



School Club Links

A Guide to School Club Links

INTRODUCTION

We are all aware that the environment of sport is changing, and the amount of team and individual sports offered to the community and our youth is increasing at a rapid speed. We are also aware that the youth is the future of our sport; otherwise we will end up with a sport and club that has an aging population.

As a club, you need to find ways to promote your sport, and hang that carrot in front of our communities. If you are looking to grow your sport in both exposure and membership, then School Club Links is a foot in the right direction.

The thought of an official link sometimes can put people off, but it doesn't need to be scary. **Put simply, a school club link** could be defined as an agreement between a school and your club to work together to meet the needs of three parties (club, school and students) through the avenue of softball.

If you are lucky, a school may have a particular need for softball and contact your club directly. If not, then one of the best ways you can get your club's foot in the door is to meet with a key staff member at the school and let them know what your club can offer and how you think the partnership could benefit all parties (including students) and to entice the school to try out our sport or be involved in the game long term.

The purpose of this resource is to provide you a guide to School Club Links, including a step by step guide for clubs who are developing links with schools for the first time.

It may also be useful for clubs that currently have a School Club Link in place but want to make it a more formal link.



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A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO DEVELOPING YOUR SCHOOL CLUB LINK

This step by step guide has been designed to show your club the process they can take when developing a link for the first time.

Step 1: Understand School Club Links

Have an understanding of what a link is, how it can benefit you and the type of links there are **Refer to sections 2, 3 & 4 of this resource.**

Step 2: Identify your schools

Identify schools in your local area which you want to develop links with. It would pay to check if any other clubs or coaches have links with this school.

Step 3: Develop your offer

Prior to meeting with the school, begin to think about what you can offer the school and what your goals are for the partnership. What you can offer will be dependent on your capability. **Check out the "ideas store" on pg 8.**

Step 4: Make contact with the schools

Schools get bombarded with approaches from a range of sports so make sure your first approach is professional and friendly. Its often useful to make the first contact in writing outlining what you can offer the school and state you would like to arrange a meeting. Follow this letter up with a phone call. Try and find a suitable first point of contact. This could be the Sports Coordinator, a PE teacher or someone who is interested in softball.

Step 5: Meet with your school

Have your initial face to face meeting with your primary contact at the school, to find out more about the school, to outline what your club can offer, and how it will benefit the school, the students and your club. **There is three (3) resources that will be handy here. Check them out on pg 11, 14 & 15.**

Step 6: Begin the link

Begin delivering the agreed softball activity. If the activity is in school time, make sure a teacher is present during session.

Step 7: Review the link

It is important to review the link that you have and to assess the softball activity you are delivering. Try and meet with your school contact at least once a term to see what is working well, what could be improved, what other options there are and if there are any more opportunities. **Check out the questionnaires on pg 16 & 18 that might prove useful.**



WHY SHOULD CLUBS DEVELOP LINKS WITH SCHOOLS?

Creating a relationship between schools and clubs is important. It allows students:

1. To make the most of their experiences within the school
2. To get the opportunity to try out a new sport
3. To feel comfortable within a club setting, and as a result make them more likely to continue playing softball once they leave school.

Below are a few quick reasons to show you why your club should think about creating a school club link.



Softball isn't offered in the school

If students are looking to play softball but the school doesn't offer it, it can provide a challenge for them to become involved in our sport. In addition another summer sport is getting all of the exposure while softball receives none.

The school club link could offer a solution to this problem by offering the students to give softball a go.

To encourage ongoing participation in softball once they leave school

Once students leave school, they are also leaving an environment where sport was organised for them. The common consequence of this is that many students find it too daunting to approach a club they know nothing or little about and end up dropping out of the sport totally.

The school club link could offer a solution by ensuring that they have the information they need, and a connection to a softball club, so they can continue to play for a club once they have left school.

More effective promotion of your clubs softball events

Schools and clubs can work together to promote local sporting events and opportunities more effectively. A lot of the community will not know what softball clubs are in their area. The school club link could offer a solution by promoting the club to their captive audience – the parents, whanau, family and friends of the students at the school as well as the businesses the school links in with.



THE BENEFITS OF SCHOOL CLUB LINKS

School club links are a great way to grow awareness of your sport while also providing fantastic benefits for your club, the school and the students.

Benefits for the students	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Knowledge of how to continue playing softball after finishing school2. Opportunity to play a sport that the school may not usually offer3. Having fun and being active4. Develop leadership skills5. Access to quality coaching6. Interaction with a wider range of people7. Increased access to sport in the community
Benefits for the school	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wider range of sport made available to the students2. Specialist coaching provided to their students3. Increase the number of school children keeping active, fit and healthy (and therefore happier)4. Coaching that compliments and supports the teaching programme5. Improved performance and sporting success6. Opportunity for students to participate in local, regional or national competitions7. Raise the schools profile8. Teacher support and development within softball
Benefits for the club	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Raise the profile of your club within the school and community2. Young people are given the opportunity to try softball3. Boost your junior membership (which potentially could increase your income)4. Increased promotion of club or softball events5. Potential for your club to share the schools resources (equipment, facilities, etc)6. Help minimise the secondary school drop off that we face in softball7. Access to additional venues for club trainings8. Coach development opportunities9. Potential access to more volunteers10. Sustainability by developing coaches and officials for the future11. Promotion of softball as “the” summer sport of choice12. Increased potential for accessing other funding opportunities



THE TYPES SCHOOL CLUB LINKS

You might already have an unidentified link with a school and have not realised it (through a parent, student or teacher) or maybe no consideration has been given to a link.

If your club decides to pursue a link, decide what type of link is best for your club. School Club Links can vary greatly. There is no right or wrong School Club Link; it's what suits all parties the best. Below is a guide to show what the different levels and types of links that are available.

Informal vs Formal links



Informal links

There is no formal agreement between the school and club, or possibly work is done unofficially by the club or one of its members. Coaching could be established around an "as and when needed basis".

Sometimes the reason or goals of the school club link may not benefit all parties as the school and the club want different outcomes from the link or haven't even discussed how the school, students and club could benefit from the link.

Example: The school may ask a club in to help run a one off softball event annually. This is great as some type of link is formed, but this type of link may not benefit all parties involved. (What does the club get out of this arrangement?)

Formal links

This will be a link where the school and club are working together and the goals and the benefits of this link will provide the best outcomes for all three parties involved; the school, club and students.

Example: If you are running a 6 week KiwiSport project within a school, you are:


- a) Meeting the needs of the school through delivery of a high quality program focused around student (and possibly teacher) development.
- b) You are providing students with an opportunity to try softball in a fun and safe environment
- c) You are reaching the clubs needs by providing positive exposure of the clubs activities and key contacts to the students should they wish to continue playing the game.

THE LEVELS WITHIN SCHOOL CLUB LINKS

Below is a **guide** showing what different levels of links your club could offer a school. You may wish to consider which level would best suit your club before you approach a school to establish a link.

You may decide to progress the level of the link offered to a school over a set period of years or if your club has the capability to work with multiple schools, you may offer each school a different level of link.

Note: This is only a guide so you can tailor make a level to suit you. Refer to the following page to get some more ideas on what your club can offer a school

<p>Basic Level</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identified a point of contact at the school 2. Promo material distributed each year at the school 3. Taster sessions provided or assist with one off events 4. Communication may be minimal 	
<p>Intermediate Level</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identified a point of contact at the school 2. Promo material distributed each year at the school 3. Taster sessions provided or assist with one off events 4. Relationship between the school & club is being fostered nicely 5. Regular communication with the school 6. Activity either happening in or out of school time, for a set duration of time throughout the year (see pg 9 for ideas). 	
<p>Advanced Level</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. INTERMEIDATE LEVEL ACTIVITY PLUS... 2. Info displayed on school notice board, in school newsletters, and leaflet distribution. Possibly run promotions at school events (such as open days, school fair etc) 3. School takes part in local competitions, Interschool comps and/or national comps 4. At least one teacher has received a SNZ coaching accreditation 5. Students have the option to take part in SNZ coaching accreditations 6. Share a greater number of resources (people, ideas, expertise, facilities) 	



THE IDEAS STORE

What can your club offer the school? The ideas store provides some concepts to help develop your school club link.

When working with schools it's good to be able to offer them a "package" rather than just wanting to run some coaching. You can develop your package from the ideas below.

Remember to work within your resources. Don't try and form a link with all schools, but target those nearest to your club.

Ideas for your link



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run KiwiSport projects. (application support can be given by SNZ) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide lesson plans and sports resources to schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide coaches for school teams, even if only on a one-off basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the school of student achievements within the club
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run "Give Softball a Go" sessions at the school (in or out of school hours, or at school fairs). Check out the SNZ website or contact your local SNZ Softball officer for further info 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide team building opportunities for the staff and/or parents at the school (modified softball comp for them to participate in)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate an after school softball club. This can take place indoors or outdoors and may bridge the gap between school activity and club activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership opportunities to the students at any upcoming club tournaments or events (i.e.: work with them to be able to take a T Ball team at a tournament) or with any club administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide SNZ development courses for students, teachers and coaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the school by lending them equipment or donating them the clubs old equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run an off season softball training run after school. Both fitness and skills based training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide officials or assist with the organisation for school or interschool tournaments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide well organised and regular coaching for students (in or out of school hours) based around the FUNdamentals of T-Ball or Softball. if you wish to utilise modified versions of softball, please refer to the Softball NZ website for further guidance. http://www.softball.org.nz/Development/Modified+Softball.html 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Growing coaches." Is a Sport NZ initiative that is linked in with the schools curriculum (NZE A Level 1, 2 & 3). Within this you can run softball accreditations. Talk to the school or your local Regional Sports Trust for further info
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote softball in the school assembly. Possibly some softball footage, demonstrate some skills, talk the game up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the school with info packs / flyers / posters on the club, training times, teams, upcoming tournaments etc



REVIEWING & MEASURING THE SUCCESS OF YOUR SCHOOL CLUB LINK

Measuring the success of your school club link?

There is no easy answer to how you should measure your link. Variable factors can place limits on what you may have predetermined to be a successful link. Such factors could include the distance between the school and club, the demographics, and how attractive your program is to join. However don't be hard on yourself. Remember that success can come in a multitude of ways and in different forms. Be open minded about how success can be measured. For example

- If your club receives 5 new players this could be deemed to be a success
- The school you have linked with is entering interschool competitions for the first time
- Your club has gained x number of junior coaches (either teachers, parents or senior students)
- The exposure of your club is increasing through publications via the school and their connections
- Your club profile is growing and your club is gaining a good reputation for being a safe and well organised club
- Parents and teachers have joined together to play softball within a social environment or for team building

Keep in mind that positive spin offs may not happen overnight. It may take well more than one year of your link to be in place before you really start seeing the benefits to your club.



How do you review your link?

There are multiple ways this can be done and we would suggest you do **more than one** of the items listed below.

1. Review the goals of the school and the club from your initial meeting – were these goals met?
2. Have individual meetings with the club coaches working with the school and with your school contact. Find out what worked well for them and what could be improved, along with what programs would they like to continue with or expand on?
3. Provide your school contact with a questionnaire at the end of each term and ask the students to fill out a questionnaire – on a random basis
4. Look at participation numbers – did these stay the same throughout the duration of the project or increase/decrease. What were the probable reasons for any fluctuation (was it the program or external factors?)



THE RESOURCE ROOM

We want to assist with making the process easier on your club.

Rather than supplying you with the information on the previous pages and then patting you on the back, wishing you good luck, and waving goodbye we thought it would a great idea to provide you some resources to make the planning and management of your school club link a little easier.

In the below section of this guide you can find

1. Schools meeting check list	Take this into your initial meeting with the school. This document will allow both parties to collect a range of useful info, which may help determine what type of link can be established.
2. School meetings confirmation letter template	You can use this letter when confirming any agreed activity about to take place as part of your school club link. The letter can be amended so you can add in your logo, or copy and paste onto your clubs headed paper if applicable.
3. School Club Link agreement	
4. School feedback questionnaire	You can use this questionnaire with your schools either at the end of each term activity is run, or at the end of the year. It would be beneficial to use this feedback and link it into any future planning you have for your link.
5. Softball young person's evaluation form	You can use this evaluation form at the end of a block of curriculum time coaching, or out of hours school club. You can amend the questions and insert your own logo / additional information.
6. Project timeframe template	This is a quick outline of suggested timeframes for setting up your school club link and reporting deadlines.
7. Coach reporting form	
8. Schools contact list	

SCHOOLS MEETING CHECKLIST

Take this into your initial meeting with the school. This document will allow both parties to collect a range of useful info, which may help determine what type of link can be established.

1. Contact Information

School Name	
Name of School Contact	
Job Title of School Contact	
School Address	
Telephone Number	
E-Mail Address	
Additional key school personal contact info (if required: eg: Sports Coordinator or Princial or head of staff)	
Is the school currently parting in Softball	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

2. Facility and Equipment Information

Indoor	
What indoor spaces does the school have that could be used for softball? (halls, gyms, sports halls) Include size info if this will assist with planning.	
Which of these indoor spaces are used for assemblies and lunchtimes?	
Outdoor	
What outdoor spaces does the school have that could be used for softball? (fields, playgrounds, multi-games areas, tennis courts) Include size info if this will assist with planning.	
Which of these outdoor spaces are used for breaks?	

What softball equipment (if any) does the school have?	
Where should coaches park and report to when visiting the school?	

4. Class Information

	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6
Number of classes in school						
Average Class Size						

OR

	Y7	Y8	Y9	Y10	Y11	Y12	Y13
Number of classes in school							
Average Class Size							

What activities are the school interested in?		
Activity	Yes / No	Preferred Days / Notes
Breakfast Club	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Lunchtime Club	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
After School Club	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Curriculum Time Coaching	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Competition / events	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
SNZ Coach Accreditations	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
School Assembly	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Give Softball A GO days	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

5. School Day Information

School Day Begins	
Lunch Break	
School Day Ends	
Breaks (If applicable)	
What is the degree of flexibility in the above timings	

6. Activity Information that the school and club would like to have take place

7. Marketing and Promotion

Are the school happy to assist with the following?		
Activity	Yes / No	Notes
Leaflet distribution	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Posters on school notice board	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Include info in School Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
School Fair / Open Days	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	

8. Meeting Actions

SCHOOL LINKS CONFIRMATION TEMPLATE LETTER

You can use this letter when confirming any agreed activity about to take place as part of your school club link. The letter can be amended so you can add in your logo, or copy and paste onto your clubs headed paper if applicable. *[delete as appropriate]*,

Date

Dear *insert school contact name here*,

Softball Activity – Confirmation Letter

Following our recent telephone conversation/meeting *[delete as appropriate]*, I am writing to confirm the details for the Curriculum Time Coaching, Breakfast, Lunchtime, After School Club, School Assembly, Competition *[delete as appropriate]*, as follows:

Dates: *Insert dates of activity here*

Times: *Insert times of activity here*

Class/Year Groups: *Insert info on classes/year groups involved here*

Facility: *Insert info on where the activity will take place here (hall/playground etc)*

To ensure that the activity takes place smoothly, please note the following points:

- Our coach will arrive approximately 30 minutes prior to the start time, to prepare for the session.
- Where possible, it would be much appreciated if the children could be changed and ready for their session, 5 minutes before the start time.
- No special clothing is required; however for their comfort, it would be preferable for the children to wear shorts, t-shirts and gym shoes or trainers.
- No equipment needs to be provided, as our coach will bring all that is required. *[change this statement if you want to use the school equipment]*
- It would be much appreciated if the class teacher or teaching assistant could remain present throughout the session.

I can confirm that *insert coach name here* will be delivering this activity and for information, can be contacted as follows; *insert mobile number here*.

In addition, please find enclosed our School Club Link Agreement, to assist us in making our relationship professional, open and trusting.

Thanks for your continuing support and if you have any queries or require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me on: *insert contact details here*.

Yours sincerely,

Insert name here
Insert job title here

SCHOOL CLUB LINK AGREEMENT

This is a School-Club Link agreement between:		
School		
Club		
Covering the period (suggest 12 month period initially)		
Review Date		
Identified Lead Contact Names:		
School		
Club		
The CLUB agrees to:		
The SCHOOL agrees to:		
Principles of the School Club Link:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School-Club Link should meet the needs of all children and young people, whether they want to be involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ As an elite performer ○ To enjoy softball and develop their skills ○ For social or recreational reasons ○ To maintain or develop their fitness ○ As a young leader or coach ○ As a club official • All activity delivered should be of 'high quality', and in accordance with the SNZ Coach Code of Conduct • Regular communication between the nominated contacts at the school and club is vital to the success of this School Club Link. 		
Declaration:		
By signing this agreement, we agree to work together to jointly deliver the elements of this School Club Link agreement, as outlined above.		
School Contact Name	School Contact Signature	Date
Club Contact Name	Club Contact Signature	Date

SCHOOLS FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRE

You can use this questionnaire with your schools either at the end of each term activity is run, or at the end of the year.

It would be beneficial to use this feedback and link it into any future planning you have for your link. Feel free to amend the questions if you would like, and to add in your own logo *[delete as appropriate]*

Please complete this questionnaire to assist us in ensuring our school programme is delivered effectively and successfully and to make improvements where necessary.

School Name	
Contact Name	

How would you rate the quality of the administration and pre-activity organisation this year?					
N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Average <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor <input type="checkbox"/>	Very Poor <input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Comments:					

Softball Program feedback. How would you rate each of the below?							
	n/a	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Comments
Presenter provided quality learning experiences for all involved							
The sessions were well planned and prepared							
Equipment matched the players needs							
The learning environment was safe							
Participants for the sessions fun							
Session achieved its learning focus							
Activities were age, gender, skill and ability appropriate							

Presenter feedback. How would you rate each of the below?							
	N/A	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	Comments
Arrived on time and ready							
Dressed appropriately							
Explanations were clear, concise and demonstrations were understood							
Listened to and included all participants							
Was positive and enthusiastic towards the group							
Gave effective feedback							
Interacted with all participants							
Involved teacher in the program							

Which particular activities do you think have proved most popular this year?
What can we do to improve our service and offering to your school next year?
Please use this box to provide us with any additional comments, if you wish:

Thanks for taking the time to complete this form, please return it to:
 [Insert details here]

SOFTBALL'S YOUNG PERSON'S EVALUATION FORM

*You can use this evaluation form at the end of a block of curriculum time coaching, or out of hours school club. You can amend the questions and insert your own logo / additional information. **[delete as appropriate]***

We hope you enjoyed your softball session at school today.

Please complete this form to tell us what you think!

1. Did you enjoy your softball session today?

- Yes
- It was ok
- No

2. Did the coach make the session fun and easy to understand?

- Yes
- No

3. Was the equipment easy to use?

- Yes
- No

4. What was the best part about playing softball today?

5. What could we do to make playing softball better?

THANK YOU 😊

TIMEFRAME FOR SETTING UP A SCHOOL CLUB LINK

This is a quick outline of suggested timeframes for setting up your school club link and reporting deadlines.

TIME FRAME	DATE	DESCRIPTION
Week 1		Understand school club links. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why you want a school club link • What type of link do you want (informal vs formal) • What benefits are you hoping to gain from the link • What resources you would require • Identify who will manage this process on behalf of the club • Identify who will coach in the school
Week 2		Identify the schools you would like to link with.
Week 3		Develop your offer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What can you offer the school • What are your goals from the partnership with the school • Put together a package to the school with different examples and scenarios of what you can offer
Week 7		Make contact with the school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide in writing, info about your club, why you want to make a link and what you can offer them • Follow up with a phone call • Identify a key contact person within the school
Week 9		Meet with the school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your initial face to face meeting • Find out more about the school • Outline your offer again and how you see it benefiting the school, the students and the club • Utilise the “school meeting checklist” provided in this resource
Week 11		Confirm you link with the school in writing, and provide the school club link agreement to be signed by both parties (if applicable)
At least 2 – 4 weeks before the link starts		Prepare your coaches and your program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the coach with relevant details about the school • Make sure the coaches are fully aware of what will be delivered and how • Make your coaches aware of the process to go through should they have any concerns or complaints about the school or specific students or the school’s first aid policy • Have you sourced all the equipment you require?
		Begin the link. Towards the end of the link provide an exit information to the school about the clubs open days, leagues, contact info etc
		Review the link <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get the school to complete the questionnaire provided in this pack • Ask students to undertake the “softball young persons survey” included in this pack • Get your coach(es) to provide a full report on their link with the school • Report on any measures of success

SOFTBALL COACH REPORTING FORM

Insert Association or Club logo	TOTALS									
	Wk 10									
Wk 9										
Attendance Sheet One of these is required to be completed per school	Wk 8									
	Wk 7									
	Wk 6									
	Wk 5									
	Wk 4									
	Wk 3									
	Wk 2									
	Wk 1									
Insert School Name & Age Group										
Club Coach Name										
No. Of Females										
No. Of Males										
Total Students										
Volunteer support										
No. Of Teachers										
No. Of Parents										
No. Of other										

SCHOOLS CONTACT LIST

School Name	School Address	Phone	Email	Contact teacher