

England
Rugby

CLUB EDUCATION LINKS

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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.

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. A good club link will provide benefits that are wider than playing rugby, which include work and volunteering experience and that will build on people's confidence and competence.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE PLAYER?

- Through 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

WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE CLUB?

- More people playing and 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?

- 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
- A wide range of volunteering opportunities for students
- Engagement with wider community
- Support from club coaches





WHO'S WHO

There are many people who you might work with to develop your club-education link, this may vary depending on your local area, but the common ones are:

CLUB

There are several people in a club who may help, such as a Schools Officer or Age Grade Chair. Use our [Club Finder](#) for details and contacts of local clubs. As well as community clubs there are also Professional clubs in the men and women's game who also have a delivery arm.

SCHOOL

The main contact at the school is likely to be a member of PE staff. It may be that someone in the club already has a contact within the PE department who can help, if not the main reception will be able to put you in contact.

SCHOOL GAME ORGANISER

There is a network of 450 SGO nationally, whose role it is to support playing opportunities for pupils across a network of local schools. You can find your local SGO team by searching online.

COLLEGE

A member of the Sports/PE staff is likely to be the main contact. For colleges without a sport department or sports programmes a proactive member of staff might be the rugby lead. Some colleges may have a sports development professional who will link colleges with community sport opportunities.

UNIVERSITIES

The key contact will either be a member of the student club (such as club captain) or a paid position within the Athletic Union or both. These contacts can be found on GMS or via the University website. Some universities will have a Cluster Officer or a volunteer "GameFinder" both of whom help to link students to local clubs.

ACTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Active Partnerships (formerly County Sports Partnerships) are a network of local agencies who work together to increase participation in sport. They establish contacts within clubs and educational establishments, support club development and can provide additional funding for club-education link activities.

RFU

The RFU and Sport England invest in projects aimed at broadening rugby's reach into new institutions and helping players transition through education into clubs. To find out information on specific programmes and how to get involved please visit www.englandrugby.com/education



HOW DO I GET STARTED IN SETTING UP A LINK?

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

ENGAGEMENT

Engaging the right people from the start will help achieve a quality and productive link.

Top: Tip-Take your time in finding the right contact. Remember, club officials are often volunteering and those in education may have other priorities.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- [Headteacher engagement letter from RFU CEO](#)

AIM

Establish key objectives and principles. Focus on the wants and needs of the players. Be honest and realistic.

WHAT'S YOUR OFFER?

Decide what you will offer the partnership and what you'd like in return, remembering that each link is unique. Think about how you 'sell' your offer – for example Senior Leaders in schools will want to know how any activity will benefit the holistic development of their students. Be flexible and empathetic.

PLANNING

Agree on the activity, timing, resources and people along with timescales, targets and accountabilities. Make sure these are communicated clearly. Be creative to overcome barriers which might exist, for example new schools might start through playing Non-Contact rugby.

USEFUL DOCUMENTS

- [Plan Example and Template](#)
- [Rugby Club Invite Letter Example](#)
- [Template Risk Assessment](#)
- [Festival checklist](#)

DELIVERY

Get your programme up and running. Ensure there is a regular review to see what is going well and how you can further develop your link.

COMMUNICATION

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. Share your success stories with others!



NOW YOU HAVE A CLUB LINK - THINGS TO REMEMBER

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

How do you engage with and support with parents, especially those new to rugby?

Think about conversations you have with them to support their child, especially if they have other commitments. Think too how you make the club welcoming to parents as well as how you share the RFU core values. How do you as a club share your philosophy and any codes of practices for spectators/parents?

OVERPLAYING OF PLAYERS

How do you communicate together between the institution, club and parents to avoid players over-playing, or worse being forced to choose who to play for? Visit the RFU Age Grade Codes of Practice for more information and practical advice: www.englandrugby.com/codesofpractice

INJURY AND CONCUSSION

How do you work together to ensure a joined-up approach about injury or concussion?

The RFU's overarching player safety and wellbeing programme- RugbySafe- offers a Toolkit which provides information and guidance on various player welfare topics including concussion. Click [here](#) to go to the RugbySafe webpage.

FORMATS OF THE GAME

Do you have an offer that's suitable for everyone and mirrors what students may do in their institution? There are many different formats of the game including non-contact, X rugby (reduced contact) and full contact. Please see the following links for more information:

- [Non-Contact video](#)
- [X Rugby video](#)

EARLY YEARS

Are you aware of our early years guidance that looks at the development of children between the ages of 18 months to 5 years? You can find the full guidance document [here](#) with ideas for safe, stage appropriate and progressive activities.

RETAINING PLAYERS

How do you work together to keep players engaged in rugby, especially those aged 16-18? Check out the video's on the Schools and Colleges YouTube channel [here](#) and [@AgeGradeRugby](#) for hints and tips.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the sport is of paramount importance. Guidance and important documents can be found [here](#).

CLUB LINKS FAQ'S

Q: We don't have anyone who can deliver during the day, who can we utilise to deliver rugby in schools on our behalf?

A: There are several partners and organisations your club may use to support delivery in school, including:

- School's Games Organisers (SGO's)
- Local **Premiership** and **Championship** Clubs
- External Providers can support clubs with tailored coaching sessions at targeted schools. Clubs should meet the provider to target age groups and identify what direct support is needed. Clubs should check external providers qualifications (DBS, Coaching qualifications etc) and ensure that the company have **public liability insurance**.
- Local Universities are a great source of coaches, referees and volunteers to support the club as well as players.

Q: How can the RFU support us to engage with the education sector?

A: Club Developers can support clubs by signposting to local funding opportunities, best practice examples from similar other clubs, and information about other local partner opportunities.

**FOR A HELPFUL VIDEO CLIP
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:**

[How can the RFU Club
Developers help?](#)



Q: How can we recruit and develop volunteers within our club to deliver in education?

A: Have you considered that you may already have members, or local connections working in an education establishment that you could reach out to or why not consider a **Young Rugby Ambassador programme** with your Age Grade players? After you have recruited a team of volunteers, think about how you can support and reward.

Q: What funding is available to help us? (training for us and staff, equipment, coaching costs etc).

A: There are many different funding streams that might be available to clubs such as through your Constituent Body, Local Authority or Sport England. Funding or grants may vary depending on location or on the planned activity.

The RFU have partnered Index to provide a free to use grant search facility which allows you to search through the thousands of grants and loans that could help your club. More information can be found [here](#).

**FOR A HELPFUL VIDEO CLIP
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:**

[Funding your
education link](#)



Q: What are the minimum standards for our coaches/what do schools/ colleges require?

A: Institutions will have their own requirements for external coaches delivering sessions, so it is worth checking with the institutions prior to any delivery. Most however will expect a coach to have and to demonstrate:

- **Level 2**, or equivalent, award.
- Enhanced **DBS** check.

The RFU will also recommend coaches complete, **Headcase**, **In Touch** and **First Aid** prior to any delivery in schools.

**FOR A HELPFUL VIDEO CLIP
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:**

[Minimum standards
schools expect from
rugby club coaches
coming in to deliver
sessions](#)



Q: Are our coaches insured and is club insured for school activity at the club?

A: You are covered as a coach when you are coaching at an RFU affiliate club at Level 3 or below and education activity at a club site is also covered.

If you are coaching in a professional capacity on a freelance basis and receiving payment, whether as a sole trader or as a company, you are not covered under the RFU insurance policy and should ensure that you arrange your own liability cover in respect of your coaching activities.

Click [here](#) for RFU Insurance Centre which also has a copy of the RFUs public liability insurance which some schools may wish to see.

Q: We've been trying to make contact but haven't been successful so far, what can we do?


A: You can use [GMS](#), the [County Schools Union](#), contact England Colleges at colleges@rfu.com or [Students RFU](#) to help find the contact information. The reception will also be able to assist.

Q: We've been in contact with the school, college or university but they are reluctant to offer rugby

A: Consider focussing the message on the impact on students. We know for example those who take part in rugby are more confident, competent, develop teamwork etc. We know also that our values of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship also resonate with teachers and it a key selling point.


Think too about your playing offer, the delivery of non-contact initially rather than the contact version can overcome hesitancy to take part. Non-contact also makes it easier for young leaders to get involved.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:**

[Insurance for RFU clubs delivering in local schools, colleges or universities](#) 

**FOR A HELPFUL VIDEO CLIP
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:**

[Making contact with a member of the staff in school?](#)

[A clubs advice on making contact with a school](#) 

FOR HELPFUL VIDEO CLIPS CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW:

[Engaging with staff in education settings](#)

[Do club's need to do anything to tailor their offer?](#)

[What's the best playing offer for new players?](#)

[What is your unique selling point as a club?](#)

[Non-Contact Rugby for Schools](#)

[Non-Contact rugby for Colleges](#) 

Q: How can we support teachers and young leaders?

A: To develop teachers' confidence and competence to deliver rugby in school you can:

- Signpost them to locally accessible RFU courses. For those delivering contact, we'd recommend the [Kids First Contact](#) course.
- Signpost to the [RFU website](#), [Twinkl](#) and [KeepYourBootsOn](#) for idea of games, CPD courses (such as [Headcase](#)) and session plans.
- Work collaboratively with the staff, to help deliver the lesson together.
- Put them in touch with their [County Schools Union](#), [England Colleges](#) or [Students Union](#) to ensure they get access to local competition and support.

As the needs of Young Leaders is so varied the RFU do not offer a specific young leaders' course. Instead

As the needs of Young Leaders is so varied the RFU do not offer a specific young leaders' course. Instead work with teachers to find the appropriate training offer (for most it will be [Kids First Tag](#)) and volunteering opportunities. Remember that young leaders can also support with more than just coaching and refereeing and can run your club's social media or be part of your club committee for example.

Q: What do we need to run a festival at our club?

A: The overriding principle is to ensure that players have a safe and enjoyable experience. Be flexible in the formats and rules during the competition to ensure games are not one-sided and benefit all players. Think about how you can utilise young leaders and others, such as School Games Organisers, to support the running of the day.

Some easy guides to help with formats can be found [here](#).

**FOR A HELPFUL VIDEO CLIP
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:**

[What can clubs do to help support some of the staff?](#)



**FOR A HELPFUL VIDEO CLIP
CLICK ON THE LINK BELOW:**

[Top tips for clubs hosting activities at the club](#)



**CLICK HERE FOR
EXAMPLES OF CLUBS
WHO HAVE
GOOD LINKS**



FOR FULL LENGTH VIDEO OF THE INTERVIEWS CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW:

[Supporting Clubs to Education links, a school perspective](#)

[Supporting club to education links. A conversation with RFU Club Developers](#)

