

School-Club Links in Hockey

Guidance for Sports Development & Active Schools

School-club links for young hockey players are a vital part of creating a complete pathway in hockey and growing the sport. Your role as Sports Development Officers/Active Schools Coordinators is vital as you are often the main contact for both schools and clubs on a day-to-day basis.

The guidance sheet aims to outline what is considered a quality school-club link for hockey and so is the target for all links in Tayside & Fife. In many cases, this will match your own understanding of a quality link, but this is intended to ensure totally clarity across the region and that we are all working towards the same goals.

The 5 elements of a quality school-club link are:

The club regularly has an active role in school sessions

- The key words here are *regularly* and *active*. Regularly may not necessarily mean at every weekly session, but does indicate a degree of continued and planned involvement. Active means that there is input by club personnel at these sessions. This could range from coaching the session to speaking to players at the end.

The school promotes the club sessions

- This would usually range from posters in the PE department/ details on electronic notice boards to teachers giving players direct information on the club in their school hockey sessions (verbally or flyers). As with all these elements, there is no limit on the level of involvement that can be evident here.

The club targets recruitment at the school players

- This means that the club actively works to recruit players from the school. This could be a school visit by a club rep in the last week of a block of hockey. Depending on the availability of club personnel, this may not be feasible and so clever use of marketing materials to target the school players can have an impact here. Other suggestions include hosting a transition event for school players to move into the club.

The link is led & maintained by the school & club themselves

- In many cases, the local sports development/active schools staff will assist to establish the link. However, it is not sustainable for you to maintain every school-club link and so you should work to assist the school & club to take on the lead roles in maintaining and developing the link.

An annual plan is drawn up & reviewed

- Having a clear plan or agreement between the school and club will increase the chances of an effective and continuing link. This plan should step out what each partner is going to deliver and when the actions fit in across the school year. With continued communication between the school and club, an annual review is likely to be sufficient. If there is less on-going communication then it may be necessary to have a more frequent review of progress. This plan is likely to initially be drawn up with support from the professional officers, however the process should be continued by the school and club themselves when they take on the lead roles in maintaining the link.

If the above 5 elements are successfully delivered then all involved can be confident of having created an effective school-club link to benefit the development of hockey. These are obviously not the only steps that can be involved and schools and clubs should be encouraged and supported to continue to develop their quality links past this minimum level.