

# 7. Physical activity options outside of elite sport

*St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy- a mixed secondary school and sixth form which is part of the Newman Catholic College Collegiate. (West Midlands / SLIDACI: 1 / PLIDACI: 2)*

## What?

Since the pandemic young people have had increased levels of anxiety, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to face challenges such as high rates of exclusion and poor mental health. This is supported by The School Health Research Network (2021) who highlighted that 18% of children aged 7-16 have a probable mental health disorder.

## So what?

St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy is tackling this barrier by ensuring their co-curricular timetable is inclusive for all their young people. By reframing competition to include multiple teams, there is greater opportunity for more young people to represent their school at intra and inter school competitions suitable for all ability levels. This inclusivity promotes a sense of belonging for individuals without isolating a young person by their ability. In addition to traditional clubs, a social club is also offered to encourage participation in physical activity by empowering the young people to choose their sports weekly. With a host of opportunities for young people to also lead, this club promotes the development of leadership skills for young people alongside developing their social connections with peers. These behaviours support the young person both inside and outside of sport encouraging their engagement in lessons and within the school environment.

## Now what?

To reduce the anxiety of young people within schools through the provision of co-curricular activities, schools can consider the following to promote success:

1. Create multiple competitive teams within each club to provide the opportunity for more pupils to represent the school at different ability levels; drawing upon young leaders and wider staff.
2. Reflect on the Reframing Competition Resource found [here](#) to consider new formats to adopt to promote positive competition, i.e., rolling subs to be considered within teams to reduce isolation.
3. Implement the principles of reframing competition within co-curricular activities to ensure young people are awarded for the process rather than the outcome.
4. Review the timetable to ensure that there are a range of opportunities for young people on the co-curricular timetable which can include multi sports or social clubs.
5. Consider the role of older students who could adopt leadership/team manager roles which would reduce pressure on PE staff as well as developing leadership skills.

[School Games \(2023b\) 'Reframing Competition'](#).  
[Accessed 16/08/23]

[School Health Research Network \(2021\) Student Health and Wellbeing in Wales: Key findings from the 2021 School Health Research Network Primary School Student Health and Wellbeing Survey.](#)

