



## Solefield School

### Solefield School Competitive Sport and Team Selection Policy

The Sports programme at Solefield is designed to be fully inclusive. We want to provide opportunities for participation by students of all levels of age and ability. Students are offered a wide range of sports during PE and Games lessons, with more choice and opportunities becoming available through our clubs' programme.

Solefield believes in the value of competitive sport and healthy competition. The school runs as many teams as possible at different levels and in a wide variety of sports. There are several limiting factors, which affect the above:

- not every other school can/will field as many teams as we are trying to, or can cope with the changing/catering/staffing/transport issues. This may limit the number of teams/players we can field on a given day.
- We aim to get all our students playing inter-school matches as often as possible.

#### Major Vs Minor Sports

Sport at Solefield is split into two categories:

**Major Sports** – are those sports that we compete in from years 3-8 on a termly basis:

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Football	Rugby	Cricket

**Minor Sports** – are those sports that we compete in extra to those above. These sports include, but are not limited to:

- Athletics
- Chess
- Cross-Country
- Basketball
- Gymnastics
- Swimming
- Table Tennis
- Tennis

Each sport has a dedicated member of staff leading the sport on both its coaching and vision.

### **Staffing of fixtures**

Staff, who are part of the Sports Department, show a valuable commitment to school sport and are prepared to give up time to take teams for home and away matches, including weekends. They are encouraged to gain coaching qualifications and they are required to follow guidance contained in the IAPS sports handbook, governing competitive sport between Prep Schools. Without compromising academic standards, we enable and encourage students to compete for places in representative sides. Every encouragement is given to all students to develop their skills at every level.

When choosing which member of staff will take which team, we look at a variety of factors including: level of coaching qualification; experience; knowledge of the sport. We also aim to ensure that staff coach a range of teams throughout the year and that each team is coached by a valued member of staff no matter what the ability of the side is.

When taking on the running of a team, members of staff do so in the expectation that the experience will be a rewarding and enjoyable one for both them and the students in their care. They know that they must coach the students to the best of their ability, and they look for a positive response from them.

Students at Solefield are highly enthusiastic about their sport. Teachers instil the values of good sportsmanship, including winning with grace and losing with dignity. Competitive sport by its nature has winners and losers, and it is an important aspect of sport and a lesson for life, that pupils, while playing to win, must also learn to manage disappointment and failure. We endeavour to challenge all our students to progress and improve throughout the respective sporting seasons.

### **Selection of teams – Major Sports**

At Solefield we believe that every child should train and compete at a level that is right for them. A teams will be in place for each age group from years 3-8, but will not be set in stone for the season. Students will be able to earn the right to move up and down the teams on a week-by-week basis.

The selection policy for teams is organised by age and then ability. Our policy regarding 'A' teams at any age and in any sport is to select our strongest team.

In very exceptional circumstances a child would be allowed to play if over the specified age limit, but this would have to be agreed by both schools, in advance of the fixture.

Discussion will always take place, amongst the sports staff, regarding who to select for particular teams and every season a fresh assessment is made of a child's ability and potential.

Team selection and management at any level is the direct responsibility of the members of staff running the team. In all circumstances the teams are selected by ability which is determined by staff using their professionalism and experience to pick the best teams to represent the school at all age levels. Factors taken into consideration, when selecting a team include effort, form, fitness, attitude, attendance, approach, discipline, team tactics as well as behaviour at school both in and out of the classroom.

### **Selection of teams - Minor Sports**

Whereas all children will compete in our Major Sports programmes and fixtures, our minor sports teams will be made up of fewer participants.

Most events that will take place in our minor sports will be competitive, and as such we will aim to select the best teams or individuals to compete. However, there will be the odd occasion in which we will be encouraged to enter more than one side, and therefore more students will be encouraged to take the opportunity to compete.

Team selection and management is the direct responsibility of the members of staff running the sport. Students selected are likely to be chosen due to their ability in the sport, participation in clubs and attitude shown within the sport.

### **Selection of teams - Management of our Students**

We try to tread the fine path between encouraging excellence and giving opportunities for all, but it is simply impossible to please everyone all the time. There has to be a clear balance between competitive matches, training sessions and the development of both the individual and the team.

Parents may, of course, speak to a member of staff about how a child is getting on or how he might make further progress. However, on no account must any parent try to influence team selection. When parents do try to influence or criticise team selection it makes the staff's job very difficult, if not impossible. It is vital that the staff are able to make selections even-handedly and independently of parental ambition, wishes, or judgement.

However strongly a parent feels about their child not being selected, if they do try to interfere it undermines the authority of the staff and this must not happen.

It can be disheartening for a child to be dropped from a team. Staff will explain to the child why this has happened, but this is something students have to learn to cope with; students learn to build resilience in this way. Staff will endeavour to speak to the individual who has been dropped before team sheets go live.

Not all students can be in A teams, but it is also very important that those who are do not boast and show-off, or criticise the play of those who aren't. This can be very hurtful and undermining. The school does not in any way condone this kind of attitude.

There is an obligation on students who are selected for a team to be available to play, this is particular important for weekend tournaments. Parents will be informed of these tournaments at the start of each term, and a letter for the tournament teams will be sent out a minimum of a week in advance.

Students should look out for the team sheets published in advance, on the school website and posted around the school. These are generally posted up to 48 hours in advance of the fixture.

Where there is a clash between a school fixture and a representative fixture, the school fixture takes precedence, unless prior permission has been granted by the Director of Sport for the child to miss the school match. Staff will show understanding, if a child is unable to play because of a prior engagement having been selected at short notice because another child has withdrawn.

### **Excellence Vs Sport for All**

The nature of independent education makes school very competitive in all aspects of their curriculum, sport is no exception to this. At Solefield we take pride in our students performing at the very highest levels in competitive sport and their sporting commitments in School provide the foundation for representing their County or on occasions at National level. There must therefore, be room to celebrate and promote excellence. To achieve this, we enter many fixtures and tournaments at local, regional and national level. The school has enjoyed success in national competitions and gained representative honours in many sports.

Our philosophy is that 'Sport for All' and Excellence can co-exist together successfully. They are not mutually exclusive.