

## FORMING A SCHOOL-CLUB LINK

### Why form a school-club link?

Both schools and clubs can benefit from forming a school-club link. From the school's point of view, the club's coaches will be able to support the school in the form of coaching, mentoring teachers and leaders, organising a competition, etc. The club, by providing an exit route for fencers at the school, will be able to boost its membership, as well as gaining access to potential new venues and schools through the school they are linked with.

### How to make it sustainable

**Shared Standards:** Schools pride themselves on the standards of behaviour, attitude and attainment that they set for their pupils and staff. It is important that the school and club work to an agreed set of standards as pupils will expect external coaches to show the same attitude during sessions as teachers show during lessons.

**Agreement:** A formal agreement, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the club and the aims and expectations of the programme, should be agreed in advance of the establishment of the school-club link and adhered to throughout.

**Continuity:** It is important to give young people the chance to pursue an interest in fencing outside of school at an appropriate level. Having a local club that is readily available at a convenient time and location and for the same age group as those at the school you are coaching in is vital if the link is to be a success.

**Coaches in Schools:** Anyone working in a school should be qualified and registered at the appropriate level (Level 2 registered coach if working with metal equipment; GO/FENCE Leader if working with plastic and/or foam equipment). If a school has trained their own students and/or teachers as GO/FENCE Leaders and/or metal fencing coaches, the regular input of a coach from the local club will help to enhance the reputation of the club in the school and make it more likely that children from the school will visit the local club.

**Understanding and Respect:** It is important that understanding and mutual respect exists between the school club and the community club – they should work together, not compete with one another. The involvement and support of other parties, such as the School Games Organiser (SGO), Partnership Development Manager (PDM), Regional and County Fencing organisations, should also be sought where necessary and appropriate.

**Communication:** maintaining good and regular communication with both the school and the parents/carers of the young people involved helps to strengthen the link between the school and your club.

**Involving Young People:** involving a good number (at least 5-10) of young people in the school-club link (for example through leadership, ambassadorial and administrative roles) will help to keep the link strong and enhance the reputation of both clubs within the school. Potential new recruits will feel more encouraged if their peers are already involved. However, it is important to not just focus on having a high number of participants: most important is the number of pupils who progress from the school club to your club and become regular members over a number of years.

## Agreements

### The School agrees to...

- Provide a main point of contact
- Deliver fencing in curriculum/after school
- Deliver the fencing Achievement Awards
- Deliver the *GO/FENCE* leadership awards
- Enter school teams in local competitions
- Advertise the club in school
- Advertise the initiative in the school newsletter to parents
- Assist with volunteer recruitment

### If the school agrees to outside coaches coming in, the school is to...

- Provide appropriate facilities
- Ensure a teacher is present at all times
- Ensure a teacher/leader lead at least one session
- Give sufficient warning to the club of any changes that need to be made
- Provide a register

- Consider entering or running a competition

### The Club agrees to...

- Provide a main point of contact
- Provide posters, flyers etc.
- Organise a Curriculum Package
- Provide coaches for agreed sessions in curriculum and/or extra-curricular time
- Ensure all coaches are qualified and help mentor teachers to ensure sustainability
- Give sufficient warning to the school of any changes that need to be made
- Help organise a school festival/competition
- Provide equipment for the school to use
- Help arrange officials for agreed fixtures
- Offer young people high quality leadership and volunteering opportunities as part of the Step into Sport programme
- Provide and assess fencing Achievement Awards and/or assist with schools teams
- Any other

## Programme Delivery

It is important to make sure that when working with schools, and when setting up a school-club link, a clear and appropriate programme is established before any activity takes place. Schools will want to see, both for their benefit and for the benefit of their students, that any programme they engage in will be aimed at an appropriate level for the students participating and has clear aims and outcomes. The club and coach delivering the programme will also benefit by establishing in advance what the programme will look like and what the aims and outcomes will be.

The rest of this section of this toolkit will help you to ensure that the programme you are proposing is appropriate and has clear aims and outcomes. The following sections will also be useful:

Key Stages (pp. 3-8)

Suggested 10-Session *GO/FENCE* Programme for a Level 2 Coach (p. 13)

Curriculum vs. After-School (p. 14)

### **Inter- & Intra-School Competition**

Intra- and Inter-School Competitions are great ways to keep young fencers enthused. Arranging competitions at specific intervals during the fencing programme will give the children tangible goals to work towards.

