



Woodcote Sport Policy

Overview

The Woodcote sports programme sets out to give boys of all ages and abilities the opportunity to participate in the variety of sports on offer at Woodcote. We want boys to progress through the school having gained new skills, challenged themselves, developed resilience and enjoyed the process. Sport is all about incremental improvement and overcoming adversity, and we set out to provide our boys with the mind-set and skills to do just that.

Games staff are all there to help boys of all ages and abilities to make the progress of which they are capable. Some will make those strides quicker than others and some will prefer the social side of sport over the competitive aspect. Whatever our boys' ambitions, staff will support them as they work to fulfil their potential.

Boys take part in a Games session every afternoon during term time and this is supplemented by weekly fixtures. In the first instance, this will mean taking part in each term's primary sport, which are listed below:

Michaelmas Term	Football
Lent Term	Rugby & Hockey
Summer Term	Cricket & Athletics

Boys will also have the opportunity to play sports including:

- Golf
- Tennis
- Swimming
- Shooting
- Cross Country
- Fitness
- Judo*
- Table tennis*
- Squash*
- Sailing*

**sports that run as part of the activity programme and incur additional charges*

Selection

The school's selection policy is grounded in what we view as being at the core of any sporting endeavour: **firm play, fair play and fun play**. Simply put, Woodcote boys should always play to win, play within the rules and, most importantly, enjoy it!

The school will always field their most competitive team in each age group and team selection will be entirely down to the discretion of the member of staff supervising that team. While we make every effort to get all boys involved in matches throughout each term, there will, unfortunately, be occasions when your child will not be involved in matches. Team management at any level is the responsibility of the member(s) of staff running the team. Parents may, of course, contact a member of staff about how a child is getting on or how he might make further progress. However, under no circumstances must any parent try to influence team selection.

When parents do try to influence or criticise team selection it makes the staff's job very difficult, if not impossible. It is vital that s/he is able to make selections even-handedly and independently of parental ambition, wishes, or judgment. However strongly a parent feels about their son not being selected, if they do try to interfere, it undermines the authority of the staff and destroys the chances of any fair team selection.

In sum, Woodcote will put out the best two teams in each age group to represent the school in the 'A' and 'B' teams. Other teams are less competitive and selection is based on giving as many children as possible an opportunity to play. Overall, it must be stressed that good sportsmanship, and good conduct are more important to the school than purely winning or losing.

If Selected

There is an obligation on boys who are selected for a team to be available to play. Boys should look out for the team sheets published in advance of a match and parents should check the sports email that is sent out the day prior to a match. Where there is a clash between a school fixture and a representative fixture, the school fixture takes precedence, unless prior permission has been granted by the headmaster. Not appearing for a team when selected lets down the team and the school. In case of illness or any other last-minute absence, staff will show understanding and may be required to alter their team selection. Please be aware that parents of newly selected boys will likely be made aware on the day of a sporting event or match.

Match Days

On match days, boys that have been selected to play for the school will adhere to the following guidelines, as listed in the IAPs Code of Conduct (<https://iaps.uk/sports/safeguarding.html>):

1. *Play for the fun and enjoyment of it, not just to please your coach/teacher or parents.*
2. *Accept the official's decisions at all times.*
3. *Respect your opponents and the match officials. Without the officials, you wouldn't be able to play the sport and compete.*
4. *Remember that the aim of the game is to have fun, improve skills and to feel good. Winning is part of this but not the sole reason why we play.*
5. *Work equally hard for the team as for yourself.*
6. *Treat all teammates as they would wish to be treated.*
7. *Co-operate with your coach, teammates and opponents – without them there would be no game.*
8. *Appreciate and respect the adults who make these opportunities possible.*
9. *Fully commit to this code of practice.*

As a spectator or parent of any boy who is selected to represent the school, you also have a responsibility to ensure the boys get the most out of their sport. You should always:

1. *Be a positive role model and lead by example. Children are involved in sport for their enjoyment and without undue spectator pressure.*
2. *Encourage children to play by the rules and respect the officials and their decisions*
3. *Respect the officials and their decisions at all times. Video evidence from spectators will not be accepted in any cases to dispute decisions.*
4. *Respect the coaches and their decisions, they give their time, energy and experience to coach your children.*
5. *Refrain from any form of abuse towards players, officials and fellow spectators.*
6. *Be friendly and respectful to the opposition.*

7. *Teach children that effort and teamwork are as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.*
8. *Turn defeat into victory by helping children work towards skill improvement and a positive sporting attitude.*
9. *Be aware that IAPS events have comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures, available on our website: <https://iaps.uk/sport/safeguarding.html>*
10. *Relax and enjoy the event.*

Fixtures

We endeavour to get as many boys involved in matches, each week, but sometimes we have to accommodate other schools and try to match the teams up. This may mean that a fixture cannot be arranged or has to be rearranged to a later date. Schools included on our fixture list are generally located within a 45-minute drive of Woodcote, as this gives parents the best chance to attend away fixtures.

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. There has to be a clear balance between competitive matches, training sessions and the development of both the individual and the team.

There will be occasions when the weather, or other unforeseen circumstances, means fixtures are not able to go ahead as planned. A variety of factors will be considered before cancelling fixtures, including the state of pitches, opposition availability and player safety, to name but a few. Where a fixture is cancelled or changed, we will try to inform parents as promptly as possible, but we reserve the right to make a final decision by 11:15AM, on the day of a match. The school office will communicate any decision on fixtures to parents.

At the end of any match, it is expected that **ALL** boys attend match tea. This gives them the opportunity to sit with team mates and the opposition after the heat of battle. Learning to accept a loss or humbly enjoy a victory are important skills to develop. If boys are leaving fixtures with their parents, they will be dismissed by the member of staff in charge of that team once tea has been completed.

If a parent wishes to remove their son from match tea for any reason, this must be communicated to the member of staff in charge of the team. Permission to leave will be granted at the discretion of the member of staff.

Age groups

Boys will take part in age group sport as outlined below. Where age groups are mixed, year groups will combine to form the teams that represent the school. When playing rugby, year groups will remain separate (with the exception of the 5th and 6th Forms) due to different age group rules. However, should a coach feel that a younger boy has the required skill set and physical ability to play in a higher age group, and the move meets RFU regulations, s/he will request permission from parents.

	U8s & U9s	U10s & U11s	U12s & U13s
Football & Hockey	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Rugby	1 st & 2 nd	3 rd & 4 th	Mixed
Cricket	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed
Athletics	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed

*For information about other sports, please contact the relevant member of staff.

House Sport

We aim to get all boys involved in the school's internal house sport programme, which runs across the academic year. House events follow the primary sport being played each term and will be organised as such. Under the supervision of house staff, competitions will be arranged according to age and numbers of pupils. While these are intended to be internal events, parents may be invited to attend on several occasions during the year. These will be communicated via the school office.

Why Sport?

