

The safe return of school sport - a framework and planning tool

Context

The COVID-19 pandemic drew a premature end to the sporting seasons of the 2019/20 academic year. In the midst of this crisis, those leading provision and support of school sport for young people in schools responded fantastically through virtual competitions, fitness sessions and opportunities to lead. As we approach the 2020/21 academic year, following consultation with School Games Organisers, Active Partnerships and National Governing Bodies of Sport, there was a strong call for support in planning the provision of school sport in 2020/21 in light of COVID-19.

Recognising the autonomy of schools, local need and the range of partners who interact with them, the Youth Sport Trust has worked collaboratively with partners and the school sport network to develop a framework and planning tool which can help providers of physical activity and multi-sport competition programmes in the education environment. The tool poses questions and provides principles to ensure that the provision of physical activity and sporting opportunities support the most vulnerable, help students resocialise and to rebuild their physical, social and emotional confidence.

The framework will help those supporting schools locally to:

- Plan for appropriate provision to meet the needs of young people
- Demonstrate the empathy and understanding of the challenges schools will face on return from COVID-19 through providing coaching support for PE subject leads in the design of their school sport enrichment offer.

Please always refer to the official Government guidelines on group sizing, social distancing, use of equipment and hygiene management.

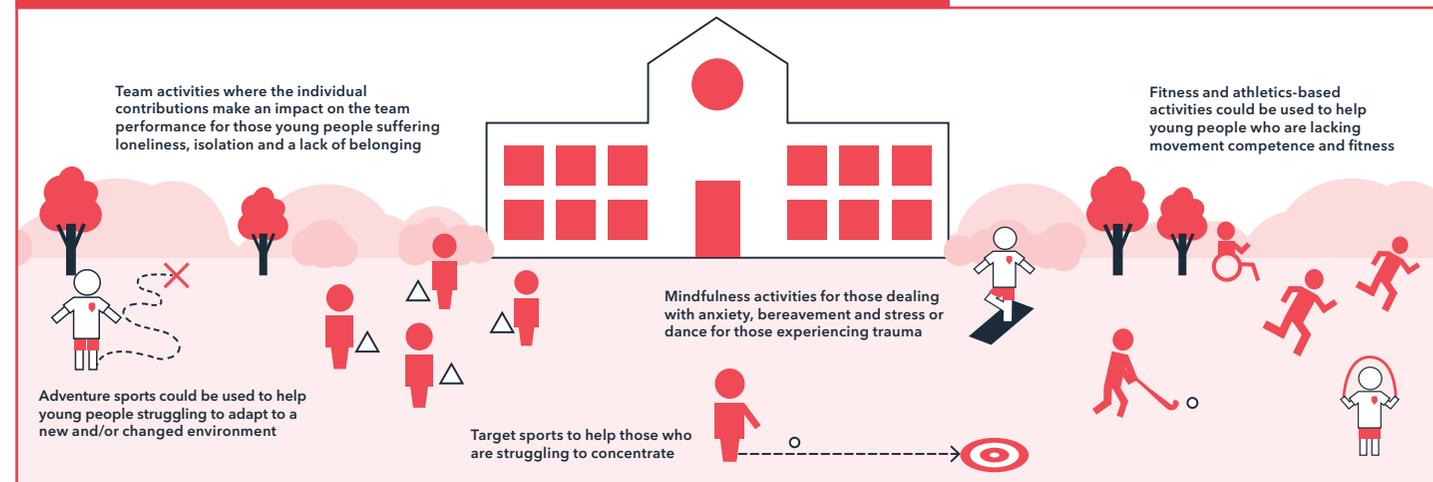
A Youth Sport Trust survey of school leaders in April 2020 revealed that **only 23% noted they would introduce extra-curricular opportunities** as part of a phased return, with many stating a lack of confidence and clarity in what is possible being the reason why they would not. This alongside a YouGov poll commissioned by the Youth Sport Trust in June highlighted that **53% of young people want to do more sport** when restrictions are lifted, demonstrating the importance of helping schools and having a united message.

The primary purpose of the safe return of more recognisable physical activity and school sport is the role

that it can play in responding to the needs of young people. Therefore the framework is designed to ensure:

- Inclusion of the most **vulnerable young people**
- The focus of teachers and senior leaders will be on helping young people **'catch up'**. We believe appropriate play, sport and physical activity is essential to this but may need to look different for the 2020/2021 academic year.
- There is specific intent in the delivery of school sport to rebuild the social and emotional wellbeing of young people using the power of sport as a vehicle to **resocialise**.

Different types of activity can be used to help young people to recover from the impact of COVID-19, depending on the challenges they are facing. It is important to consider how school sport is referenced. For example:



Considerations for 'returning to school sport'

The policy decisions made for sport in education rely on responsible interpretation of Government guidance in the interest of public health. Those individuals involved in the organisation and delivery of school sport need ensure they are up to date with Government guidance on group sizing, social distancing, use of equipment and hygiene management. Additional considerations in planning include which facilities are open, the specific characteristics of the activities and the availability of the workforce. To ensure that the school sport offer is inspiring, accessible and meaningful for children and young people, providers of local school sport provision are encouraged to:



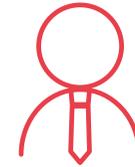
Put the **health and safety** of children, teachers and parents/carers first.



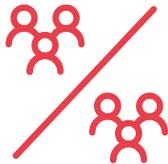
Be clear about the **intent** of the offer. For example, this could be skill development or building resilience.



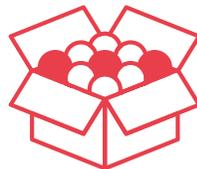
Ensure **young people** are at the heart of decision making - consultation is key.



Engage with key local **stakeholders** to ensure clarity of messaging and offer.



Develop a strategy for grouping pupils to ensure **bubbles are consistent with Government guidance**.



Have an **equipment policy** that aligns to the schools' strategy.



Ensure that there is an approach for **managing and briefing the workforce** regarding their responsibilities.



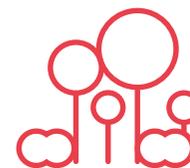
Plan and **communicate** what to expect and why, to pupils, teachers and parents.



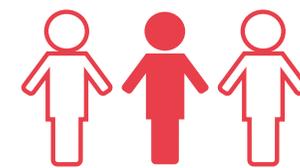
Have an increased focus on responding to **local conditions** and addressing a particular need, e.g. transition.



Prepare a **flexible** offer that can be delivered at home, in a single school (intra competition) or virtually across schools.



Use **outdoor spaces** where possible and have continued engagement with local **facility** providers in relation to accessing indoor spaces.



Identify **priority groups** of young people who will need additional support.

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Considerations for local school sport provision

With the academic year normally split into terms, there is much for those organising school sport to consider in relation to the types of opportunities to be provided and the sports that can be delivered in line with Government guidelines. Opportunities that form part of a meaningful school sport calendar can be made up of Personal Challenge, Intra and Inter School competition that can be delivered virtually or face to face.

- **Personal Challenge** can be delivered to pupils learning from home and when in school, and can focus on individual fitness, skill development, movement competence and resilience.
- **Intra School Activity** can be delivered to pupils learning from home and when in school and can include pupils competing against other individuals or in teams to create a wider sense of belonging and connection.
- **Inter School Activity** can take place through carefully designed virtual competition which can include the contribution of individuals and teams. There is no set time frame for the return, this will need to be decided locally in line with Government and school guidelines.

Alongside the types of opportunities, those supporting schools will need to consider the types of activities which feature as part of their school sport offer.

Each sport has a return to play framework which outlines the safe return of the sport and the types of adaptations to be made.

For the purposes of helping schools to consider which sports could be delivered as part of a school sport offer, sports have been put into one of four groups based on their traditional formats in line with the following considerations:

- Whether the sport is individual or group based
- The number of participants involved in the sport
- The amount of physical contact involved in the sport
- Hygiene implications in relation to the sharing of equipment
- The ability to adapt the sport to ensure social distancing guidelines are able to be met.

Please note that the list of sports is not exhaustive and provides an indication as to the potential groupings of sports.

Individual Sports

Archery	MATP
Athletics	New Age Kurling
Boccia	Orienteering
Bowls	Pentathlon
Canoeing	Rowing
Cycling	Sailing &
Dance	Windsurfing
Equestrian	Swimming &
Fencing	Aquatics
Golf	Triathlon
Gymnastics	

Non-contact Outdoor Sports

Cricket	Softball
Multi Skill	Tennis
Festivals	Ultimate Frisbee
Rounders	

Contact Sports (1:1, within team and/or opposition)

American Football	Judo
Basketball	Lacrosse
Boxing	Netball
Dodgeball	Rugby League
Football	Rugby Union
Goalball	Volleyball
Handball	Wheelchair Basketball
Hockey	

Non-contact Indoor Sports - Individual or small groups

Badminton	Table Cricket
Polybat	Table Tennis
Squash	

Adaptations must be put in place to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed where needed and an appropriate equipment hygiene plan is in place. Every sport will have its own return to play guidance which will provide further detail.

For further information, please refer to:

- Guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) - On 2 July 2020, the DfE released guidance for the full opening of schools from September 2020. Within the guidance there is a specific section focusing on Physical Activity www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools
- DfE have also released separate guidance on supporting children and young people with SEND www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance.

- Guidance from the Department for Education www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak
- Plus, guidance for parents and carers on their children attending out of school hours provision www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-of-children-attending-out-of-school-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak
- Government guidance on the phased return of sport and recreation - www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation
- Guidance from Sport England for grassroot sport www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus
- Guidance from the Association for Physical Education www.afpe.org.uk/coronavirus-guidance-support/

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Planning Tool

<p>Participants</p>	<p>Consider how you can involve young people in developing and delivering an appropriate offer.</p> <p>Think about what young people need to do before, during and after they participate (how are they prepared?).</p> <p>Are there priority cohorts that your provision could support on return?</p> <p>Consider how you will provide opportunities for those at home and those at school.</p> <p>Communicating with participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep them connected • Provide information on current opportunities • Provide information on plans for restart 	
<p>People</p>	<p>Think about how you will engage schools/teachers/parents and carers and other volunteers.</p> <p>Communicating with key people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult • Keep them connected • Provide information on plans for restart <p>Provide CPD opportunities</p>	

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<p>Inclusive</p>	<p>Think about how you welcome, engage and connect people.</p> <p>What barriers exist for schools/ young people accessing the different phases and how can you address them?</p>	
<p>Places</p>	<p>Think about how you will manage facilities and outdoor spaces.</p> <p>Preparing facilities for sport.</p> <p>Protecting the safety of participants while facilities are open.</p> <p>Reviewing plans on an ongoing basis.</p>	
<p>Collaborative</p>	<p>Think about the wide range of people and organisations that need to be involved with your planning.</p> <p>Nurturing existing partnerships.</p> <p>Developing new partnerships.</p>	
<p>Profile</p>	<p>Consider how you communicate locally the role PE and sport is playing in each phase and how you are managing the return safely.</p> <p>How do you capitalise on an enhanced digital following to continue higher levels of engagement?</p>	

The Youth Sport Trust would like to thank Sportscotland for sharing their approach to a principles-based framework and BUCs and AOC Sport for their approach within other education settings.

This framework and planning tool has been endorsed by the National Council for School Sport.

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