

POLICY ON COMPETITIVE SPORT AND TEAM SELECTION

Bedford Modern School 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 for both boys and girls. We aim to employ teachers and coaches who have a commitment to school sport and who are prepared to give up time to take teams for home and away matches.

We enable and encourage students to compete for places in representative sides and to achieve national recognition. Every encouragement is given to all students to develop their skills at every level.

When taking on the running of a team, members of staff do so with the expectation that the experience will be a rewarding and enjoyable one. They know that they must coach/teach students to the best of their ability and they look for a positive response from them. Boys and girls at BMS are very enthusiastic about their sport and over the years the school usually wins considerably more matches than it loses and staff do their best to maintain high standards. Very large numbers of children get a chance to represent the school and very few, if any, who regularly train, have not done so by the time they leave. Our staffs inculcate the values of good sporting behaviour, 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 students, whilst playing to win, must also learn to manage disappointment and failure.

Availability: The School expects all students to make themselves available for sports fixtures. This is clearly communicated in the School Contract (Information Booklet) and the New Parent's Booklet. However, on occasions, there may be a significant clash, such as a family wedding that will mean the student is unable to play. In such rare instances, please could you let the relevant person in charge of the team know **in writing** as soon as possible. For example, we do not consider attending a friend's birthday party, playing for your local football club or going to watch a sports fixture a valid reason.

Our philosophy is to try and select from those students that have opted in Games for that term's major team sport, however, there may be occasions when we ask students who have selected a different option to attend after school training and represent the School in matches. This is particularly the case in Years 9 and 10. We acknowledge some students may not wish to participate in team sport, however, we would ask that they persevere and accept the School's need for them to play.

Without your support in this matter we will find it very hard to honour our competitive fixture list and provide the well documented benefits team sport can provide. Not appearing for a team when selected lets down the team and the school and in some cases may lead to the cancellation of the fixture. If a child has been selected at short notice because another child has withdrawn, staff are understanding if that child is unable to play because of a prior engagement.

If a student is likely to be involved in the term's major team sport, parents will receive an email with the relevant information along with the fixture list at the beginning of that term. Students should look out for the team notices published in their Common Room or Sports Noticeboards. It is also our intention to email parents the team list each week, but please bear in mind that sometimes selection is only finalised towards the end of the week.

Selection: Our policy regarding 'A' teams at any age and in any sport is to select our strongest team. At other levels there is room for a bit more flexibility in varying team selection to give others a chance and team coaches may use their prerogative. A lot of discussion goes on amongst our sports staff about who to select for particular teams and there are on-going assessments made of a child's ability and potential. 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. In addition to school matches we have house matches, which offer competitive opportunities for many girls and boys.

Team selection and management at any level is the prerogative of the team coach or coaches. Parents may, of course, speak to the team coach about how a student is getting on or how he or she 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 job very difficult for the team coach, if not impossible. It is vital that he or she is able to make selections even-handedly and independently of parental ambition, wishes, or judgement.

As Director of Sport, I believe that the member of staff's judgement on issues such as selection must be accepted as final. However well you know your son or daughter, you cannot share the same overview of the whole team. The coach is best suited and entirely qualified to take all factors into consideration and make the right decisions for the team as a whole.

It can be disheartening for a child to be dropped from a team and the coach will explain to the child why this has happened, but this is something children have to learn to cope with. Not all children can be in A teams, but it is also very important that those who are do not boast and 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.

Substitutes: If a student is selected as a substitute for the B Team they will be guaranteed at least a third of the game. The decision to use substitutes in A Team matches will be at the discretion of the team coach. Whilst it is highly likely that substitutes will participate, there may be times when it is not in the best interest of the team/student.

In cricket, the 12th Man will be rotated in the field with the intention of batting or bowling. The general rule of thumb for B team players is they will bat in the top six if they do not bowl. In A Team matches, the emphasis will still be trying to ensure players are involved in either batting or bowling but this will be at the discretion of the coach during the game.

Competitive sport has flourished at BMS for many years and it is a great strength of the school. We wish to continue this tradition and for that we rely on the goodwill of those teachers who give up their time for after school training and weekend matches, often travelling considerable distances to find good competition. Without this continued goodwill and the full and healthy support of parents and students, school sport will gradually diminish to the detriment of everyone, especially the children.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and support.



Patrick Jerram
Director Sport