

ROKEBY COMPETITIVE SPORT & TEAM SELECTION POLICY

Member of Staff Responsible	Director of Sport
SLT Sign Off	Deputy Head Pastoral
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Approved By Governors	N/A
Distribution:	All Staff

The Sports programme at Rokeby is designed to be fully inclusive. We want to provide opportunities for participation by boys of all levels of age and ability, involving either competition within the school or with other schools. Boys are offered a wide range of sports during PE and Games lessons, with more choice and opportunities becoming available as part of the activities programme.

Rokeby 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 boys playing inter-school matches as often as possible.

While we select as many boys as possible as often as possible, there are specific issues relating to technical ability, as well as health and safety, which limit the number of teams/players schools (including ourselves) put out for Rugby and Cricket. However, Sports Days, Swimming Galas and the Inter-House Events give every child the opportunity to compete at as high a standard as possible, striving for personal achievement and house points. All boys will represent the school in our 3 main games sports of football, rugby (contact or non-contact) and cricket.

Staffing of fixtures: Staff who are part of the Sports programme, 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 boys to compete for places in representative sides. Every encouragement is given to all boys to develop their skills at every level.

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. They know that they must coach the boys to the best of their ability, and they look for a positive response from them. Boys at Rokeby are very enthusiastic about their sport. Teachers instill the values of good sportsmanship, including being both good winners and good losers. 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 are looking to challenge all our boys to progress and improve throughout the sporting season.

Selection of teams: 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 boy 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. Boys may also be selected to play for a higher year group team if it agreed that it would benefit their personal development and enhance the quality of that team.

Discussions 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 boy's ability and potential. Therefore, boys should not expect to necessarily be in the same team at the start of a new season as they were at the end of the last season. In all circumstances, the teams are selected 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, ability, fitness, attitude, attendance, approach, discipline and game understanding. Whilst attendance at after-school training is not a pre-requisite for selection, the additional training time will be a benefit to those attending.

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 and there are limits to the number of matches it is possible to arrange. There must be a clear balance between competitive matches, training sessions and the development of the individual and team.

Team selection and management at any level is the direct responsibility of the members of staff running the team. Parents may, of course, speak to a member of staff about how their child is getting on or how he might make further progress. 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 coach is able to make selections even-handedly and independently of parental ambition, wishes, or judgement. However strongly a parent feels about their son not being selected, interference undermines the authority of the staff. This must not happen.

It can be disheartening for a boy to be dropped from a team. Staff will explain to the boy why this has happened, but this is something boys are supported to learn to cope with. Not all boys can be in A teams, but it is also very important that those who are do not boast, 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 as it does not demonstrate sportsmanship. Boys are reminded that attitude is one factor considered in selection.

There is an obligation on boys who are selected for a team to be available to play. Parents should look through the fixture list and make a note of matches in which boys may be required to play, including House matches. Boys should look out for the team sheets published in advance, on the school SOCS website and posted on the sports television. These are posted up to 48hrs in advance of the fixture (see Fixtures Policy and Procedure for more information).

Where there is a clash between a school fixture and a club/representative fixture, the school fixture takes precedence, unless prior permission has been granted by the Director of Sport for the boy to miss the school match. If a boy has a regular non-sporting activity that is likely to clash with weekend fixtures, please contact the Director of Sport to discuss the clash. Not appearing

for a team when selected lets down the team, the house and/or the school. Staff will show understanding if a boy is unable to play because of a prior engagement having been selected at short notice because another boy has withdrawn.

IAPS Guidelines on Sport - Parents' Guidelines

Children develop differently, at different rates and react differently to the same pressure

- Don't force an unwilling child to participate in sport; he is not playing to satisfy your ambitions.
- Children and young people are involved in organising sport for their enjoyment - not yours.
- Encourage your children always to play by the rules.
- Teach your child that effort and teamwork are as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
- Turn defeat into victory by helping your child work towards skill improvement and a positive sporting attitude. Never ridicule or shout at your child for making a mistake or losing a competition.
- Children learn best by example. Applaud good play by your team and by members of the opposing team.
- Don't question publicly the officials' judgement and never their honesty.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's sporting activities.
- Recognise the value and importance of coaches. They give their time and resources to provide guidance for your child. Set an example by being friendly to the parents of the opposition!
- Emphasis on enjoyment and fun.
- Praise and reinforce of effort and improvement.

IAPS Guidelines on Sport - Spectators' Guidelines

Children at play are not professional entertainers

- Children play organised sport for their own fun. They are not there to entertain you, and they are **NOT** miniature adults or professional athletes.
- Don't harass or swear at players, coaches or officials.
- Applaud good play by your own and the visiting team. Show respect for your team's opponents. Without them there would be no game.
- Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a competition.
- Condemn the use of violence in all forms.
- Respect the officials' decisions.
- Encourage players always to play by the rules.
- Relax and enjoy the game whether your team wins or not.
- Be a positive role model and lead by example.

Guidelines issued to Prep Schools point out that ‘the school has a responsibility for the conduct of every aspect of its sports - including the behaviour of supporters (pupils/parents/other adults alike)’ and staff will speak to parents if they think their attitude is detrimental to the spirit of the game.

The nature of independent education makes school very competitive in all aspects of their curriculum, sport is no exception to this. At Rokeby we take pride in our boys 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 play many of the best schools in the London/Southeast Area. 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.

*Mr M Schmid
Director of Sport
August 2026*

FIXTURES POLICY - ARRANGEMENT

- In all sports, all teams at all age groups will have at least two training (games) sessions, where possible, prior to their first competitive fixture. This must include at least one scrummaging/tackling session during the rugby season.
- No team will have fixtures on both of their games sessions in one calendar week during the first half of each season. This will allow sides to play a maximum of two games whilst having at least one training session, each week. The only exceptions to this are rescheduled matches or Cup fixtures, arranged after the publication of the calendar.
- Where possible, fixtures during exam weeks will be arranged with schools in close proximity to Rokeby to prevent late returns and delays thereby allowing boys sufficient time to revise in the evenings.

Advance notice to parents

- Fixtures are to be published on the school sports website (SOCS) before the end of the preceding term to provide parents with as much notice as possible.

Changes to Fixtures schedule

- Any changes or additional fixtures to the published list will be posted on the school sports website (SOCS) as soon as amendments are made.
- News of any Cup fixtures will be added to the sports website and added to the electronic calendar.
- The school Sport Website (SOCS) will have the latest and most up-to-date fixture information on it.

Team sheets

- Team sheets will be posted on the school website and Sports television a minimum of 48 hours prior to the fixture
- There are obvious exceptions to this where teams have matches within that time frame. If this is the case the team sheet will be published as soon as possible ahead of the next match.

Day of fixtures

- If your son is away from school on the day of a fixture, an email must be sent to the member of staff taking the side, or a message sent to them via the school office.

Where boys are brought into squads, due to injury or illness, with differing arrangements, parents will be notified either by the member of staff running the side, or the School Office.

Dress code for pupils

- Please refer to the School Uniform Section of this Handbook for a comprehensive list of all items required for the three major sports and PE lessons.

Football-specific information

- **Boots and shin guards:** Boots are highly advisable in all age groups, not only to give grip but also to provide protection when other children are wearing boots. Shin guards are compulsory for all age groups. In line with FA Guidelines, all boys must have shin pads for competitive matches. If they do not have a pair, they will not be allowed to play.

Rugby-specific information

- **Mouthguards:** The RFU recommendation is that mouthguards are advisable for all children. The school policy is the mouthguards are advisable in the Under 7 and Under 8 age groups (touch rugby) but **compulsory** in the Under 9 and older age groups playing contact rugby. If a boy does not have his mouthguard, he will not be allowed to take part in any form of contact, this includes school fixtures.
- **Boots:** Boots are highly advisable in all age groups not only to give grip but also to provide protection when other children are wearing boots. Football or rugby boots are generally acceptable.
- **Boot studs:** Studs with sharp or jagged edges (such as the nylon studs commonly fitted to football boots) pose a danger to other players. Blades and studs are currently both acceptable as footwear for rugby

Match teas

- It is the expectation of the school that **ALL** boys attend post-match tea.
- If boys are leaving fixtures with their parents, they will be dismissed by the member of staff in charge of that team once tea has been completed.
- In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, if a parent wishes to remove their son from a match tea, this must be communicated directly with the Director of Sport prior to the fixture. Permission will be granted at the discretion of the Director of Sport.

Transportation to and from Sport:

Football & Rugby Seasons

- All boys will always be transported to and from home and away midweek fixtures, during the Football & Rugby season.
- Parents have the option of collecting their son from home and away fixtures, providing the relevant member of staff is notified.
- The same options are available for school training at RSG.
- Where boys are involved in weekend fixtures, it is the responsibility of the parents to get their son to the correct venue. This is the case for all weekend fixtures.
- Please ensure your son signs out with his coach or a member of staff before departing.

Cricket Season

- **There is NO return transport to School, following the conclusion of home fixtures for boys in Years 5-8.** This is due to the finishing times and the availability of school transport.
- Boys will always be returned to school from away fixtures and training sessions, unless collected from the venue by a parent or guardian.
- Parents have the option of collecting their son from school at the conclusion of training sessions at RSG.
- Where boys are involved in weekend fixtures, it is the responsibility of the parents to get their son to the correct venue. This is the case for all weekend fixtures.

Location of schools

- The school provides a comprehensive list of postcodes and multi-map links for all away venues in the 'Parents' section of the Rokeby website. Please also look at the SOCS website, as locations are added to the site for away fixtures.
- New postcodes and venues will be added as necessary. If parents note that a school or venue is missing, then please inform the Director of Sport directly.

Arrival for fixtures (weekend)

- All boys must arrive at the venue for fixtures (home or away) a minimum of 30 minutes prior to kick-off. This time may be increased at the discretion of the staff.
- Upon arrival, all boys must report directly to a member of staff or their team coach.
- If a boy is going to be late, for any reason, they must contact the member of staff taking the side. Staff contact numbers should be published on team sheets or staff can be emailed.

Departure from fixtures

- Parents are permitted to take their son home from all fixtures, home or away, however an email (or other form of communication) must have been sent to the teacher-in-charge of the side, prior to departure, informing them of their wishes. Staff can then ensure that the relevant boys take all school bags to the fixture.
- Once dismissed from match tea, boys going home directly with their parents **MUST sign out with the teacher-in-charge and/or their team coach prior to departure.**

Late return - School Post

- The school uses School Post as a method of communicating with parents. This system will be used under the following circumstances:
 - Cancellation of fixtures/activities
 - Late changes to the published fixture arrangements
 - Reminders
 - Delayed return from fixtures/tournaments
- A message will be sent to the relevant parents, informing them of the changes to the return.

Medication for weekend fixtures:

- If your son requires any medication, during midweek sport, this will always be carried out by the relevant member of staff.
- For fixtures/tournaments held at weekends it is the responsibility of the parents to carry their son's medication.
- The school reserves the right not to include any boy in a weekend fixture if no medication is available.