minutes of activity a day.



[NSPCC \(2023\) 'Involving children and young people'](#).
[Accessed 14/08/23]

14. Co-curricular activities tailored to YOUR students

City Academy Bristol – a secondary school part of the Cabot Learning Federation Multi Academy Trust (SLIDACI 3/ PLIDACI 2)

What?

For many children and young people, their family affluence, characteristics, geography and lived experiences can negatively impact their ability to access the same quality of health and educational outcomes as their peers, (Youth Sport Trust, 2023a). Schools must focus on the 53% of young people not reaching the physical activity guidelines through targeted co-curricular activities, (Sport England 2022).

So what?

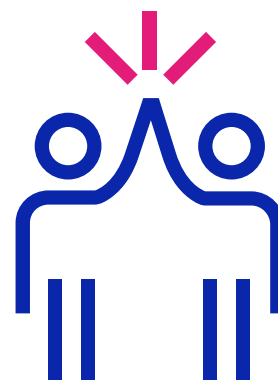
An excellent example of targeted sport and physical activity provision is demonstrated by City Academy who continuously monitor and evaluate the demographic data of the pupils attending their co-curricular activities. If these activities are not attended by children and young people in need, the club is removed from the timetable and reconsidered to an alternative activity. To support their targeted approach, City Academy have adopted Youth Sport Trust programmes tailored to the current student demand to both educate and support their co-curricular sports offer inclusive of Boys Move, Girls Active and Active in Mind.

In addition to this, City Academy understand the value of recreational play for pupils outside of lessons; opening their facilities during breaks and lunch time to encourage pupils to participate in unstructured free play.

Now what?

From observing the success within City Academy, fellow schools could benefit from this case study by:

1. Identify pupils that require tailored co-curricular activities using the Youth Sport Trust evidence of need tool found [here](#) and reach out to the young people to seek preferences of sport and physical activity options.
2. Create targeted co-curricular activities within the timetable for inactive pupils which are regularly reviewed to assess occupancy and engagement.

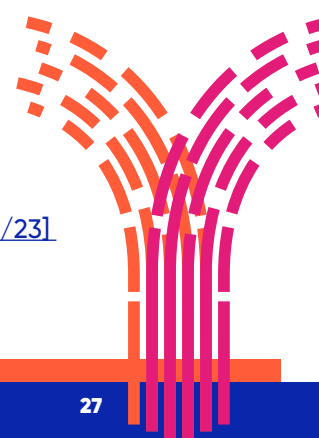


[School Games \(2023c\) 'Evidence of Need: SGO CPD'](#). [Accessed 16/08/23]

[Sport England. \(2022\) 'Active Lives \(Children and Young People\) Survey 2021-22'](#). [Accessed 16/08/23]

[Youth Sport Trust \(2023a\) 'PE and School Sport: The Annual Report 2023'](#). [Accessed 16/08/23]

[Youth Sport Trust \(2023c\) 'Active School Planner'](#). [Accessed 16/08/23]



Home Country & International Case Studies

Creating Daily Habits!

Setting North West Community Campus

Location Scotland

Aim With the Chief Medical Officer recommending 60 active minutes a day for children and young people, it is critical that our schools can educate the importance of protecting time in the day for activity and encouraging physical activity to be a habit rather than a chore.

Description of Activity North West Community Campus supports pupils to achieve their 60 active minutes through multiple different options including publishing a range of different sport and physical activity options within their co-curricular timetable, timetabling two movement breaks into the school day and providing equipment for the pupils to engage in individual exercise activities during their breaks.

Creating Lifelong Skills through Co-curricular Activities

Setting Ysgol Aberconwy

Location Wales

Aim Every school has a duty of care to pupils to develop their lifelong skills as they progress through education to ensure every pupil is well equipped for a career post-education. However, there is a clear increase in the number of young people categorised as unemployed between the ages of 16 to 24 years old, (UK Parliament, 2023). By offering an inclusive timetable of co-curricular activities, schools can educate pupils around these life skills utilising sport and physical activity as a catalyst for change.

Description of Activity An excellent example of utilising physical activity to develop life skills has been demonstrated by Ysgol Aberconwy who have explored outdoor learning opportunities for pupils through a 'forest school', creating a sport ambassadors' scheme and providing the opportunity to complete a leadership qualification through co-curricular provision.

Co-curricular needs a mandatory slot in the school day

Location

Germany

Aim

With children and young people at risk of falling behind with studies due to the pandemic, schools are not prioritising co-curricular activities within the school day.

Description of Activity

Over 65% of secondary schools in Germany have adopted an 'all day' model where children attend an all-day programme for at least seven hours for a minimum of three days a week. The shift in hours has been chosen to schedule co-curricular activities into the timetable around studies to combat inactivity levels in addition to societal problems inclusive of crime. It has been highlighted that children and young people attending an 'all day' programme schedule have witnessed a significant impact on their grade achievements and positive wellbeing, (Steinmann et al. 2019).



Steinmann, I. Strietholt, R. & Caro, D. (2019) 'Participation in co-curricular activities and student achievement: evidence from German all-day schools' *School effectiveness and school improvement*. 30. (2) pp. 155-176.

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Glossary

SLIDACI - School location income deprivation affecting children index

PLIDACI - Pupil location income deprivation affecting children index.

EDC - Ethnically diverse communities





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