

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

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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]