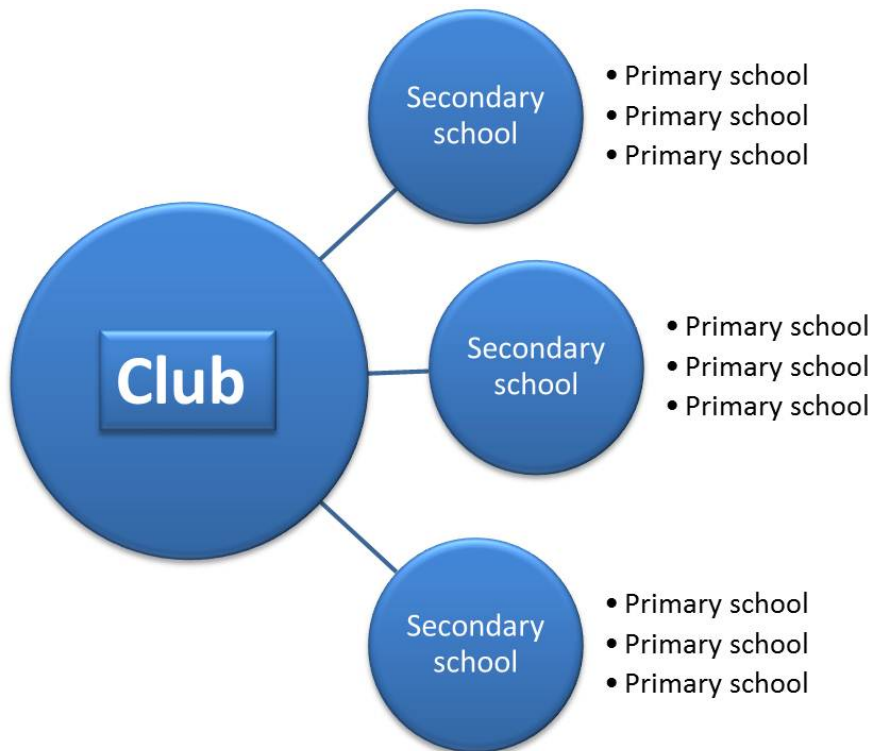


Scottish Touch - Cluster Development Model

A Touch cluster is a touch club linked to local Primary and Secondary schools to draw young people to the clubs youth section and provide a sustainable flow of players to the club. There can be many variations on how this operates but the main objective is for clubs to link to schools to provide and introduce touch opportunities and a playing pathway for it to continue to develop.

This model forms the foundation of Club Development and is essential for the growth of touch.

Primary schools are based in clusters around a Secondary School and each cluster has an Active Schools Co-ordinator. A club should identify the schools in the cluster they want to work with and make the initial contact with the Active Schools Co-ordinator through the local authority or school. Clubs need to be careful not to step on other clubs who have developed links, but a discussion with other clubs at Regional planning meetings should prevent this.



There are a number of ways for the club to work with the schools:

Initially it is important for the club to have enough coaches to support the delivery of the touch activity. To do this people should be identified to attend a Safeguarding Children in Sport workshop, a Touch Community Coaching Award with a view to undertaking a Level 1 and 2 Touch Coaching Awards. You need at least one Level 1 coach and ideally a Level 2 to help plan and manage the programme.

Touch courses can be arranged at your club for 6 people or more if you contact your Regional Coaching Co-ordinator. Safeguarding Children in Sport courses run across the country each year for you to point people to. These are run by Children 1st - Safeguarding in Sport on 0141 418 5674 or e-mail safeguardingsport@children1st.org.uk. The link to the training courses and dates is <http://www.children1st.org.uk/services/118/training>

Ideally the children should be given a taste of touch in the school. Occasionally the school or Active School Co-ordinator is able to do this for you, or at least help you get started but more likely it will be up to club volunteers.

You should co-ordinate this with the Active School Co-ordinator and the school as early as possible into the school calendar which fills up quickly. Target coaching delivery in the second and third terms with a lead into the summer months, ready to train and play in touch clubs, tournaments and leagues.

The target age we recommend is P4-P7. The more taster sessions delivered the more children are exposed to touch. To get benefit from this, each child must be given a flyer that promotes touch and the club.

Actions to consider to improve effectiveness:

Run more than one session within a school

- this helps get children hooked on touch

Run more than one school at the same time

- enables you to organise a festival more easily at the end of the coaching block

Organise a festival for all schools involved or in partnership with your RA

- introduces potential new members to your club and the local touch network

Run an afterschool club on the school site

- helps children get over their apprehension of joining a club

Invite teachers to be members of the club

- provides an on-going link between the school, the sport and the club

Send a club newsletter to the school

- ensures the school is aware of all the activities of the club

Send posters and flyers to every school in cluster each year, regardless of their involvement

Maintain personal contact with teachers; it's the most effective way to get them to spread information and involve children



The cluster model will require volunteers and coaches to service it to achieve the maximum potential. These could come from the club, parents, teachers or other volunteers. It is important to consider where these volunteers will come from before planning an activity. Contact the STA's Volunteer Director for support.

The club should run a junior section for this to be effective. The children need to have somewhere for them to go if they are interested in playing touch after school coaching sessions. The junior section should include things like:

- A parent welcome meeting
Detailing what the club does, what is expected of the parents and how they can help
- Regular coaching for the young people
Coaching where they learn basic skills and also have fun will keep them in the club
- Regular opportunity to play
Children play sport to play games, these can be internal to the club, through school festivals, in a local or regional league
- Provide social activity for the young people
Children enjoy socialising as much as adults, a social event should be run each term. You could link in with the school for this.

A cluster can be highly successful in obtaining new junior and youth members, it is of huge importance that the cluster is well maintained in order to maximise the flow of new members.

To support the Cluster concept, Scottish Touch should organise a National Primary Festival annually. This event is open to three teams from each local authority. The teams should either be primary schools or teams from a cluster of primary schools. Teams will be graded into two groups, experienced and inexperienced to ensure reasonably fair competition.

