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Sport Supporters



Young people in sport are dependent upon the support of their parents, family, teachers, coaches, volunteers, peers, former students, and the community. Make sure that the roles these supporters take on are well defined; they need comprehensive instructions, organised introductions, written guidelines on the role, and clear communications.¹⁴

2.1 Parents and Whanau

Parents are the primary influencers on the sporting choices of young people. Engagement with parents, whanau and clubs to collaboratively support young people is essential to them continuing to play sport.

By involving parents and family in the school sport planning process as well as the delivery of sport, strong connections are formed between schools and families.

The roles that parents could have include:

- spectator and supporting their kids from the sideline – often the sideline is the only connection the school may have with parents so it can be a good opportunity to engage with them
- coaching and managing teams
- administering and running sport as volunteers
- carpooling/transporting kids to sports competitions and events
- encouraging backyard play to establish a love of sport and develop skills
- administrative assistance.



You need to be clear about what these roles entail otherwise parents and whanau may not continue to help out if they find they're doing more and spending more time than anticipated.

To support parents who are coaching and managing teams, you can provide them with:

- opportunities to understand how to coach
- access to coach development opportunities from clubs
- organised pre-season training for parents, which introduces them to others who can provide support
- knowledge and skills through training from clubs or the school.

And remember to recognise and thank parents' involvement through such channels as school newsletters, social media and school prizegivings.

Nearly one third of those with a family member participating in the same club or team say that they would not continue volunteering if their relative stopped being involved with the sport.



Source: Sport NZ's Volunteers: the heart of sport

¹⁴Sport New Zealand 2006, *Volunteers: the heart of sport* [online], available URL: http://www.srknowledge.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/82.-SPARC-2008-Volunteers_Heart-of-Sport.pdf

2.2 Teachers and School Personnel

Teachers are increasingly less involved with school sport but are still an important resource to consider when looking for volunteers and support. Other sport personnel can include the head of department (HOD) sport, director of sport, and the teacher in charge (TIC) of sport.

Some schools formally allocate responsibility for school sport to a member of staff, for example HOD sport. Some recognise staff members' leadership in that area with management units and others rely on the school sport coordinator to tackle school sport functions.

When employing sport personnel, secondary schools are required to meet the education requirements in the National Education Goals (NEGs) and National Administration Guidelines (NAGs). Key to meeting these requirements are position descriptions, appropriate remuneration and professional development.

See example position descriptions of school sport personnel:

- [sport director](#)
- [sport coordinator](#)
- [sport administrator](#)
- [sport assistant](#).

You can contact your RSD who will have example job descriptions from your own and other regions.

Professional development for personnel dedicated to sport

Skills Active Aotearoa, New Zealand's Industry Training Organisation (ITO) for the sport, fitness and recreation industries, offers qualifications for people involved in the sport sector.

Skills Active can help you with a wide variety of on-the-job qualifications including coaching, officiating, event management and Education Outside The Classroom (EOTC). These qualifications are open to both you and the volunteers you work with.

If you're interested in finding out more about how they could work for you and your school, please contact

Nigel Elvidge nigel@skillsactive.org.nz or visit the Skills Active website www.skillsactive.org.nz.

Sport NZ and NZSSSC in conjunction with RSDs provide professional development opportunities for sport coordinators on an annual basis. Information on the annual School Sport Conferences is available from your RSD.

RSDs may also hold regular local or regional meetings for sport coordinators; these are a good chance to find out about and share important information, network with other sport coordinators, and to develop your skills and role as a member of the sport personnel in your school.



2.3 Coaches, Officials & Volunteers

At the heart of volunteering in sport are four core values associated with volunteers and volunteering:¹⁵

GENEROSITY (OF SELF)

Is a core motivator. This comes with conditions such as their time isn't wasted, the environment is safe and carries limited risk, they don't want to take on more than they were led to believe, and codes of conduct are in place.

LOVE OF SPORT

Volunteers often have a love or passion for the sport they're volunteering for. Involvement as a player is often a gateway to volunteering and provides fertile ground for recruitment.

SOCIAL CONNECTION

Any volunteering strategy needs to build in adequate social times and give people who work together the ability to have fun with one another. Critical to retaining volunteers is achieving the right balance between structure and efficiency, and fun and social times.

APPRECIATION

Many volunteers do not want direct recognition for their volunteering efforts, but do want to feel good about giving up their time.

Coaches

Coaching is seen as a 'gateway' role to volunteering and because of its closeness to the game and the association with the team, volunteering in a coaching capacity has huge appeal.¹⁵

Several things that could be of assistance to coaches include providing coaching seminars or training, feedback and information, and having written guidelines for their role.

For advice, tips and other resources for coaches and those developing coaches see the [Coaching section](#) of Sport NZ's website.

¹⁵Sport New Zealand 2006, *Finding and keeping volunteers*, available URL: <http://www.sportnz.org.nz/assets/Uploads/attachments/managing-sport/officials-and-volunteers/Finding-and-Keeping-Volunteers.pdf>

My boy was playing rugby and he wanted me to coach, even though I had never played rugby in my life before.



Source: Sport NZ's *Volunteers: the heart of sport*

GROWING COACHES

Growing coaches is a leadership programme for secondary school students who want to coach sport.

Secondary schools are under considerable pressure to provide coaches for a raft of teams over a significant number of sports. Encouraging students to realise their leadership potential through coaching is one way of helping to provide coaches for sport in your school. Senior secondary school students already coaching other young people or looking for experience in coaching have the opportunity to learn through Sport NZ's Growing Coaches programme.

Growing Coaches is also linked to NCEA credits and is available to students who aren't necessarily studying NCEA-level PE.

For more information about this programme, visit the [Growing coaches section](#) on Sport NZ's website.

Volunteers and officials

Without volunteers, including officials, sport at a local level wouldn't exist.

An official is any person who controls the actual play of a competition by using the rules and laws of the sport to make judgments on rule infringement, performance, time and score. Officials play a key role in ensuring the spirit of the game and/or event is observed by all.

To ensure the continued involvement of volunteers, it's important to understand their motivations for becoming a volunteer and staying involved. New Zealanders report that they become sports volunteers for many different reasons, with the main ones including: giving something back to the sport or club, a family member starting to play in the sport, and love of the sport.



It's important to screen your volunteer candidates. By screening potential volunteers with interviews and police checks, you ensure they are a good fit and are able to make a valuable contribution to your school. See the section about [screening volunteers: self-vetting, police checks and interviews](#) on Sport NZ's website.

To find out more about establishing a volunteer workforce including coaches see the publication [Finding and keeping volunteers](#) and the [Volunteers - recruiting section](#) on Sport NZ's website.

Well, I wouldn't do it if I didn't enjoy it.
It's as simple as that.



Source: Sport NZ's Volunteers: the heart of sport

Good leadership helps in retaining volunteers and results in:

- a safe environment
- manageable volunteer roles
- a supportive and encouraging environment
- clarity and certainty about the commitment required from volunteers
- volunteers feeling respected and listened to
- clear processes and systems for managing volunteers.

Some tangible ways of thanking volunteers include:

- a verbal thank you
- prizes
- naming rights
- access to sports gear
- recognition from peers
- social functions for volunteers at the beginning and end of the season
- acknowledgement of people's efforts in school newsletters and social media
- a sincere thank you from the players.

To develop and retain more capable supporters and deliverers of sport you need good processes for recruitment, induction, development, health and safety, and recognition. For more information, see the [people management toolkit](#) on Sport NZ's website.

2.4 Community

Schools that are well connected to their communities, sports clubs and the sport sector can provide a greater variety of quality sport opportunities for young people, as well as ongoing participation in sport. The source of sports expertise typically lies outside the school gates - accessing this resource while making sure that providers understand and cater for the needs of schools and young people is critical.

Benefits of connecting with the community

YOUNG PEOPLE:

- become aware of the variety of sports available to them, learn how to join community sports clubs and regularly participate in them
- make new friends and develop skills enabling lifelong participation
- develop talent and progress in their sport
- increase confidence to pursue sport after leaving school
- have access to quality training (coaches and facilities)
- have more opportunities to develop both as players and leaders e.g. coaching, officiating.

SCHOOLS:

- raise the school's profile in the community
- share facilities and resources (hire charges for school facilities)
- gain more supporters and deliverers to provide sport for students
- have healthier, fitter, more skilful pupils who display higher standards in teams
- provide more training for teachers by working with quality clubs and coaches.

CLUBS:

- increase their profile in the community
- increase membership by recruiting young people
- have more people to volunteer
- share facilities and resources
- enhance opportunities for grant applications
- increase club funds through increased membership.

COUNCILS/NSOs/RSOs:

- develop schemes linked to the Sport NZ Sport and Recreation Pathway
- promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle
- encourage club modernisation
- supply a vibrant and growing membership and volunteer base
- identify and develop talent
- improve retention in sports participation beyond school leaving age
- enhance opportunities for grant applications
- embed the principles of equality through delivery of club links
- ensure quality controls are in place to raise standards
- develop capacity of local sports clubs including training of coaches.

Keys to successful collaboration

Both school and community organisations:

- focus on student learning
- develop mutually beneficial relationships based on trust
- share an attitude of service towards young people
- build good relationships with leaders in the school.

Barriers to collaboration

- Focus is on what is best for the organisation or the school rather than what is best for the student.
- Relationship is based solely on what one agency can gain from the other.
- Emphasis is on access/ownership of the most talented athletes rather than developing all athletes.
- Individuals who are more focused on self-promotion or personal egos than serving young people.
- Power struggles around who makes the decisions, owns the agenda, whose interests are being served.



When building school and community relationships:

- be clear about the motivations of the schools and question whether your motivation is beneficial to collaboration
- clarify the motivations of the organisation and question whether their motivation is beneficial to collaboration.

For example, if schools see community organisations as a resource for them to access, the relationship will not be sustainable. The school must also seek to support and grow the organisation they are collaborating with.

If the sport organisation is only interested in building its membership base and/or accessing revenue from increased membership, the relationship will not be sustainable. The organisation must seek to support the school's goals of enhanced learning for students.

How to initiate collaboration

- Talk with the students, find out what they're most interested in participating in.
- Review the personnel (teachers, support staff, existing parent coaches) within the school who are willing and able to support the sport that students want to participate in.
- Consider the range of sport organisations available to your school (your RSD should be able to help you with this) who offer the sport opportunities that students want to participate in.
- Arrange a meeting with the relevant sport organisations to gauge their willingness to collaborate and:
 - share your goals in relation to student learning
 - share the advantages you see in collaborating together
 - find out what motivates the organisation to work with the schools
 - consider ways you could work together
 - identify some long term goals/targets for the collaboration
 - develop a partnership agreement
 - work through a realistic action plan (towards the goal) for one year and review at the end of the year.

Examples of how school and community organisations collaborate

The school could:

- invite and welcome sports club members into the school
- invite community members to be part of the school's Sports Advisory Council
- arrange for students to visit local sports clubs
- influence the club to review its guidelines for the use of club facilities to ensure they are young person friendly
- arrange for students to use club facilities within the guidelines of the club
- share facilities with the community
- provide an updated list of sport organisations that young people can access in their local community
- let parents and other community agencies (e.g. media) know which organisations support and/or sponsor school sport.

The community sport organisation could:

- run introductory sessions at the school
- influence the school to link school programmes with the organisation's junior, youth and adult programmes to provide consistent messages, expectations and quality experiences
- ensure their environment (facilities and club members) is young-person friendly
- assist with coaching/training programmes for parents/volunteers, students, managers and team coaches
- help with or provide the cost of equipment, training and travel
- sponsor school sport programmes
- provide coaches, officials and event organisers for the school
- influence the coordinators of competitions (e.g. inter-school, inter-club, inter-region) for young people (e.g. RSO, RST, college sport) to ensure competitions, selection processes, and rewards/recognitions serve the needs of young people
- get involved with 'have a go' sessions - opportunities for kids to try different sports at school, and organise competitions around these.

2.5 Codes of Conduct

Codes of conduct are a means to clarify the schools' expectations of behaviour of volunteers and supporters, including parents; those expectations should be continually reinforced by the behaviour of key people in the system. The codes of conduct should be agreed to before the commencement of the season and ideally reviewed every year. The critical thing is to not only get your volunteers to sign the codes of conduct but they should also be held to account for them.

In particular, codes of conduct are about volunteer to volunteer, supporter to supporter behaviours; and quite often sideline behaviour.

See examples of codes of conduct on the NZSSC website:

- Coaches, athletes, parents
- Player, coach, spectator, supporter.

Safe sport for children

All sport staff and volunteers need to understand their responsibilities and be able to identify and respond to children at risk of harm. In order to do this effectively there needs to be ongoing supervision, support and training for people who work with children.

Children (and their parents and supporters) also need to be informed about expectations of them for appropriate behaviour.

Through developing a safe sport for children policy schools identify, assess and set out steps to minimise the risk of harm to children. There are several child protection policy templates available and some sports have examples of policies that are already being implemented. See a policy template in [Safe sport for children: Appendix 4](#).

Processes and procedures should be set up to protect young people in school and club environments. As part of its duty of care, a sport provider should ensure that suitable and appropriate staff and volunteers are engaged to work with children. Education should be provided to staff and volunteers on what they can do to:

- minimise the risk that their actions or inactions cause harm to any child; and
- limit their risk of being the target of allegations and complaints.

Every agency that provides sport opportunities for young people should have these codes of conduct and policies always in the back of their mind; they need to understand them, how they affect them and what they need to do to put them in place.

Those volunteering are looking for codes of conduct, policy and processes to deal with conflict in relationships and implementation of boundaries which have a protective function around their roles and responsibilities, e.g. role clarity and job descriptions.



Legislation

In implementing a safe sport for children policy, you need to be aware of and keep up-to-date with child protection legislation that may impact on sport providers. This includes:

- Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992
- Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989
- Crimes Act 1961 – Protection of Children.

For more information, see [Safe sport for children and presentation](#) on Sport NZ's website.



Resources and templates are available online at: www.sportnz.org.nz/rsss