

Use of Competition to Support Transition

The Toolkit



Introduction

Evidence shows that school transition from year 6 to year 7 is a universally-challenging time for many young people. Research has identified that young people's greatest concerns about this transition centre around changes in friendship groups, getting used to a new environment and adapting to a new workload along with the associated organisation required.⁽¹⁾

This toolkit has been designed to provide inspiration and approaches to the use of sports competition to support transition from primary to secondary school. It incorporates the Principles of Competition and themes and approaches to competition throughout, using evidence from the School Games Competition to Support Transition Pilot Project, funded through National Lottery investment.

What does the toolkit include?

- ✓ Who is the toolkit is designed for?
- ✓ Who has informed the toolkit?
- ✓ Primary to secondary transition – What does the evidence show?
- ✓ Competition as a positive transition tool – Youth Sport Trust Transition Pilot Project findings
- ✓ Case study examples from the Youth Sport Trust Transition Pilot Project
- ✓ Tools for design of competition to support transition:
 - > Workshop matrix and slides for development coaches to support SGOs
 - > Workshop matrix and slides for SGOs to use with project stakeholders
 - > Editable planning template
 - > Top tips for supporting transition through competition

Who is the toolkit designed for?

- School Games Organisers to support transition work and relationship-building
- School staff supporting students with their transition from primary to secondary school
- Development coaches to support their work with the School Games Network

Who has helped to inform the toolkit?

- School Games Organisers (SGOs)
- Secondary headteachers
- Heads of year
- Form tutors
- PE Staff
- Teaching assistants
- SENCO
- Transition managers
- Secondary students



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⁽¹⁾ Youth Sport Trust Research 2019

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What does the evidence show?

Research was commissioned by the Youth Sport Trust in 2019 to explore the position of competitive sport during young people's transition from primary school to secondary school. The research used a combination of methodologies to gather data, including a desk-based review of secondary evidence, a review of School Games data, consultations with key individuals and insight from young people.

The three overarching aims of the research were:

1. To develop a greater understanding of young people's experience of transitioning from primary to secondary school
2. To generate an understanding of current practice for supporting young people to transition from primary to secondary school
3. To identify the role of sports competitions in supporting young people to transition from primary to secondary school

Key findings from the research

- Young people's greatest concern centres on changes in friendship groups, along with getting used to a new environment and adapting to a new workload and associated organisation
- School transition year 6 to year 7 is a universally-challenging time for many young people
- Those from deprived communities and facing inequality are more likely to continue to be at a disadvantage throughout this transition phase
- Young people experience a drop in physical activity levels during the transition phase
- Girls are particularly at risk for declining participation levels in sport during this time
- Competitive sports opportunities reduce for young people when they move from primary to secondary school
- Young people were more positive about sports competitions in primary school compared to secondary school
- Some schools use sport and competition as part of the variety of activities to support transition
- Sports competitions can develop young people's physical, social, and cognitive skills, which arguably are key skills to support a positive transition from primary to secondary school
- Most transition work happens during the summer term of year 6
- More still needs to be done to support year 7 pupils' transition to secondary school and reduce the drop-off in competitive sports participation.

Primary to secondary transition

Insight

60%

of young people felt overwhelmed when they moved from primary to secondary school.

Prince's Trust, 2017

'A big change of everything'

Year 7 pupil comment on transition

46%

of young people cited a change in friendships as their biggest worry about moving to secondary school.

Poor transition can negatively affect children's wellbeing.

GL Assessment, 2016

During the transition period, evidence suggests young people's happiness decreases.

Active Lives, 2018

22%

of children in year 5 and 6 were active every day compared to 20% of those in year 7 and 8.

Active Lives, 2018

Competition as a positive transition tool

The pilot

The School Games Competition to Support Transition pilot explored the role of sports competitions during young people's transition from primary to secondary school. In total, eight School Games Organiser areas were involved in phase one of the pilot, designing and delivering sports competitions for young people in Year 7, supporting them to settle into their new secondary school between September and December 2019.

At all stages of the pilot the planning and delivery was informed by the Themes of Competition and the Approaches to Competition and guided by the Principles of Competition.

1. The young person's motivation, competence and confidence are at the centre of the competition.
2. The focus is on the process rather than the outcome (on the learning and values development of the young person rather than the result).
3. Volunteers, leaders and officials are appropriately trained and display behaviours reflective of the nature of the competition.
4. The environment is safe and creates opportunities to learn and maximise social development.
5. The facility and the environment that is created for the competition reflect the motivations, competence and confidence of the young people and format of the competition.

The Competition to Support Transition pilot used three focus areas identified as concerns in the commissioned research:

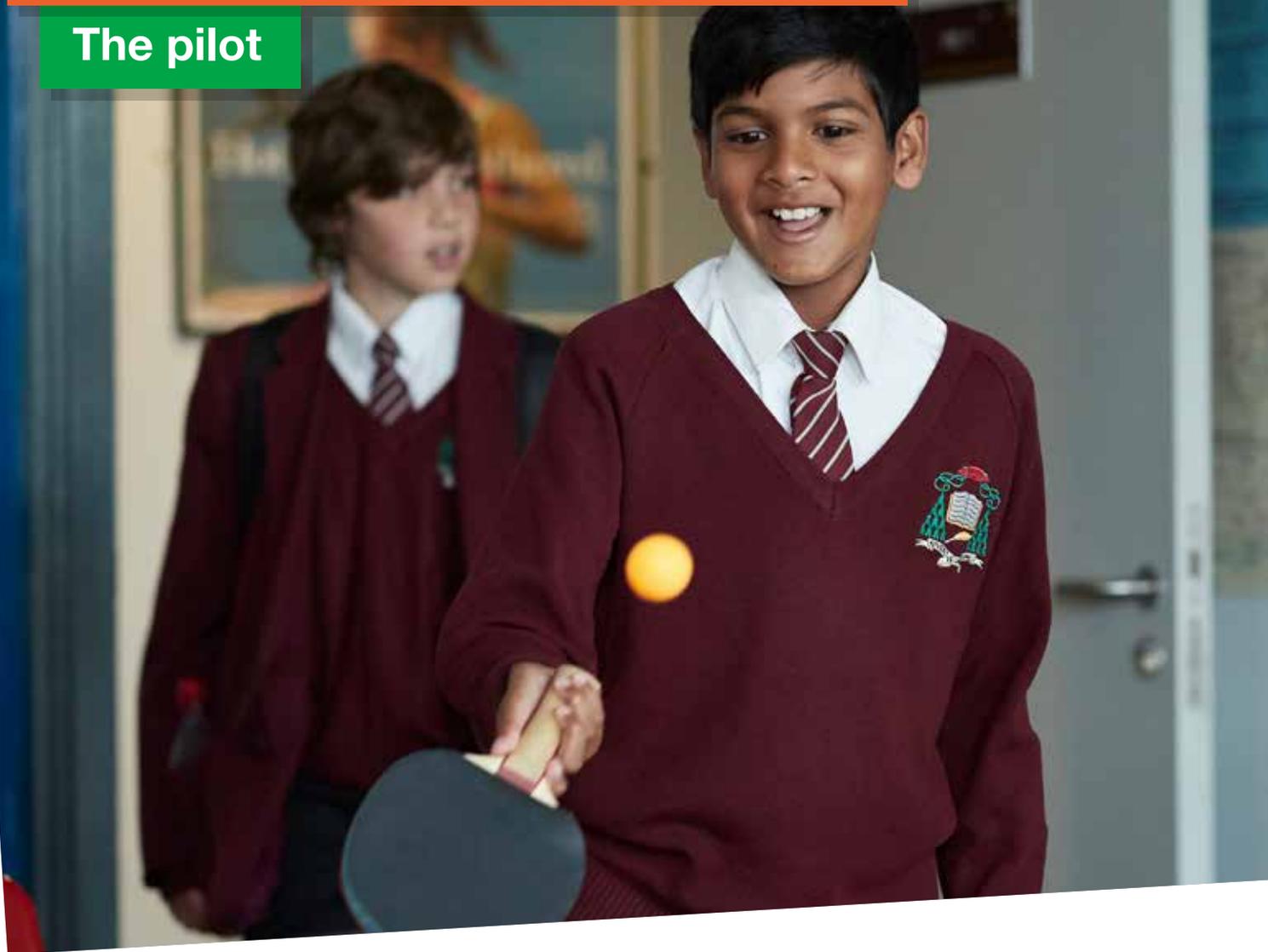
- Changes in friendship group
- Familiarisation with a new environment
- Adapting to a new workload and organisation requirements

Each SGO piloted the use of competition using one or more of the above areas of concern as the intent.



Competition as a positive transition tool

The pilot



Working collaboratively with a range of secondary school staff, SGOs identified a target group of students for the transition pilot programme, developing and delivering competitions to reduce those students' concerns.

SGOs worked collaboratively with:

transition managers; SENCO; pastoral staff; PE staff; teaching assistants; heads of year 7; form tutor; class teachers; sports leaders.

Target students included those:

identified as struggling to form friendships; finding workload and organisation challenging; with few/no peers from primary school; arriving after the start of term; with low confidence; with SEND.

Delivery of competitions took place during:

breakfast club; registration; tutor time; after-school; lunchtimes; enrichment activity time.

Duration of projects included:

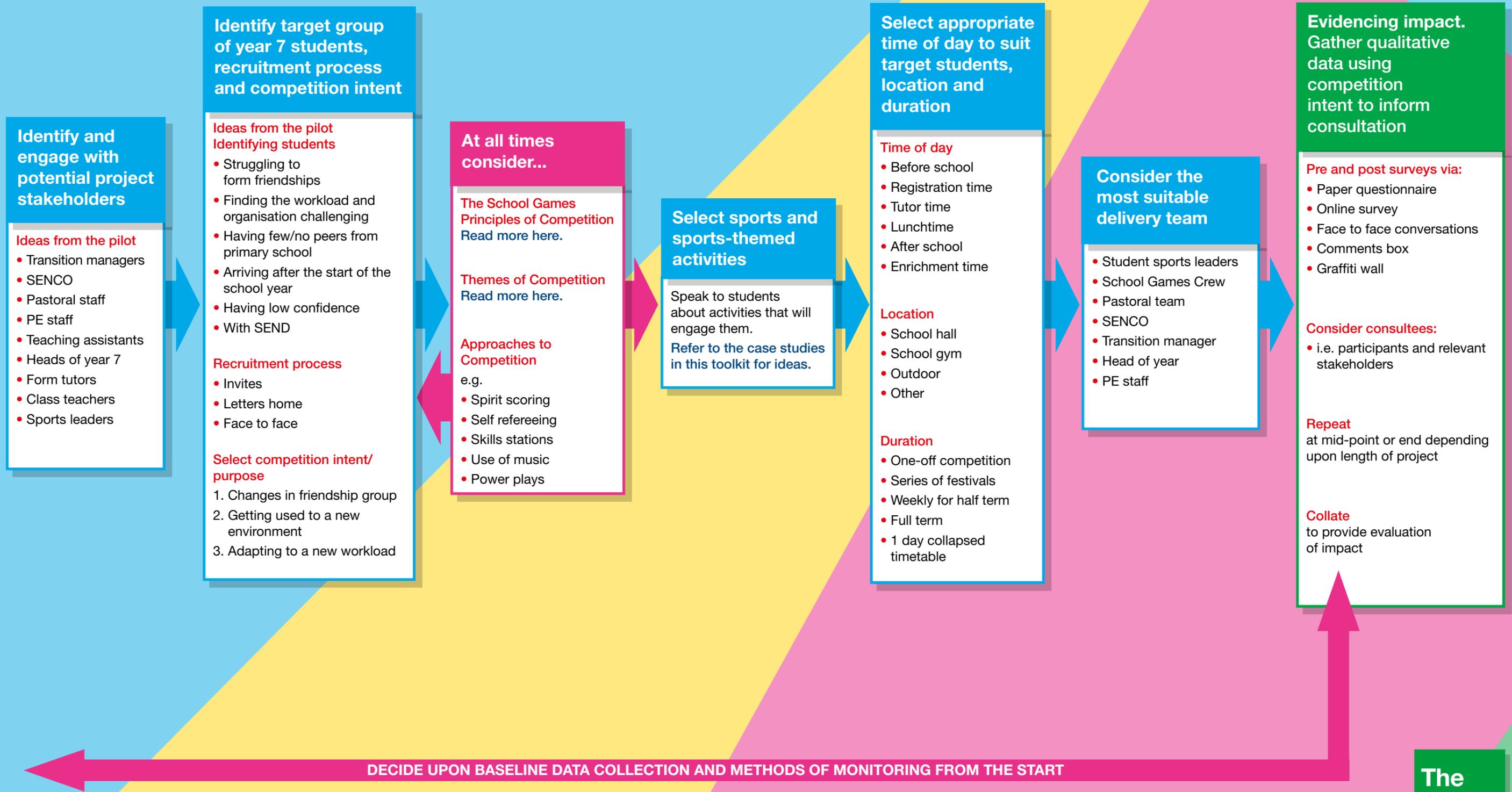
weekly for half a term; full term (Sept-Dec 2019); 4 week programmes; one-off festivals.

Competitions included:

invasion sports; (basketball-themed; dodge ball; handball); net/wall sports (table tennis, badminton) striking/fielding; (cricket,) and also curling, kayaking, multi-games; team-building activities;



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Case study

School Games Organiser:	Jeffery Hoey, East Point Academy, Lowestoft
Location:	Sir John Leman High school
Time and duration of event:	After school. A series of events
Target students:	Year 7 students from five different schools. (60 in total)

Intent:

- To embed and develop social and interpersonal skills within year 7s
- To support students to create their own friendship groups through a shared passion of fun and engaging competition

Competition:

Five schools attended bringing 12 students each (six boys and six girls); eight teams were created from these schools, mixing students from different schools.

A timed icebreaker Bingo-type game was used to start the event followed by a team-building activity: 'Crossing the Pond' using a hoop and blindfolded team member.

The teams then competed in a mat-ball tournament, which they refereed themselves. Music was played at random points throughout the matches. During this period goals were worth double. Points were given for goals scored and each team scored the opposing team on their ability to self-referee.

Outcomes:

- The students gained increased confidence, better social and personal skills.
- Students developed greater self-esteem and resilience from their experience of playing in a self-refereed match environment.
- The teachers who attended and watched the event gained a wider understanding of their role in transition and the ease with which it can be implemented in school.

Successes:

- Having self-refereed matches helped to build resilience.
- Students scoring each other on the values made them accountable for their behaviour.
- Not having a winner or loser but recording goals instead allowed students who didn't like competition to enjoy them.
- Using music created a fun environment.

Challenges

- Having big groups of 12 did not allow students enough time to speak and interact with all 12 students, also it was too daunting for a lot of students.
- Complex scoring system - teams could not add up the figures.

Case study

School Games Organiser:	Chris Gibson. Kingsbury High School. Brent
Location:	Indoors and outdoors, Kingsbury High School
Time and duration:	Extended learning day via a collapsed timetable
Target Students:	Full year group

Intent of competition:

- To develop friendships
- To familiarise students with a new environment
- To develop personal independence
- To enable form groups to work together and work with other form groups

Competition:

A PRIDE carousel of activities including team-building, personal challenge, sports hall athletics and team competitions. **PRIDE** are the school values:

- P** Personal excellence
- R** Respect & friendships
- I** Inspiration
- D** Determination & courage
- E** Equality

Each form carried a score sheet, this was designed around the schools PRIDE values and students were scored at each station against the PRIDE values. They all started on a score of three for each value. Where the event organiser saw exceptional behaviour against one of the values they increased the score to five – if they saw poor behaviour they reduced the score to one. Individuals could collect PRIDE points which were added to the score. Scores were added up and winners announced at the end of the day. Activities were designed for forms to work together.

Outcomes:

- Increased confidence
- Smoother transition to a large school
- Friendships were developed
- Wider sense of belonging and understanding of the values of the school was developed

Video case studies

School Games Organiser: Dawn Jones from Wolverhampton piloted the *Mind the Gap* Project as part of the the School Games Competition to Support Transition pilot during registration time, for four weeks, with a celebratory after-school club event in the final week.

Target students:

- Students struggling to integrate socially
- EAL students who had recently arrived in the UK or late-starters
- Students disengaged with or not keen on PE lessons
- Students with SEND

Intent of competition:

- To support friendship
- To develop confidence to socialise
- To develop a sense of belonging

“It is great to see their self-esteem increase and the positive effect of the pilot”

Head of Year 7, Smestow School



School Games Organiser: Ali Knight from Warwick piloted a School Games Competition to Support Transition pilot during the lunch hour, for a term in the sports hall at Myton School and as a breakfast club at Round Oak School with students with SEND.

Target students:

- Students arriving from primary school only knowing one or two other students.

Intent of competition:

- To encourage friendships
- To improve organisation skills
- To develop personal independence



Video case studies

School Games Organiser: Chris Dyson based in Greater Manchester worked with both Ashton on Mersey and Broadoak schools to deliver a School Games Competition to Support Transition pilot, running it after school for four weeks, with two weeks in each school.

“The relationship between the staff and students involved in this project has improved significantly. The students now regularly greet me in school and are more personable in PE lessons. This has ultimately increased their confidence in and around school.” PE staff member

Target students:

- Students struggling to settle into school
- Students finding it harder to make friends
- Students not attending out-of-school activities

Intent of competition:

- To create friendships, promoting respect, removing worry and concern
- To develop self-belief, personal organisation and confidence in themselves to cope with transition and succeed
- To promote a sense of belonging, trust and friendship both within and between students from two schools within the same trust who ultimately share the same values
- To seek advice and the confidence to work and collaborate with others being prepared to give and take advice and build trust



School Games Organiser: Emma Toone from Great Academy Ashton, Tameside piloted the School Games Competition to Support Transition project as a two-hour event, during two periods of school lessons.

Target students:

- Students from primary schools where very few students join the secondary school. Great Academy Ashton draws from 40 primary schools, many of whom send only one or two students

Intent of competition:

- To overcome the friendship barrier
- To help students to meet people from other primary schools
- To help students to settle quickly and get to know more students in a shorter space of time



Findings

from the pilot

Impact the pilot had on young people:

- **92%** felt more confident finding their way around their new school
- **90%** felt more confident that they will have friends
- **82%** felt more confident to cope with their new workload
- **88%** felt that the pilot had a positive impact on their confidence
- **86%** felt that the pilot had a positive impact on their resilience

Five key benefits were identified for the young people participating in the pilot:

Confidence

Fun and enjoyment

Communication skills

Friendships

Engagement in sport

Impact reported by wider school staff:

- **91%** felt the pilot had a positive impact on the amount of time young people spent participating in physical activity and sport.
- **83%** felt that the pilot had a positive impact on young people's ability to achieve their potential.
- **79%** of practitioners felt that the pilot had a positive impact on young people's behaviour at school.
- **74%** of practitioners felt that the pilot had a positive impact on young people's overall health and wellbeing.

TOP TIPS

for School Games Organisers

- 1 Engage key stakeholders in your plans from the outset and start the planning process well ahead.**

[This could include headteacher, head of year, form tutors, PE staff, teaching Assistants, SENCOs, transition managers, secondary students]

- 2 Agree the purpose of the competition based on the highlighted transition concerns.**

[Changes in friendship group, familiarisation with a new environment, adapting to a new workload and associated organisation requirements]

- 3 Plan collaboratively to identify the most appropriate students.**

[Those struggling to form friendships, finding workload and organisation challenging, those with few/no peers from primary school, those arriving after the start of term, those with low confidence] Be guided by the principles of competition including the focus on the process rather than the outcome (on the learning and values development of the young person rather than the result).

- 4 Reflect the principle of competition 'The young person's motivation, competence and confidence are at the centre of the competition' in your competition planning and delivery.**

[Work collaboratively to ensure the competition meets the needs of the students]

- 5 Agree the most suitable time, duration, venue and marketing methods to attract the desired target group.**

[Breakfast club, registration time, tutor time, lunchtime, after school, collapsed timetable]

TOP TIPS

for School Games Organisers

- 6 Consider meeting the students prior to the competitions so they have a familiar face and use suitable sports leaders to help students mix with other year groups.**

[Consider the use of School Games Crew]

- 7 Be flexible with your plans and ready to adapt your activities; remind students each week or invite additional students.**

[As time progress staff may identify other students who would benefit]

- 8 Be creative and consider the use of specific resources to help to achieve your planned purpose. Reflect the principle of competition which highlights the focus being on the process rather than the outcome (on the learning and values development of the young person rather than the result).**

[Getting-to-know-you Bingo sheets, name stickers, team wrist bands, score cards]

- 9 Keep it fun, simple and engaging for all.**

[Consult with participants each week to establish what they enjoyed and to help develop your plans]

- 10 Keep focussed on progress as you go, ensure you are able to provide evidence of impact.**

[Observe and consult students during each session to establish progress. Communicate with key stakeholders for feedback and evidence of impact]

Principles of Competition

- 1** The young person's **motivation, competence and confidence** are at the centre of the competition.
- 2** The **focus is on the process** rather than the outcome (on the learning and values development of the young person rather than the result).
- 3** **Volunteers, leaders and officials are appropriately trained** and display behaviours reflective of the nature of the competition.
- 4** The environment is **safe** and creates **opportunities to learn and maximise social development**.
- 5** The **facility and the environment** that is created for the competition **reflect the motivations, competence and confidence of the young people** and format of the competition.

Themes and Different Approaches to Competition

Theme 1: Widening the competition environment to develop character and life skills

Theme 2: Adapting the scoring to develop different sport skills

Theme 3: Adding fun elements to engage new audiences

Theme 4: Widening the competition environment to develop health

Theme 5: Adapting the format to increase motivation

Theme 6: Considering age or maturity levels to support fair competition and foster social connections

Theme 7: Using technology to develop physical skills

Theme 8: Adapting the competition environment to support individual development in sport

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SMILES

If all the competition principles are followed, that should result in SMILES.

Use the below as a checklist:

SAFE participants feel physically and emotionally safe.

MAXIMUM PARTICIPATION participants are fully involved all of the time, i.e. not hanging around.

INCLUSIVE all participants can take part; activities are designed to suit and develop their abilities.

LEARNING participants develop personal, social, creative, thinking and/or physical skills.

ENJOYMENT activities recognise individuals' personal needs and interests.

SUCCESS participants feel they are making progress and getting satisfaction.

NB. While there isn't a specific letter for fair play, **SMILES only happen** for all participants if they feel a sense of fairness. Fairness underpins inclusion, enjoyment and success; it isn't just about 'rules'.

School Games' mission

Keeping competitive sport at the heart of schools and provide more young people with the opportunity to compete and achieve their personal best.

School Games' vision

By 2020 the School Games will be continuing to make a clear and meaningful difference to the lives of even more children and young people.

Thank you to all those whose contribution to the Transition Pilot Project helped to develop this toolkit. With special thanks to the eight School Games Organisers:

Chris Dyson	Ashton-on-Mersey
Chris Gibson	Brent
Jeffery Hoey	Suffolk
Dawn Jones	Wolverhampton
Ali Knight	Warwickshire
Peter Knight	Herefordshire
Jacqui McDonnell	Brent
Emma Toone	Tameside

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Print out a blank Planning Process template to support your own project planning

Identify and engage with potential project stakeholders

[Blank space for notes]

Identify target group of year 7 students, recruitment process and competition intent

Possible Target Students

Recruitment process

Select competition intent/ purpose

- Changes in friendship group,
- Getting used to a new environment
- Adapting to a new workload

At all times consider...

The School Games Principles of Competition

Themes of Competition

Approaches to Competition

- e.g.
- Spirit scoring
 - Self refereeing
 - Skills stations
 - Use of music
 - Power plays

Select sports and sports themed activities

[Blank space for notes]

Select appropriate time of day to suit target students, location and duration

Time of day

Location

Duration

Consider the most suitable delivery team

[Blank space for notes]

Evidencing impact. Gather qualitative data using competition intent to inform consultation

Pre and post surveys via:

Consider consultees:

Repeat at mid-point or end depending upon length of project

Collate to provide evaluation of impact

DECIDE UPON BASELINE DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS OF MONITORING FROM THE START