

Are you a local sports club looking to connect with schools in your area, or vice versa? Let's bring schools and clubs together to build stronger connections. The aim is to create partnerships that benefit students, athletes and the whole community. By combining the strengths of schools and clubs, it offers ideas to make it easier for young athletes, coaches and officials to get involved, stay involved and smoothly move through their sporting journeys.



Why team up?

When schools and clubs join forces, everyone wins! Here's why it's a great idea:

- **Better support for athletes**, helping young athletes balance school and sport without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Utilising shared school and club facilities** (including fields, courts and equipment) helps reduce costs, and benefits the entire community.
- **Working together helps connect** families, students, and the wider community for increased physical activity opportunities.
- **Sport communities help give students a sense of identity**, purpose, belonging and enhanced confidence beyond the classroom.
- **Provides students with more chances** to try various sports by participating in clinics, joining after school programs and then transitioning into clubs/teams. More touchpoints = more confident young students.
- **Schools can help clubs reach new families** and clubs can help schools strengthen relationships with local communities. This is especially valuable for increasing participation of underrepresented cohorts such as girls and multicultural communities.
- **Club partnerships can provide schools with experienced coaches** to assist with PE lessons, support the achievement of curriculum assessment objectives (movement, teamwork, strategy) and offer convenor assistance for the delivery of sport gala days.

Who's this for?

- **Schools and Educational Institutions** – To work with local clubs and help students grow as athletes.
- **Clubs and Associations** – To build stronger connections with schools and make sure athletes get the support they need.
- **Coaches and Educators** – To collaborate and focus on helping athletes grow, both in their studies and in their sport.
- **Sport Administrators** – To see how school-club partnerships can benefit the community and help shape the future of sport in their community.



How do we do it?

Here are some simple steps to get started:

1. Talk to each other

- Identify schools/clubs in your local area and establish contact.
- Set up regular chats between school staff and club leaders. Set up a small team to manage the partnership with term-based check-ins.
- Identify where your priorities and goals are mutually beneficial. Create a plan together to avoid scheduling clashes between school and club activities where possible.
- The Australian Sports Commission's Physical Literacy Toolkit for Schools is an excellent resource to learn and advocate for a greater focus on physical activity in the learning environment.

2. Share resources

- Consider opening up school facilities after school hours. It's an additional revenue stream, provides more 'eyes' for school security and supports positive school/community connections.
- Efficient use of local facilities maximises the use of valuable community infrastructure. Demonstrated shared use may also increase access to sporting grants offered from a range of organisations. Check out the Department of Education's [Community use of state schools facilities procedure](#) and supporting information for further insight.
- Work together to upgrade and maintain facilities such as fields, lights and storage facilities – it's more cost efficient and benefits everyone.
- Encourage participation of accredited club volunteers to support school sport competitions in areas such as coaching, officiating and scoring.
- Explore delivery of club development programs at schools to ensure ease of student access and cross training of school staff.
- Check out if your sport is one of the 40 registered to deliver the Australian Sports Commission's [Sporting Schools Program](#) designed to help schools increase children's participation in sport and to connect them with community sporting opportunities.

3. Create pathways

- Think 'complementary' rather than 'competing'. Make it easy for students to move from school sports to club teams if they want to.
- Following delivery of sport specific PE units send home 'next step' information for students with standout skills to ensure pathway opportunities are understood.
- Offer 'off-field' pathway opportunities in coaching and officiating for students and staff alike.
- Offer mentorship and development programs for students aiming to go further in sport. Consider offering scholarships or discounts to help promising students join your club.
- Identify talented players during school competitions and invite them to join your club.
- Ensure school and club representative selection trial dates and processes are clear, concise and widely communicated

well ahead of time to ensure talented athletes don't miss a pathway opportunity.

- Align club and school pathway opportunities where possible through State Sport Organisations and Queensland Representative School Sport to create connected pathways and streamline processes.
- Work with schools to offer flexible learning arrangements for athletes who need to travel or train extensively.

4. Get the community involved

- Run open days, clinics or fun competitions at your club to bring families and the school community together. Students who feel connected to their community through sport often have improved school attendance, better engagement and stronger friendships.
- Encourage students, parents and alumni to volunteer – it's a great way to build a sense of belonging.
- Incentivise and support local volunteers to become coaches, officials and administrators. Implement a train the trainer approach to translate knowledge and expertise into the community.
- Consider an existing communication method such as the school newsletter to engage directly with the school community.

5. Check and improve

- Collect feedback from parents, students and schools on how the partnership is working and what can be done to improve.
- Track data to evaluate success such as attendance numbers at extra-curricular programs, transition numbers from schools to clubs and overall facility usage.
- Adjust the plan based on what works and what doesn't.
- Expand the program to include more schools and clubs.

6. Keep an eye on wellbeing

- Emphasise balance! Make sure students aren't overdoing it by monitoring and communicating training loads across school and club commitments to prevent injury.
- Include mental health and wellbeing programs to support young athletes.
- Promote physical fitness, mental health and positive lifestyle habits alongside sporting success.

Let's get started!

By teaming up, schools and clubs can create amazing opportunities for young athletes. It's all about working together, sharing resources and supporting students to succeed both on and off the field.