



BRIDGE HOUSE

PRE-PRIMARY · PREPARATORY · COLLEGE

PREPARATORY SCHOOL SPORTS POLICY

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PREAMBLE

Bridge House strives to offer a holistic educational programme, with physical activity being a key component in promoting a healthy lifestyle. We believe that sport in general offers our children countless opportunities for personal growth, while team sports offer invaluable skills such as team cohesion, social integration, and a sense of ownership.

One of the fundamental aspects when offering a sporting programme is the manner in which the code is coached. We strive to ensure that our children enjoy their time at prep school, instilling the desire for lifelong participation.

Pre-Primary	Grades 00-0	The focus in the Pre-Primary is on the development of gross motor skills, including sensory motor processes. We aim to assist children in reaching their age appropriate developmental stage, under the guidance of two in-house, qualified kinderkinetic practitioners. Children are introduced to games and ball skills in Grade 0, steering away from competition and the associated pressure they may place upon themselves in order to achieve.
Junior Primary	Grade 1	Grade 1 learners take part in a dedicated Sports Skills programme, on each of the days from Monday through to Thursday. As part of their rotations, they are introduced to sporting skills at an age appropriate level. This approach is seen as a key foundation to the introduction of structured sport.
	Grade 2	In their second year in the Junior Primary, children attend more code-specific practice sessions. This is a continuation and extension of the skills learned in Grade 1, whereby the intricacies of the sporting codes are taught.

	Grade 3	A competitive element and the selection of teams is introduced to the learners in Grade 3, as by this stage they should have the maturity and emotional development to enable them to deal with the various challenges that go with competitive sport. We also hold that Grade 3 is a suitable age to learn the intricacies of competition and respect for their opponents.
Senior Primary	Grades 4-7	In the Senior Primary, children have the opportunity to take part in a number of sporting codes. These enjoy structured practices and regular fixturing. We strive to unlock a child's talent in sport, and ensure they are equipped with the skills to enable them to pursue a chosen code. We do encourage that the children try a range of sports, to avoid specialisation in a particular sporting code at too early an age.

Ethos: Although we strive to win competitive matches, this should never be at the cost of sportsmanship. Giving of their best, and fair play are characteristics emphasized at every opportunity. Coaches model and encourage this behaviour. We expect our players to warm up together as a team, and to shake hands after the game, thanking the opposition for the opportunity to compete. Personal achievement is valued as much as absolute achievement; our aims are to improve the skills and develop the enthusiasm of every learner at Bridge House. Sporting prowess is important, but good manners (both on the field and on the touchline), being humble in victory and graceful in defeat, are also regarded as essential qualities.

Sports choice: As a prep school, we strive to offer our boys and girls every opportunity to learn and develop their skills in a variety of sports. Grades 1-5 take part in sport each afternoon. In Grades 6&7, we expect each child to commit to a minimum of two afternoons of sport each week. Please refer to the Extramural Programme for all options. Your child will be encouraged to try additional sports and activities, and will have the opportunity to take part in a sporting activity every afternoon of the week.

Dress: Sport is an integral, and highly visible part of school life. As such, our children are representatives of Bridge House, and expected to align with the ethos of the school. In this regard, we expect our players to be neatly turned out, with the prescribed sporting kit. As many of our sporting codes are active and contact sports, we cannot expect our players to be neat and tidy at all times during the game. We will, however, encourage that players start a game with shirts tucked in, and socks pulled up. Although we celebrate individuality, footwear should not detract attention from our uniform. Please consider this when purchasing new sports shoes for the season.

Practices: Practices are held weekly, with our players enjoying at least one practice prior to each fixture. Should a fixture not be scheduled for a particular week, a practice will take place instead. All practices are structured, with a specific skill addressed, and an opportunity for game scenario drills.

Selection: Team selection is always a topic of discussion. In each age group, there are two streams of teams. The A team is comprised of the best players within the age group. Although this team may see little change through the term, fringe players will be discussed and given the opportunity to perform at a higher level, whether it be in a match or practice scenario. The B team will be selected with a focus on participation, and the rotation of players will ensure that everyone is given a fair opportunity to play.

Fixtures: League fixtures are scheduled for each sporting code, as listed in the Extramural Programme. Where the frequency of these prove insufficient, the Sports Department will endeavour to source additional competitive matches for our players. The aim is for our children to be fixtured in six competitive games each term.

Additional opportunities: Festivals, hosting of touring teams, and Saturday morning clinics offer our players additional opportunities to get involved. We have a proud history of hosting teams and festivals, and encourage our children to get involved in the sporting clinics on offer. As part of our hosting policy, we may ask that those involved in the games host players of the opposition team for the evening.

Tours: Sports tours are a wonderful opportunity to challenge and extend our players against teams that they would not normally come across, resulting in the growth of the individual and the school's overall level of sport. Touring also plays a big part in a child's developing their sense of responsibility, as well as his or her learning to cope under different playing conditions. Tours are arranged on invitation to particular festivals, predominantly in the U13 age group. All Prep tours are domestic tours only.

Coaching: The coaching staff comprises a balance of teaching staff, and external specialist coaches. Within each sporting code, more experienced coaches are in constant liaison with the rest of the staff, ensuring a shared coaching vision. We strive to continually develop our coaches, through affiliated courses and further certification.

Inter-house events: These competitions are essential in building internal school pride. These events are generally held towards the end of the sporting season, prior to the change-over to new sporting codes. Competition results are recorded and count towards the overall house competition.

Safety: Safety of our players is of utmost importance to us. A mouth guard is required for all hockey practices and matches. Shin pads are required for hockey and soccer. Your child will not be allowed to take the field if he or she does not have the required safety equipment.

Teas and refreshments: We have looked into ways in which we can accommodate visiting teams better. Although the Coffee Shop and Tuck Shops are open on match days, basic refreshments will be supplied to visiting teams. In this regard, a member of the Sports Forum may contact you to assist with refreshments, most probably in the form of a bag of oranges for half time.

Communication: Fixtures and match details will be made available on D6 prior to the games. If there are any concerns, please direct these to the coach of the team, or the member of staff overseeing the sporting code. Please see below for the relevant contact person for each sporting code, should you have any queries during the season.

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