

Accessing schools' facilities

Discussing and securing access to a school's facilities can sometimes feel complicated and even daunting. To help, Club Matters has worked with Active Gloucestershire to prepare this list of key considerations.



The first section considers things you might want to find out from a school, whilst the second helps you understand the types of questions schools may ask so you can prepare answers. Automated External Defibrillator (AED) access at school sites is also covered.

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Things for you to consider asking the school about include...

- What types of facilities are on offer and what are their opening hours?
- How accessible are the facilities for participants or volunteers with disabilities or long-term health conditions?
- What is the availability of the facilities? Does this match your needs?
- How much will it cost to hire the facilities (including VAT) and what are the payment terms? Are these affordable and manageable for you?
- How can you book and secure the use of the facilities? Can you block-book facilities, or is usage arranged on a weekly or rolling basis?
- Who is responsible for hiring out the schools' facilities and what are their contact details?
- Who will be using the facilities before/after you and are there any associated requirements, like putting equipment away before you leave or locking up?



- Will you have access to any ancillary facilities like toilets, changing rooms, car parking or first aid room etc?
- Can equipment be stored at the school? How secure is the storage?
- What is the process for cancelling sessions? Is there a minimum notice period before charges are incurred?
- How will you access the facilities? Which entrance will you use? Are any keys required or if there is a keypad entry system?
- Who will be responsible for opening and locking the facilities?

- Will there be a staff member on site during use of the facilities when you use them? If not, who do you contact in the event of an emergency?
- Are there times of the year when facilities aren't accessible for example, during exam periods or school holidays, during any known refurbishment works or pre-bookings?
- Is there an induction process and what will this include?
- Is there a process for reporting any accidents, injuries, illnesses, breakages, or spillages?
- Can you access a copy of the school's emergency procedures and/or Emergency Action Plan?
- Are there any Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) on site that you can access? Where are they and how do you access them in an emergency? See the AED section for more information.
- Can you get copies of the school's health and safety and wellbeing procedures? Which should include but are not limited to:
 - Health and safety policy.
 - Risk assessments.
 - Safeguarding policies and procedures.
 - Insurance policies.
 - Covid-19 procedures.

Explore [a checklist of the policies schools should have in place](#), which is available from the Sport England 'Use our school' resource.

- Who is responsible for any injury or damage that may occur whilst using the facilities?
- Can you advertise your organisation's activities at the school?
- Check all the requirements a school might ask of you e.g. fire warden training.

- Does the school have any expectations about you extending your offer to benefit their pupils, such as running after-school sessions, offering coaching or holiday programmes etc? Is this achievable?
- What are the terms and conditions of use/hire and can you meet them all? What form of agreement will be put in place?



You can see [examples of the types of agreement a school might use](#) in the 'Legal and Governance' section of Sport England's 'Use our school' resource.

Things the school may ask your organisation about include...

- Which facilities would you like access to, when and how long for? Is there any flexibility on this?
- How will you pay for hiring the facilities (e.g. will this be bank transfer, cash or cheque)? The school may have a preferred method of payment so be sure to check if they do ask you this.
- How long do you intend to use the facilities for? Are you interested in bookings throughout the year or seasonally?

- If the school will be giving out keys or codes to access the facilities or storage facilities, who will be responsible for managing this from your organisation and how will you do this?
- How is your organisation structured and who is responsible for running your organisation (e.g. chairperson or secretary)?
- Who will be the main point of contact for the school should any issues arise?

Be prepared to give contact details for someone that will be present at all sessions like a coach or instructor and someone who is responsible for running your organisation, if these are different people.

- Will there be a trained first aider present during all sessions? Do you have your own first aid box?
- Are all the required people DBS checked if working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults?
- How will your organisation ensure that all participants and volunteers are familiar with the health and safety processes and procedures that the school has in place?
- What policies and procedures do you have in place and can share with the school? A school is likely to request to see a copy of the following, but this is not an exhaustive list:
 - [Safeguarding policy](#)
 - [Risk assessments](#)
 - [Health and safety policy](#)
 - [Insurance policies](#)
 - [Covid-19 procedures](#)
- Who from your organisation will be responsible for reporting any accidents, injuries or illnesses, breakages and spillages to the school

and completing any required paperwork? What systems do you have in place to deal with this?

To help answer the next three questions, it can be helpful to consider the below points.

If their facilities are in demand, a school is likely to prioritise working with organisations in the **local community** that provide opportunities for children, young people and families from within their catchment area.

Think about whether you could run after-school sessions, offer coaching, taster sessions or holiday programmes if you have the capacity to do so, as **added value** for the school.

We recommend looking up **the school's vision, mission, values and aims** on their website and explaining any of these that your club share. You may also want to draw on what you can offer the school and your commitment to being a trustworthy and reliable partner.

- What benefits does your club or group offer to the local community? Who benefits from participating or volunteering at your organisation?
- Does your club / group currently engage any children, young people or families from the school? What can you do to extend your offer to benefit the school community?
- What makes your club or group stand out over others the school may be considering hiring facilities out to?



Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

60,000 people in the UK experience Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in the community every year (UK Coaching 2021). Sadly, only 1 in 10 survive.

Acting effectively within the first minute can treble someone's chances of survival, and access to an AED can make all the difference. Many schools will have an AED on their site, but might have different procedures for how a community user group can access it in an emergency, if at all. This can vary from:

- A school not providing community user groups to access their AED.
- A school allowing access to their AED in an emergency, but this is only possible through a member of staff.
- A school allowing access to their AED with community user groups, by sharing necessary access details e.g. where the AED is stored, any relevant security codes etc.
- A school allowing full public access to the AED by storing it externally, such as in a cabinet fixed to an outside wall.

It is good practice to find out about a school's procedures regarding AEDs before using their facilities, and securing up to date contact details for emergencies. For more information and advice on SCA and how to react quickly, [check out UK Coaching's digital toolkit](#).

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