

The Benefits of Playing Rugby



**Bedford
Modern
School.**



The Benefits and Aims of Playing Rugby



Rugby's values of teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline, and sportsmanship are what makes the game special for those who enjoy the environment and culture they create, and it is important to highlight the numerous benefits and aims of Rugby at Bedford Modern School.

Training sessions and game days are centred around developing the School's aims of inspire, encourage, engage, and cultivate. Our primary aim of rugby at BMS is to create an environment that provides every student with an opportunity to achieve their own personal goal in the sport, be that simply to have fun with friends or to aspire to play professionally.

Engagement and Enjoyment Players

We want students to enjoy their rugby experience so that they continue to play the sport throughout their time at Bedford Modern School and beyond.

To ensure players are engaged and enjoying rugby we adopt a player-centred approach, ensuring that we play appropriate opposition, deal with mismatches on game days, and listen to students' voices by offering different types of fixtures such as full contact, touch rugby, and rugby sevens.

Parents and Carers

Parents, carers and relatives are welcome to support students in all competitive fixtures. We

actively ask parents to engage positively with the rugby (and wider sport) provision at BMS to align your understanding of the goals and ambitions of BMS Rugby. When supporting, parents are requested to:

- Positively support all players before, during and after their performance
- Work with coaching staff to recognise and celebrate positive performances
- Support officiating decisions
- Act as positive role models for all students.

Coaching Staff

To ensure the development, safety, and enjoyment of all rugby players at BMS, the programme is staffed with a range of specialist coaches and teachers, all of whom deliver across years 3 to 13. Mr Hawken, Head of Rugby, has both an extensive playing and coaching background and oversees the entire rugby provision at BMS.

Miss 'Rocky' Clark MBE is one of England's all time most capped players. Following her extensive playing career, Rocky moved into coaching, achieving the England Rugby Advanced Coaching Award. Rocky works with all students in the programme, including the 1st XV.

The programme is underpinned by several members of the sports department who hold formal coaching qualifications, and a range of playing experiences themselves. Rugby coaching at BMS is also supported by coaching staff from Northampton Saints, and Bedford Blues.



RFU Age Grade Rugby

RFU Age Grade Rugby is a system of rugby for players aged 6 to 18 years old. It outlines the details of the game, instructing the number of players on the pitch, the maximum pitch size for that specific age, the maximum minutes per half and the maximum number of minutes a child should play per day.



It aims to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for players to develop their skills and personal growth. The format at various ages ensures that young players play the right rugby at the right time. These formats are supported by the regulations of the Age Grade game and have been developed by scientific research and studies on player development in sport.

The principle behind the Rules of Play is to provide a playing format with building blocks to the 15-a-side game that allows players time to get to grips with the basics of running and catching the ball before contact and specialism is gradually introduced – which positively impacts on player safety.

Rugby Opportunities

Touch Rugby

We want to keep as many players in the game as possible but are aware that some students and parents have reservations surrounding the contact element of the sport. For some of these students, touch rugby is therefore a more viable option and as students develop at different rates some of these players may transition over to contact rugby at a later stage.

As of next season, we will be playing the [RFU-backed T1 format of touch rugby](#) and are continuing to push for competitive fixture opportunities.

Third Game Trial

Bedford Modern School has recently signed up to a national trial for what is being called the 'Third Game'. This format of the game is designed to keep the main elements of scrum, lineout, full-contact tackle, but to reduce the number of collisions and reward hitting space, offloading, and passing earlier.

The Third Game has several new laws with the jackal contest over the ball outlawed while the ball carrier is also penalised for unnecessarily colliding with static defenders.

We are hoping involvement in this trial may keep additional players involved in the game whilst supporting the majority who continue to play full contact.

Player Welfare

Player welfare is a primary concern, and our strategy is injury prevention through proactive measures which include grass length and pitch conditions, physical conditioning, coaching good technique, and ensuring appropriate rest periods.

With concussions prevalent in the media, it is important to highlight how the school game differs from the professional game and how this difference affects injury trends, and how we proactively respond to issues.

School rugby is not the same as the professional version seen on television, which involves powerful athletes in large collisions,



and concussion is caused through direct contact with the head against an opponent predominantly in the tackle.

In the school game, this level of impact is not the same and the small number of concussions that occur come as result of contact with the ground, accidental collision with a third party, poor technique, or lack of pre-season preparation time. With these issues in mind, we have developed a proactive approach to reducing injury.

We have maintained a week-long pre-season progression to playing contact rugby, to better ensure that students can gain their confidence and timing in the contact aspect of the game. We have also reduced the number of mid-week rugby fixtures to allow students to properly recover between fixtures and to use those vital midweek training sessions to coach and reinforce good technique and build understanding.

We believe that poor technique through fatigue is a contributing factor to all injuries and we strongly advise that U15-U18 students only play one game of rugby in a weekend. All of our coaches complete Activate and Headcase concussion training. Headcase is a concussion training and return to play protocol, informing what concussion is, how to recognise signs and symptoms of it, and the measures to take if suspecting a student of concussion.

Coaches also undertake Activate training and the use of an 'Activate' warm up in all sessions is standard. Activate is an injury prevention

exercise programme that can be integrated into training and pre-match sessions. Exercises are designed to improve functional and core strength, balance, and agility, helping players with the game's physical demands.

If a student does get a suspected concussion while playing sport, in or outside of school, we have a management process in place to oversee the effective and safe return to activity. As part of our ongoing commitment to student safety, medical supervision is provided by a national ambulance service, Ambulance Response Services Limited (ARSL) who will be present at every set of Saturday home fixtures, and significant fixtures throughout the week. The presence of the paramedic team on these occasions should reassure all parents and carers that students are in safe hands when representing the school.

We fundamentally believe that the rugby programme at Bedford Modern School will enhance students' behaviours while developing skill sets that will transfer into their challenges that lie beyond the rugby pitch.

Key Contacts

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