



Friday 7th June 2019

Sports Teams at Arno Vale Junior School

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are receiving an increasing number of questions, comments and even complaints about how we select children to form our various sports teams. I'd therefore like to take this opportunity to clarify our procedures.

At Arno Vale we are extremely proud of our sporting success and currently hold the prestigious Gold School Games Kite Mark for our commitment to school sport. We recognise the importance of sport as a way of improving both physical and mental health.

We are regularly invited to take part in events against other schools in a wide variety of sports such as football, cricket, tennis, lacrosse, handball, athletics, boccia, tag rugby, tri-golf and netball. Each event is aimed at a specific year group and has a strict limit on the number of children that can attend. This year we have had a record number of children taking part in school sports teams and as a result, we have entered more competitions than ever before and have qualified for an unprecedented **eight** County Finals.

The way in which we select each team depends on the type of event that has been organised. Events are categorised as follows:

Pathway events/leagues/tournaments

These Gedling district events often lead to a County Final. Due to the competitive nature of them, we will always aim to pick the strongest possible team. This is done using our professional judgement and will involve an open trial or series of trials and/or assessments.

Development/festival events

These events have a clear focus on participation, enjoyment and skill development. Selection for these teams is done using our professional judgement and will involve an open trial and/or an expression of interest. Preference is given to those children that have not represented school in a pathway event or to those that have represented school on the fewest occasions.

Friendlies

These events also have a clear focus on participation, enjoyment and skill development. Selection for these teams is done using our professional judgement and will often involve children expressing an interest. Preference is given to those children that have not represented the school in any of the above event categories.

As a staff, we pride ourselves on ensuring that teams are picked as fairly as possible. We spend a significant amount of time and effort doing this and keep registers and tracking documents to monitor participation. Announcing a team is one of the worst parts of our job as it inevitably leads to some children being disappointed. The alternative would be to not enter competitions, and this is something we are not even prepared to consider.

Please be aware that the vast majority of sporting opportunities outside of the curriculum are for children in Years 5 and 6. The Gedling competition calendar, which is formulated by the School Games Officer and is out of our control, does include a few events for children in lower school, but these tend to be pathway events. Please also be aware that there is a limit on how many competitions we can enter due to time constraints, staff availability and other aspects of school life that require our constant attention. It is also worth pointing out that much of this organisation is done in staff's own time and many go above and beyond what is expected of them.

This year over 80% of our Year 6 children have taken part in at least one sports competition. I know that this figure is much higher than at many local schools. I even know of one local school that did not allow their Year 6 children to be picked for teams in the run up to SATs. We cannot guarantee that every single child will be chosen for a team. However, we do aim to provide every child with the opportunity to be chosen over the course of their four years here. Just yesterday, we hosted a Y5 golf competition. Of the ten children that were picked for the team, five were representing school for the very first time. In addition, every child in Year 3 and Year 5 has taken part in an intra-school (class v class) golf competition over the last few weeks.

Finally, I know that there is a perception amongst some parents that the same children are chosen to be in all of the teams. This is not true for the reasons outlined above. However, there may be times when particular children are selected to be in several teams over the course of a year. This is one way that we support and challenge our most talented athletes, in the same way that we support, challenge and provide opportunities for children who excel in other curriculum areas.

I hope that this information is useful and gives you a better understanding of how we select teams for competitions.

Kind regards,

Chris Baker (Deputy Headteacher)
cbaker@arnovale.notts.sch.uk