

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.

