

# Running an after-school orienteering club

## Why?

- To attract new youngsters and their families into the sport
- To bridge the gap between in-school orienteering and the regular sport
- To make direct contact with parents of interested children
- To offer participation opportunities in a format that is similar to other sports and familiar to parents
- To provide basic orienteering skills training opportunities
- To create a fun social setting for the sport

## What Format?

- The best format for an after-school club is likely to depend on where you are trying to run it and the local set-up for example with Active Schools
- Running the club under the Active Schools umbrella will have promotional benefits as well as being a familiar opportunity to parents. However, it may carry limitations, such as possibly having to provide the sessions for free and completing a lot of paperwork
- Alternatively, sessions can be run by a qualified coach through your club and registered with BOF for insurance purposes. You are then free to charge as you wish and will have full control of how they are run. You may still be able to get collaboration from Active Schools to help promote your sessions.
- The location for the club is important. A school playground works fine initially, but will likely be difficult to maintain fun, interest and enough challenge over longer periods there. A local park or small piece of urban woodland can expand opportunities dramatically.
- It's a good idea to have an accessible regular meeting spot, at least for a particular block of sessions.

## Who?

- You will want a minimum of 2 adults (possibly 1 adult and 1 Young Leader) to run each session. Active Schools will likely want to see some evidence of competency, such as a minimum of attendance at a Coaching Foundation / Young Leader course. Additional unqualified adults can be used if you wish to run a bigger group.
- Think about what age of children you wish to target - generally primary age will be easier to engage in a new sport than older youngsters, and you are more likely to be able to get them involved in the club as a family unit.
- The club could be linked either to an individual school or to a school cluster.

- If you can only run one club then consider where you think you are likely to have the most success with your objective.
- However, the more inclusive we can be as a sport, the stronger we will become, so do be open to any wider opportunities that emerge.

## Example

- Overview of a plan for a block of sessions (2+ different club examples)

## Tips

- Consider organising the club in blocks of sessions running for, say, 6 weeks at a time. Maintaining it throughout the year is extremely hard work!
- Keep the ratio of coaches : children at no more than 1:7. Any higher number will make it difficult to work with each individually.
- If you are able to charge a fee for the sessions then this will encourage some commitment and regular attendance (and discourage free / cheap child-minding participants).
- Think about the timing of blocks and whether there are club activities that can be inter-woven to provide opportunities for hooking parents and other family members in also.
- Set some targets for your group e.g. to gain a white / yellow badge from taking part in local events, or to run for their school at the Scottish Schools Festival.
- Consider asking all after-school participants to join your club. The junior membership fee is very low and this will give you a mechanism to promote and encourage other club activities and opportunities.
- Remember that most of the participants will just want to take part for fun and not plan to take orienteering any further; that's ok, they're still taking part and hopefully enjoying it!
- Celebrate success!