

GET INTO ARCHERY | HANDY GUIDES



Developing Links with Schools

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Introduction

A school is an obvious place to promote your club, encourage more young people to try archery and often a good place to hire a sports hall or playing field.

A link between an education establishment and a community sports club, to work together to meet the needs of young people, providing them with new and varied opportunities is therefore a valuable arrangement for both parties.

A key part of a 'school club-link' is providing appealing opportunities for young people to make the step from playing sport in school and further education settings – a time when many young people drop-out of sport – to regular and lifelong participation in sport in their own time within their community.

Establishing club-links gives young people the opportunity to continue participating in sporting and physical activity throughout their lives. It allows them to make the most of their experiences in both settings, to try out new sports, feel comfortable in a club setting and as a result makes them more likely to continue participating once they leave school or college.



1. Benefits of a School-Club Link

Linking with local education establishments (schools, colleges or universities) is a worthwhile way to, for example, recruit new members or gain access to facilities. The ways a club can do this include providing coaches, running activities/competitions, linking with leadership/volunteering programmes or providing extra opportunities for students. Some clubs find establishing these relationships difficult but with careful preparation and planning it can be quite straightforward and beneficial for everyone.

Benefits of linking with education

Many archery clubs are approached by schools or colleges to deliver sessions for their students and many clubs want to promote their sport and engage new people in archery. Education establishments and clubs can work together to promote local sporting opportunities much more effectively.

Most communities do not know what clubs are in their area. Also, young people are more likely to get involved if they know what they are dealing with (for example, if they have already seen club coaches in the familiar surroundings of their school or college they are more likely to attend the club).

You should be clear about how your club expects to benefit, before trying to create links. The gains may match the objectives in your development plan and working with schools, colleges or universities might be an objective in itself, either way it is essential that you identify what the club will derive from the partnership. This will ensure that you can justify the time and effort that club members may have to put in to reap the rewards.

Potential benefits may include:

- More young people joining the club
- Increased participation in general
- Opportunities to identify future talent and demonstrate how your club can provide for this
- Access to facilities and equipment for club activities
- Raised profile within the community
- Reduced costs for facilities hire
- Increased income from higher membership and increased participation
- Widening access to the community
- Increase the potential to recruit new volunteers
- A pool of young players, leaders, coaches and officials of the future

What is a school/college looking for?

It is important to appreciate what the school/college will be looking to achieve by working with your archery club as this will make you better placed to demonstrate how you can help them.

It may be that they are simply looking for a provider for their after school club, a coach/instructor to support lessons or someone to organise their competitions. Education budgets are currently tight which may mean that although they would like to create a link with your club they may not be able to afford it (if you are looking provide them with paid coaches or activities).



You will have a better chance of creating an effective link if you are able to demonstrate how you can help them achieve their wider aims including:

- Using sport as a positive recruitment tool
- Using sport as a tool to engage and retain students
- A contribution to achievement, attainment and success
- Increased employment prospects of students
- Raising self-esteem and self-confidence, and improving behaviour of students
- Helping to improve Ofsted inspections
- Enhancing partnerships and generating income

2. A good school-club link

The way school-club links are set up will vary. Some will be solely information sharing and communication based whereas others will fully integrate clubs into the school/college by getting them to deliver a number of curriculum and after school/college sessions. Neither can be deemed more successful than the other as it will depend on your situation and the needs of the club and the school/college.

Success can be judged on how well the two partners, education establishment and club, work together to meet these needs. Regardless of what is being delivered if you can both do the following you will be well on the way to having a good club-link:

- Agree a shared vision and approach
- Agree expectations and goals
- Communicate with each other regularly
- Communicate with young people and parents
- Work together to find ways of enabling young people to take part in club activities
- Recognise, share and celebrate achievements
- Share and develop teaching and coaching expertise
- Share facilities, equipment and resources
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies that may contribute to and support the club-link

What can you offer?

This will depend massively on the size, capacity and set up of your club. For example, if you have a large number of coaches and they are free they may be able to offer sessions during the day. When determining what it is you can provide, it is also important to remember what you and the school/college are looking to get out of the partnership.

- Some examples of what you may be able to offer include:
- Sharing information about the club to students
- Running a festival/display/open day/fun day at the school/college
- Providing coaches to assist with extracurricular clubs
- Running a satellite club
- Informing the school about its pupil's achievements and successes
- Providing officials for some fixtures/tournaments
- Presenting in assemblies or classrooms on archery

- Opportunities for students to gain coaching experience at your club
- Provide teacher training

As mentioned, your offer should be based around what you and the school/college want out of the partnership. Therefore before finalising your ideas try to get as much information from the school/college as you can.

The importance of planning

If your members are professional and organised in their approach the school/college will value you and be more likely to want to work with you in the future. If those that represent your club are unprofessional or disorganised, they will be unlikely to want to work with you in the future. The importance of preparation and planning cannot be emphasised enough. Before contacting the school/college, ensure you know what you have to offer and how you will deliver it.

When putting your plan together you may want to consider the following:

- Consider the most appropriate method for making initial contact e.g. phone, face to face contact, follow up email etc.
- Build a professional relationship by contacting schools/colleges in plenty of time (they prefer at least one terms notice)
- Clarify expectations and responsibilities prior to the first session (e.g. teacher to be present for the whole session)
- Try to link with existing programs offered at schools/colleges
- Ensure you have the knowledge and capacity to cater for specific age groups
- All coaches working in school/college will need to have a Disclosure & Barring Scheme check carried out
- Make sure you target local schools/colleges
- Ensure the program is planned and high quality including progression for students
- Make sure your club is able to cater for a potential increase in members
- Consider how you encourage students to attend your club session

3. Creating a partnership

As mentioned in previous sections setting up a good club-link can take time and effort but the rewards can be huge. Once you have taken the time to set the link up your club will want to ensure that it is sustainable and runs for a number of years to maximise the benefits. This will mean the time you have put in doing the groundwork will have been well spent and worthwhile.

There are a number of things your club can do to improve the sustainability of the partnership including:

Provide continuity

Continuity for young people comes through linking the PE curriculum, out of hours' activities and the club-link. Young people who join clubs after experiencing particular sports in PE are usually more confident in their ability and knowledge. Teachers can help to make links by promoting clubs immediately after a unit of work or during an out of hours' activity. Knowing coaches from local clubs can help make the transition from school/college to club much easier.

Reach agreement

A formal agreement, whether written or achieved through mutual understanding, should be negotiated at the start of the link and maintained throughout. This should clarify roles and responsibilities, and agree a vision, expectations and goals.

Communicate well

Good communication is crucial to sustainable links. Clubs and schools/colleges need to be in regular contact and share each other's achievements, recognising and celebrating young people's progress. They also need to ensure that they communicate well with young people and their parents/carers.

Involving young people

Anecdotal evidence from coaches and teachers indicates that a minimum of five to ten young people are required to establish an effective, sustainable link. However, a high number of participants do not necessarily mean that a link is effective. A better indication is the number of young people who stay year after year, attend regularly and eventually become full junior members of the Club.

Provide expertise

Many schools/colleges value the input of sports club coaches, as they have good knowledge and are up to date with rules, coaching methods, events and issues in their sport.

Have shared standards

Many school/colleges are proud of their standard of PE and sport and are anxious that clubs reinforce good practice. In line with this, teachers and coaches need to work together to ensure that they share a common approach to working with young people and involving parents/carers.

Areas for discussion might include expected standards of behaviour and attitude (of both young people and adults), preparation and planning, providing positive feedback, and involving young people in their own learning.

Ensure understanding and respect

For a club-link to be sustainable, the archery club and school/college must show respect for one another's role. They need to actively promote and support each other, rather than being in competition for young people's time and commitment.



Making initial contact

First impressions are crucial when setting up a new club-link and therefore the first contact you have is very important. Planning this approach will help ensure that the first contact is a successful experience.

Schools and colleges, however, are very busy places and many teachers involved with planning activities and club links also have full teaching timetables. Therefore, making contact with the school/college and getting some of their time to explain what you can offer is often the most difficult part of the process. You have to be willing to persevere but if you do, the results can be really worth it.

When looking to make initial contact try to ensure that you:

Get the right person

Find out in advance who the right person to contact is.

Contacting the school/college with a name of someone in particular often increases your chances of getting through. This can be found by looking at the school/college website to find out who is the Head of PE or sport coordinator. Keep a record of this person's name and contact details for future reference.

Demonstrate awareness

Safety is high on a school's agenda so ensure you highlight at how you will ensure the pupil's safety at your club.

Offer taster sessions

Schools/colleges are often interested in free services provided by professional organisations with high quality coaches so if possible be open to offering free introductory/taster sessions

at the start of the partnership. This will also give you the opportunity to demonstrate the high quality services that you can offer them and for the Head teacher/Head of PE to see this first hand.

Update your club's website

Ensure your website is up to date and professional as it is most likely that the school/college will use this to get more information about your Club before meeting you. If you have them, take copies of your club newsletter and/or club handbook to demonstrate club successes and achievements.



4. Providing a quality experience

Many archery clubs delivering within education may be delivering to new audiences. A lot of young people will try archery for the first time while they are at school or college and it is important that their experience is a positive one so they enjoy the sport and continue the activity beyond their introductory sessions.

The main aspect is ensuring the sessions delivered are safe and adhere to the Rules of Shooting. The perception amongst some schools/colleges that have never had archery delivered within their grounds is that archery is a dangerous activity, but correctly delivered, clubs can help to dispel these perceptions.

Clubs with Clubmark, and Archery GB's *ontarget*, are recognised as meeting a national standard and this process is recommended for clubs providing services to people outside

of their clubs, as well as their own members. Individual schools/colleges may differ on the qualification requirements of the person delivering the archery session, but as a minimum, Archery GB would expect that individual to be a Leader, Instructor or Level 1 coach. Some people may query a Level 1's ability to lead a session alone as for many other sports, a Level 1 coaching qualification is an assistant award. However, the school/college will decide the appropriate level of the person delivering the session.

Many coaches and leaders delivering to young people tailor their sessions to suit those taking part. A variety of fun games and competitions will keep the sessions interesting for young people and many coaches and leaders will be happy to share what they do!

5. Further Information

County Sports Partnerships may be able to help develop club-links. Find your local one here - <https://www.cspnetwork.org/your-csp>

If not in England, this may be your local Sports Development Officer or Sports Council.

To find out more, have a look at the Archery in Schools section on the Archery GB website - <http://www.archerygb.org/clubs-facilities-development/education/archery-in-schools/>

Contact the Sport Team at Archery GB who can help with your enquiries. Email sport@archerygb.org or call 01952 602795.

Alternatively contact the Archery GB office at enquiries@archerygb.org or on 01952 677 888.





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