



Club School Link Initiative

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CLUB SCHOOL LINK INITIATIVE



INTRODUCTION

The 'Tennis Ireland Club School Link' initiative forms an important part of the Tennis Ireland National Strategy. The purpose of the programme is to establish and strengthen the formal links between affiliated tennis clubs and their local schools. Stronger links between our clubs and schools are required to grow participation levels in our sport that will lead to better promotion and visibility of the game of tennis in Ireland.

The Club School Link Initiative will help our clubs and coaches establish and develop strong and formal links to local primary and secondary schools and to create a clear pathway from local schools to club tennis.

This Tennis Ireland Club School Link Initiative is designed to assist and guide clubs and coaches in this process. This toolkit will give you a better understanding of what the process entails and how to become involved.

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HOW TO GET INVOLVED

The Club School Link Initiative resources are free for all Tennis Ireland affiliated clubs, and all Tennis Ireland licensed coaches. To get involved as a club or coach please contact the Schools Coordinator, or your local Regional Development Officer who can be found at this link:

<https://www.tennisireland.ie/about/tennis-ireland-staff>

Schools Tennis Coordinator:

Email: schoolscoordinator@TennisIreland.ie



WHY SHOULD CLUBS LINK TO SCHOOLS?

The Benefits

Schools are the obvious place to promote our sport to the broadest range of children in Ireland, but the benefits of linking with local schools have a variety of benefits above and beyond just promoting the game.

Schools tennis is a promotional opportunity like no other, allowing clubs to 'fish where the fish are'. Tennis is the 4th most popular sport in the world yet less than 3% of the population play tennis in Ireland. We are a sport with an ageing fan base (the average age of a tennis fan is 61 years). We need to act now to promote our sport and grow the game from the base up. The more rackets we get in people's hands, the more people will migrate into clubs. Schools tennis is not just about the kids, it is about their families and teachers, it is about word of mouth and creating a buzz.

Here is a summary of some of the benefits of forming links with local schools:

- For the future of our sport and to improve visibility of it with a greater audience
- To promote your club
- To increase participation in your club – kids, parents & teachers
- To keep coaches in clubs by maximising earning potential
- To increase opportunities to identify talent
- Potential access to school facilities
- To increase use of courts at off peak times
- To increase income through court revenue and new members
- Funding opportunities – Sports Capital Grants and Leader give priority to clubs that have license agreements and make tennis accessible to the community
- To increase the amount of volunteers
- To take away the 'first time fear factor' by having a familiar face such as a coach in the school, increasing the chances of kids attending club classes

What types of links are there?

An agreement between a club and a school need not be formal, however having a more formal agreement can be beneficial to both the school and the club, particularly if the club is applying for Leader or Sports Capital Grants.

Levels of agreement:

Note: This is only a guide so you can tailor the levels to suit your club.

1. Basic: School agrees to promote club information and updates, and agrees to allow club to deliver a blitz day annually at the club or school
2. Intermediate: Coach has an agreed slot in school for ongoing sessions, school promotes club literature, school has access to club facilities for PE
3. Advanced: Coach led programme and after school programme, teachers upskilled to deliver ongoing sessions after coach has left, intra school league and inter school leagues

Club school link licenses

When applying for grants including from Leader and The Sports Capital Grant applicants that are seen to share their facilities with other organisations including schools are given more points. In 'Club Resources at the end of this toolkit you will find a sample license agreement which you may wish to use as a template when engaging with local organisations or schools who may be using your facilities. It is important to ensure both parties are happy with arrangements before signing a license for grant purposes.

Clubs are advised that you would be wise to get your own legal advice in this regard and that you should utilise the template at your own risk.

Club school link grant opportunities – Local Sports Partnerships (ROI)

Linking with Local Sports Partnerships can lead to a greater opportunity to gain access to grants, particularly where clubs are seeking to work with target groups such as youths at risk, teenagers, women in sport and so on. LSPs will also have various grants available to clubs in the form of small club grants. All clubs should be aware of and in contact with your LSP.

There are 29 LSPs in the Sport Ireland network. Find yours here:

<https://www.sportireland.ie/participation/lsp-contact-finder>

Club school link grant opportunities – Sport NI & Local Councils (NI)

Sport Northern Ireland invests in a range of projects throughout Northern Ireland. Sport Northern Ireland is a Lottery award distributor and also provides exchequer funding to a number of Sport Northern Ireland recognised Governing Bodies of Sport.

For more information on funding in Northern Ireland follow the link:

<http://www.sportni.net/funding/>



HOW TO PLAN AND FUND YOUR SCHOOLS OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Step by step guide to developing your club school link

Step 1: Call in the cavalry!

- Organise an initial meeting with the Tennis Ireland Schools Coordinator and your local Regional Development Officer, Club Coach, and Club School Liaison officer identified to work with as the lead for the school's programme in the club.
- At this meeting we will conduct a quick audit of the current situation at the club, SWOT analysis to identify the best strategy for the club and coach moving forward and set some tangible SMART goals. The Schools Coordinator will then draft a brief presentation for your board/club committee to explain the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in the initiative.

Step 2: Create a 3 year Club School Link Strategy

- From the SWOT analysis and first meeting a series of SMART goals for the club and coach will be decided on and a strategy and operational plan will be designed for the club by the School Tennis Coordinator.

Step 3: Identify Schools & Funding

- The schools coordinator and RDO will help identify schools that are most likely to lead to the most memberships and will help source grants, local level sponsorship or provide ideas for fundraising to cover the initial school blitz series.

Step 4: Coach Upskill

- The coach will be upskilled in any area they deem necessary to enable them to deliver school playground sessions, teacher training, secondary school Lunchtime Leader Awards and large-scale club blitz events. *Please note that coaches may be comfortable with none, some or all of these programmes/events and this will need to be taken into consideration before approaching schools.*

Step 5: Create follow-on opportunities and prepare promotional materials

- Once decisions are finalised on what are appropriate follow-on opportunities the Schools Coordinator will provide an action plan and timeframe for the roll out of the sessions.

Step 6: Delivery

Step 7: Follow on, monitor & evaluate

Step 8: Identify gaps, formalise accessible tennis to address barriers such as financial, geographical

Step 9: Re-evaluate and plan for year 2



EVALUATING AND MONITORING

How do you evaluate or measure the success of your Club School Link?

The SMART goals that are set out during the audit will give a good idea of how successful your Club School link campaign has been. In order to measure this we will have feedback forms for the school, coach and students. While it would be great to see immediate success it is important to remember that success can be measured in many different ways. For some clubs success may be an increase in junior members, for others it may be the use of off peak courts, or it may be in the form of a license agreement that increases your clubs chances of acquiring funding. It is also worth keeping in mind that variable factors can place limits on what you may have predetermined to be a successful link. Such factors could include something out of your hands such as the introduction of delays caused by roadworks between the club and school, the weather, or your coach becoming unavailable to deliver the sessions.

We should also keep in mind that positive spin offs may not happen overnight. However, we hope that by creating a barrier free pathway that we can see results early in the process.

How do you review your Club School link?

There are multiple ways this can be done and the Schools Coordinator and your local RDO will be in hand to help you review and plan for the following year.

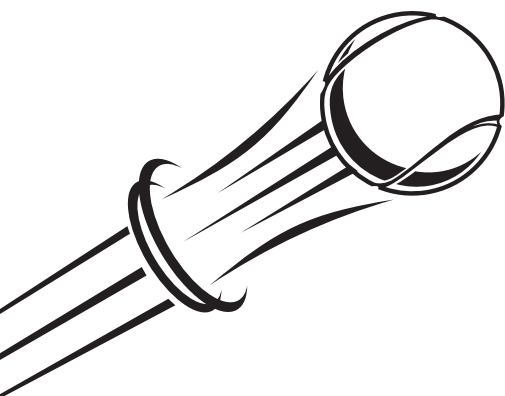
1. Review the SMART goals of the school and the club from your initial meeting – were these goals met?
2. Collect feedback forms from the coach, school and a random selection of students in both the school and club setting.
3. Update the Player Participation Database, which the Schools Coordinator will then use to identify strengths and weaknesses of the link and formulate a plan for the following year.
4. Complete the Cost-Benefit Analysis form with the schools coordinator to determine a budget for the following year.



CLUB RESOURCES PACK

Clubs that become involved with the initiative will receive a resource pack that includes the following:

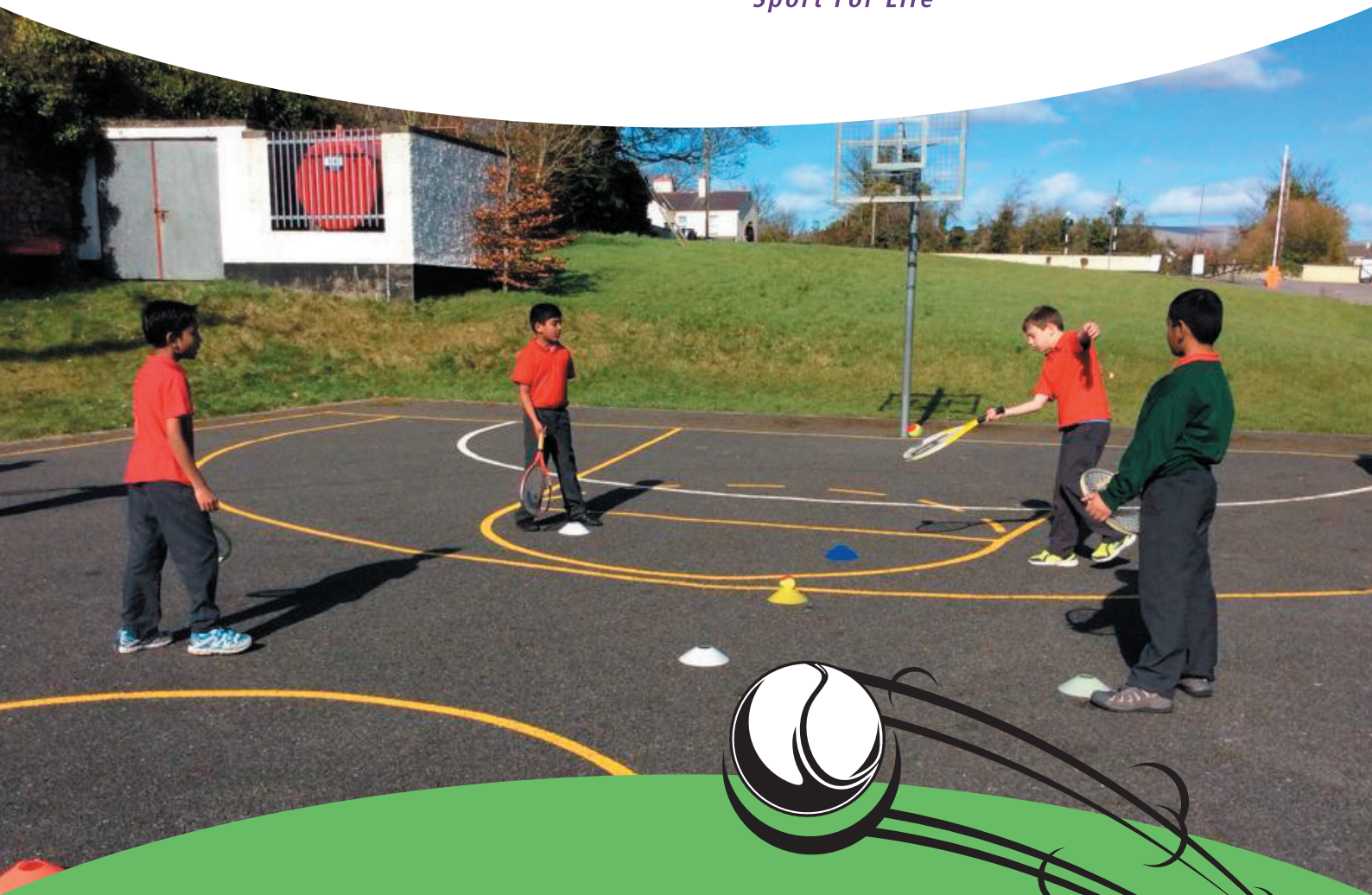
- **Club Needs Analysis**
 - » Club Audit
 - » SWOT Analysis
 - » Building SMART goals worksheet
- **Building a pathway**
 - » Club School Link Player Pathway
 - » Tips for marketing your follow on sessions
 - » Event Checklist and Action Plan
- **Finances**
 - » Template sponsor letter
 - » Template Budget Sheet
 - » Fundraising ideas
 - » Cost Benefit Analysis Sheet
- **Club School Link templates**
 - » Generic Tennis Ireland intro letter
 - » Template school introduction letter
 - » School club link checklist
 - » Template Club School License Agreement
- **Evaluating and monitoring**
 - » School feedback form
 - » Club feedback form
 - » Student feedback form – school
 - » Student/Parent club feedback form – new player
 - » Tennis Ireland Player Participation Database





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