

Competitive Sport Team Selection and Parental Policy

Member of Staff Responsible	Director of Sport
SLT Sign Off	Deputy Head Pastoral
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The Sports Programme at Rokeby is designed to be fully inclusive. We aim to provide opportunities for participation for boys of all ages and abilities, whether through competition within the school or against other schools. Boys are offered a wide range of sports through PE and Games lessons, with increasing opportunities for choice and participation through our co-curricular activities programme.

Rokeby believes strongly in the value of competitive sport and healthy competition. The school seeks to field as many teams as possible across a wide variety of sports and ability levels. However, several factors can affect this objective:

- Other schools may not be able to field the same number of teams as Rokeby.
- Logistical considerations, including staffing, transport, facilities and fixture arrangements, may limit the number of teams or players involved on a particular day.
- We aim to provide all boys with opportunities to participate in inter-school fixtures as regularly as possible.

While we strive to give as many boys as possible the opportunity to represent the school, factors relating to technical ability, player welfare and health and safety may limit the number of teams that can be fielded in sports such as football, rugby and cricket. However, Sports Days, Swimming Galas and Inter-House competitions provide every child with the opportunity to compete at an appropriate level, pursue personal achievement and contribute to their House. All boys will have opportunities to represent the school in our three major games sports: football, rugby and cricket.

The school is committed to providing a sporting environment that encourages participation, enjoyment, personal development and excellence. We seek to strike a balance between offering opportunities for all pupils and ensuring that our teams are competitive when representing Rokeby

As a prep school, our primary aim is to develop each pupil's sporting ability, character, resilience and love of sport. Team selection will always reflect what is considered to be in the best interests of both the individual pupil and the team.

Staffing of Fixtures

The success of the Sports Programme relies upon the commitment of staff who willingly give their time to coach and manage teams at home and away fixtures, including weekend events. Staff are encouraged to gain coaching qualifications and are required to follow the guidance set out in the IAPS Sports Handbook governing competitive sport between Prep Schools.

Without compromising academic standards, we support and encourage boys who are selected for representative teams. Every effort is made to help all boys develop their sporting skills and enjoyment of sport, regardless of ability.

When staff take responsibility for a team, they do so with the expectation that the experience will be rewarding and enjoyable for everyone involved. Coaches are committed to helping boys develop to the best of their ability and expect a positive attitude, commitment and effort in return.

Sport plays an important role in developing character. Staff promote the values of good sportsmanship, encouraging boys to be both gracious winners and resilient in defeat. Competitive sport produces winners and losers, and learning to manage disappointment and setbacks is an important life skill. Our aim is to challenge all boys to improve and progress throughout each sporting season.

Selection of Teams

Team selection is organised primarily by age group and then by ability. At every age level and in every sport, our policy is that A teams will comprise the strongest available players.

Boys may be selected to play for an older age-group team where coaches believe this will benefit their development and strengthen the team. In exceptional circumstances, a boy may be permitted to play above the specified age limit, provided this has been agreed in advance by both schools.

Team selection is reviewed carefully and regularly by Sports Department staff. A fresh assessment of each boy's ability, progress and potential is made at the beginning of every season. Therefore, selection in a particular team at the end of one season does not guarantee selection in the same team the following season.

All teams are selected using the professional judgement and experience of the coaching staff. Factors considered when selecting teams include:

- Ability and performance
- Effort and commitment
- Attitude and conduct
- Sportsmanship
- Attendance
- Fitness and physical readiness
- Understanding of the game
- Team contribution and coachability
- Discipline and behaviour

While attendance at after-school training is not a prerequisite for selection, the additional coaching and practice opportunities offered through these sessions are likely to benefit those who attend regularly.

We seek to balance the pursuit of excellence with the provision of opportunities for all. While it is not possible to satisfy every expectation, we endeavour to provide a suitable balance between matches, training and individual development.

The selection and management of teams remain the responsibility of the staff leading those teams. Parents are welcome to speak with staff regarding their child's development and ways in which they can improve. However, attempts to influence team selection are inappropriate and will not be accepted.

Selection decisions must be made fairly, objectively and independently. Attempts by parents to influence or challenge team selection can undermine both the process and the authority of staff. We therefore ask parents to respect the professional judgement of coaches and teachers.

Being omitted from, or moved between, teams can be disappointing.  Wherever possible, staff will offer constructive feedback to help boys understand selection decisions and identify areas for improvement. Learning to respond positively to disappointment is an important aspect of both sport and personal development.

Not every boy can be selected for an A team. Equally, boys selected for higher teams are expected to remain humble, respectful and supportive of their peers. Any behaviour that demeans, criticises or excludes others is contrary to the values of good sportsmanship. We encourage all players to celebrate each other's efforts and achievements, and to contribute positively to a team culture built on respect, inclusion and mutual support. There is an expectation that boys selected for school teams will make themselves available for fixtures. Parents should refer to the published fixture list and be aware of potential commitments, including House events. Team sheets are normally published up to 48 hours before fixtures via SOCS and school communication channels.

Where a school fixture clashes with a club or representative fixture, the school fixture will normally take precedence unless prior permission has been granted by the Director of Sport. Parents should discuss any regular sporting or non-sporting commitments with the Director of Sport as early as possible.

Failure to attend a fixture after selection impacts teammates, coaches and the school. However, staff will be understanding where unforeseen circumstances arise, particularly when boys have been selected at short notice due to late withdrawals.

Guidelines on Sport

Children develop at different rates and respond differently to pressure.

- Children participate in sport for their enjoyment, not that of adults.
- Encourage children to play by the rules at all times.
- Teach that effort, teamwork and personal improvement are as important as winning.
- Help children view setbacks as opportunities for growth and development.
- Never ridicule or criticise a child for making mistakes or losing.
- Lead by example by applauding good play from both teams.
- Respect the decisions of officials and never question their integrity.
- Support efforts to eliminate verbal and physical abuse from children's sport.
- Recognise and appreciate the commitment of coaches and volunteers.
- Promote enjoyment, participation and a positive sporting experience.
- Praise effort, commitment and improvement.

Guidelines on Sport: Parents' and Spectators' Code of Conduct

We are delighted to welcome parents and spectators to our fixtures. Your behaviour has a significant influence on children's sporting experiences.

Parents and spectators should:

-  Remember that this is a children's event and that their experience comes first.
- Be positive, supportive and encouraging.
- Promote respect, fairness and good sportsmanship.
- Respect officials and accept their decisions.
- Show appreciation for coaches, staff and volunteers.
- Celebrate effort, teamwork and improvement, not only results.
- Treat players, officials and supporters from all schools with courtesy and respect. 
- Avoid inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Help children learn from both success and disappointment.
- Follow safeguarding procedures and event guidance.
- Avoid talking negatively about other children with other parents or their own children.
- Raise any concerns with the member of staff at an appropriate time.
- IAPS guidance makes clear that schools are responsible for the conduct of everyone involved in school sport, including players, parents, spectators and other adults. If staff believe that behaviour is detrimental to the spirit of the game or the experience of the children involved, they will address the matter directly. The school reserves the right to ask any individual to leave a fixture if their behaviour is deemed inappropriate.

IAPS Code of Conduct for Parents and Spectators:

You should:

- Remember that this is a children's event and their experience should come first.

- Be positive, supportive and encouraging.
- Promote respect, fairness and good sportsmanship.
- Respect match officials and their decisions.
- Show appreciation for coaches, staff and volunteers.
- Celebrate effort, teamwork and improvement, not just results.
- Treat players, officials and supporters from all schools with respect.
- Avoid inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Help children learn from both success and disappointment.
- Follow our safeguarding expectations and event guidance.
- Relax and enjoy the event.

We reserve the right to ask individuals to leave an event if their behaviour negatively impacts the experience of others.

The nature of independent school sport is inherently competitive, and Rokeby takes great pride in supporting boys to perform at the highest levels possible. School sport often provides the foundation for representation at club, county and, on occasion, national level. There must therefore be scope to celebrate achievement and excellence.

To support this ambition, Rokeby competes regularly against many of the strongest schools in London and the Southeast. The school has enjoyed success in regional and national competitions and has produced pupils who have gone on to achieve representative honours across a range of sports.

Our philosophy is simple:

"Sport for All" and sporting excellence can successfully coexist. They are not mutually exclusive.

Mr M Schmid

Director of Sport

September 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.