



ARCADIA
PRIMARY
SCHOOL

ARCADIA BRITISH SCHOOL

Physical Education, School Sport and Competitive Sport Policy

Academic Year 2026-27

Nurturing Lifelong Learning | Happiness First | Character for Life

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SLT accountable officer	Executive Principal
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Policy note: This policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion, medical, trips/visits and attendance procedures. Competition-specific rules published by governing bodies and associations take precedence where applicable.



1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This policy sets out Arcadia British School (ABS) expectations for curriculum Physical Education (PE), Games, after-school sporting activities, representative school sport and competitive fixtures from Foundation Stage to Year 13.

1.2 The policy aims to balance broad participation, physical literacy, wellbeing and inclusion with the school's ambition to achieve high standards in competitive sport.

1.3 It applies to students, staff, coaches, volunteers, parents and spectators involved in sport under the name of ABS, whether on the school site or at an external venue.

1.4 Where external competitions are governed by DASSA, BSME or another recognised organising body, ABS will comply with the relevant competition rules and eligibility requirements. Where a school policy sets a higher safeguarding or welfare expectation, the ABS expectation will normally apply.

2. Aims and Principles

2.1 ABS believes that high-quality physical education and school sport make an important contribution to students' physical health, confidence, character, teamwork, resilience, leadership and sense of belonging.

2.2 Through sport, students will be encouraged to develop their physical talents, learn the disciplines of teamwork and sportsmanship, improve individual fitness and physical skills, and represent the school with pride.

2.3 The following principles underpin the programme:

- Every student should experience high-quality, age-appropriate physical education and meaningful opportunities to be active.
- Participation and inclusion sit alongside, rather than in opposition to, competitive excellence.
- Selection for representative teams is based on transparent sporting criteria and the needs of the team.
- Student welfare, safeguarding and long-term athletic development take precedence over short-term results.
- Students should experience a breadth of physical activity, while older and high-performing athletes may appropriately move towards greater specialisation.
- Representing ABS is a privilege that carries expectations of commitment, conduct and respect.

3. Definitions and Structure of Provision

3.1 For the purposes of this policy, ABS distinguishes between the following forms of provision:



Provision	Definition
Curriculum PE	Planned curriculum learning for all students, focused on movement competence, physical literacy, knowledge, health, safety and progressive skill development.
Games	Timetabled sporting provision that develops participation, performance, team play and experience across a range of activities.
Sport ASA	After-school sporting activity that may be recreational, developmental or linked to a representative squad.
Representative Sport	Competitive participation in which students are selected to represent ABS in a fixture, league, tournament or event.

3.2 The Director of Sport will publish the annual sports programme, including seasonal focus sports, development opportunities, representative pathways and significant competitions.

4. Curriculum PE and Games Entitlement

4.1 All students, other than those temporarily or permanently restricted for medical reasons, will participate in the school's planned PE/Games programme in accordance with the curriculum and timetable for their phase.

4.2 From Foundation Stage to Year 9, the programme will provide regular opportunities for vigorous physical activity and progressive development of movement competence. Students in Years 10-13 will continue to have timetabled physical activity and Games opportunities appropriate to their phase and curriculum choices.

4.3 Curriculum PE will primarily serve curriculum outcomes for all learners. On occasion, and where educationally appropriate, Games or PE time may support preparation for a forthcoming school competition; this should not routinely displace the curriculum entitlement of other students.

4.4 ABS encourages breadth in younger students. No student should normally specialise exclusively in one activity throughout the year where this would unnecessarily restrict broader physical development. Increasing specialisation may be appropriate for older students or high-performing athletes where this supports their long-term development and welfare.

5. Participation, Inclusion and Access

5.1 ABS is committed to enabling all students, including Students of Determination and students with medical, physical, sensory or additional needs, to participate meaningfully in PE and school sport through reasonable and safe adaptations wherever practicable.



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5.2 Competitive selection may legitimately differentiate between students on sporting grounds, but access to curriculum PE, development opportunities and appropriate participation should not be unnecessarily restricted by disability, background or prior sporting experience.

5.3 Where a student cannot fully participate for medical reasons, the PE/Sport team will seek an appropriate adapted role or alternative learning activity, consistent with medical advice and safety.

5.4 ABS recognises that competition structures may be organised by sex or age category. The school will distinguish between sports available within the ABS programme and the categories made available by external competition providers, and will apply current competition eligibility rules fairly and consistently.

6. Sports Programme: Focus, Development and Flagship Sports

6.1 ABS groups sports into three broad categories. The precise programme may change annually according to facilities, staffing, student demand and external competition opportunities.

Category	Meaning
Focus Sports	Sports with structured seasonal coaching, team pathways and regular competitive opportunities through organisations such as DASSA and BSME.
Development Sports	Sports offered to broaden participation, physical literacy and skill development, with competitive opportunities where appropriate.
Flagship Sports	Selected sports in which ABS has enhanced competitive ambition and may provide additional training, specialist preparation or wider competition opportunities.

6.2 At the date of implementation, focus sports include Rugby, Football, Swimming and Basketball for boys, and Netball, Football, Swimming and Basketball for girls. Development sports include Cricket, Rounders, Padel, Athletics, Cross-Country, Aquathlon and Girls' Rugby where age, staffing and competition structures permit.

6.3 Rugby and Netball are currently designated flagship sports because of the scale and significance of competitive opportunities available to the school. This designation may be reviewed annually.

6.4 Where a flagship competition requires additional preparation, the Director of Sport may adjust the relevant training and ASA programme. Any adjustment to curriculum provision must remain proportionate and educationally justified.



7. Team Selection

7.1 Representative sport is competitive. Selection is a professional judgement made by the relevant coach within the framework of this policy and overseen by the Director of Sport.

7.2 Selection will take account of:

- technical ability and skill execution;
- tactical understanding and decision-making;
- physical readiness and fitness appropriate to the sport;
- attitude, effort, coachability and conduct;
- attendance and commitment to relevant training;
- positional requirements and the balance of the team;
- recent performance and consistency;
- student welfare, injury status and overall sporting load;
- competition-specific rules and eligibility requirements.

7.3 Selection is based on performance and development within the ABS programme. External club or academy participation may provide useful context but does not, by itself, confer entitlement to selection.

7.4 Students should normally attend the relevant team ASA or training session to remain eligible for selection. Where absence is for a reasonable and communicated cause - including illness, injury, school commitment or representative sport - the coach may still consider the student for selection.

7.5 A squad may be larger than the team required for a particular fixture. Selection in a squad does not guarantee selection for every match, and selection for a match does not guarantee equal playing time.

7.6 Coaches should use developmentally appropriate rotation where this supports the age group, level of competition and long-term development of players. In higher-level or performance fixtures, playing time may vary according to the needs of the game.

7.7 All students should have meaningful opportunities to participate in House sport and other broad-participation events where these are available in the school calendar.

Key principle Selection should be transparent, explainable and development-focused, but it is not an entitlement or a formal appeals process based solely on parental preference.

8. Playing Up and Age-Group Movement

8.1 Students will normally compete within the age group specified by the relevant competition. Where regulations permit, a student may be considered for an older age group when this is judged to be developmentally appropriate.

8.2 Decisions to play a student up will consider technical competence, tactical understanding, physical maturity, emotional and social readiness, injury risk, team need, competition rules and the student's wider sporting load.

8.3 Playing one year up may occur where appropriate. Playing more than one year up should be exceptional and must comply with the current rules of the relevant sport or competition. No blanket exception will override governing-body or competition regulations.



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8.4 The impact on students in the older age group, including team cohesion and development opportunities, will also be considered.

8.5 The Director of Sport has oversight of exceptional age-group movement and may seek parental awareness or consent where the nature of the sport, travel or welfare risk makes this appropriate.

9. Student Commitment and Fixture Expectations

9.1 Students selected to represent ABS are expected to treat that selection as a significant school commitment. Once a student accepts selection for a fixture or tournament, there is a strong expectation that the commitment will be honoured.

9.2 Students in Years 3-9 who are selected for a focus sport are normally expected to represent the school, while ABS will consider medical circumstances, welfare, representative sporting commitments and exceptional family circumstances.

9.3 For students with substantial external sporting commitments, the school may agree an individual arrangement where participation in a development or focus sport would not support the student's overall welfare or athletic development. Such arrangements will be considered case by case by the Director of Sport in consultation with relevant staff and the family.

9.4 In Years 10-13, increasing specialisation may justify a student stepping away from a particular focus sport. Where possible, this should be discussed in the term before the sport begins so that timetabling and team planning can be managed fairly.

9.5 The school will seek constructive dialogue with external clubs and academies where commitments overlap. ABS will not assume that every school fixture automatically takes precedence over every external commitment; decisions should reflect the level of representation, prior commitments, welfare and reasonable notice.

10. Athlete Welfare and Load Management

10.1 Student welfare and long-term development take precedence over short-term competitive outcomes.

10.2 Staff should consider the cumulative sporting load of students who participate in multiple school teams, academies, clubs or representative pathways. This includes training volume, match exposure, travel, recovery, sleep, academic pressure and previous injury.

10.3 Where there is concern about excessive load, the Director of Sport may adjust training or competition expectations, liaising with the student, family, medical team and external coaches where appropriate.

10.4 Students should be encouraged to report fatigue, pain, injury or wellbeing concerns without fear that responsible disclosure will automatically disadvantage future selection.

10.5 During examination or high academic-demand periods, reasonable adjustments may be made to training and fixture expectations, particularly for older students.

10.6 Coaches must not encourage students to compete when doing so would contradict medical advice, safe return-to-play principles or the student's welfare needs.

11. Health, Safety, Injury and Return to Play

11.1 All sport will be planned and supervised with appropriate regard to age, environment, equipment, facilities, staff competence and foreseeable risk.



11.2 Medical information relevant to safe participation should be available to appropriate staff, and students/parents must inform the school of injuries, medical conditions or restrictions that may affect participation.

11.3 Injuries sustained during school sport will be managed through the school's medical and incident-reporting procedures. Where required, parents will be informed and appropriate follow-up recorded.

11.4 Suspected concussion or significant head injury requires immediate removal from activity and assessment in accordance with the school's medical procedures. A student must not return to contact sport or competition until the applicable return-to-play requirements have been met.

11.5 Return after significant injury or illness should be graduated where appropriate and informed by medical advice. Coaches may require confirmation from the school medical team or an appropriate healthcare professional before full competitive return.

11.6 In Dubai's climate, outdoor activity will be modified, relocated, shortened or cancelled when environmental conditions create an unreasonable risk. Hydration, shade, recovery opportunities and age-appropriate acclimatisation should be built into practice.

11.7 Emergency medication and relevant medical action plans must accompany students to off-site fixtures and tournaments where required.

12. Safeguarding in Sport

12.1 All sport at ABS falls within the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Sporting contexts do not create exceptions to normal safeguarding expectations.

12.2 Particular attention must be given to:

- appropriate supervision ratios and handover arrangements;
- All staff having relevant safeguarding training, including external providers
- changing-room supervision that protects dignity and privacy;
- one-to-one coaching and staff/student professional boundaries;
- appropriate physical contact for instruction, first aid and safety;
- transport to and from fixtures;
- away fixtures, tournaments and overnight trips;
- photography, filming and use of student images;
- communication with students through approved school channels;
- visitors, external coaches and volunteers;
- prompt reporting of any safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

12.3 Staff and coaches must never use personal communication channels or private social-media messaging to arrange sport with students unless explicitly authorised by school procedure.

12.4 Any safeguarding concern arising during school sport must be managed through the school safeguarding process (CPOMs) rather than informally within the Sport Department.

13. Behaviour, Sportsmanship and Sanctions

13.1 A healthy spirit of competitiveness should be promoted. Students should aim to perform and compete to the best of their ability while demonstrating respect, self-control and integrity.

13.2 The ABS sporting code requires students to:

- play within the rules and the spirit of the game;



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- show respect and courtesy to opponents, officials, coaches, teammates and spectators;
- accept umpiring and refereeing decisions without dissent;
- avoid foul, abusive, discriminatory or intimidating language or behaviour;
- respond to victory and defeat with humility and sportsmanship;
- behave impeccably when visiting other schools or representing ABS externally;
- support teammates positively from the sideline and spectator areas.

13.3 A breach may result in a sport-specific response, including a warning, temporary removal from play, non-selection or suspension from a future fixture. Serious or repeated incidents will also be managed through the ABS Behaviour and Character Policy and may result in school-level consequences.

13.4 The Director of Sport and relevant divisional leader should be informed of significant or repeated breaches. Where appropriate, parents will be contacted.

Dual accountability A sporting consequence and a school behaviour consequence may both apply to the same incident where this is proportionate and consistent with the ABS Behaviour Policy.

14. Parent and Spectator Expectations

14.1 Parents and spectators are important partners in creating a positive sporting culture. All adults attending ABS sport are expected to model the standards required of students.

14.2 Parents and spectators should:

- support all students positively and avoid public criticism;
- respect coaches, officials, opponents and host-school expectations;
- avoid coaching or contradicting the team coach from the sideline;
- refrain from entering the field of play or technical areas unless invited;
- raise concerns through the communication route in Section 17 rather than during or immediately after a fixture;
- use social media responsibly and never post material that could humiliate, target or endanger a student, official, coach or school community.

14.3 Unacceptable spectator behaviour may lead to a request to leave the venue and, where serious or repeated, restriction from future school sporting events. All away team parents must enter through ABS security and provide **relevant details**.

15. Fixtures, Transport, Trips and Tournaments

15.1 Fixture calendars and major weekend tournaments will be communicated as early as reasonably possible. The Sport Department will aim to publish significant weekend commitments by the end of the preceding term where organisers have confirmed dates.

15.2 Team selection and logistical information should normally be communicated with sufficient notice for families to plan. Late changes may be unavoidable because of injury, organiser decisions, weather or competition requirements.

15.3 Where a clash with an external sporting or family commitment is known, parents should inform the relevant coach or Director of Sport as early as possible. Ten days' notice is encouraged for foreseeable



weekend clashes, but weekend non-attendance is not treated as a school Leave of Absence request unless it also affects statutory/timetabled school attendance.

15.4 Transport, supervision, emergency arrangements and student release/collection procedures for off-site sport will follow the school's trips, safeguarding and transport procedures.

15.5 Overnight or international sport trips require the additional approvals, risk management and parental consent set out in the school's educational visits procedures.

16. Academic Responsibilities

16.1 Students who represent ABS remain responsible for their learning and should make reasonable efforts to catch up on work missed because of approved sporting commitments.

16.2 Coaches should minimise avoidable curriculum disruption and communicate significant absences in accordance with school procedures.

16.3 Academic attainment alone should not normally determine representative selection; however, persistent failure to meet reasonable school responsibilities, poor conduct or significant attendance concerns may be considered alongside the wider Behaviour and Attendance policies.

17. Communication, Queries and Selection Feedback

17.1 ABS encourages students to develop ownership of their sporting development. Where age appropriate, a student who wishes to understand selection or playing time should first speak directly with the coach.

17.2 If further clarification is required, the normal route is:

1. Student discussion with the team coach.
2. Parent contact with the team coach, where appropriate and after the student has had an opportunity to seek feedback.
3. Escalation to the relevant Head of Games/Sport or phase sports lead.
4. Final review by the Director of Sport where the issue concerns the application of this policy or a significant welfare matter.

17.3 Coaches should be able to explain the developmental reasons for selection decisions and identify areas for improvement. The purpose of this process is clarification and development, not a formal right of appeal against professional sporting judgement.

17.4 Concerns involving safeguarding, discrimination, serious misconduct or medical safety should bypass the normal selection-query process and be reported immediately through the relevant school procedure.



18. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Core responsibility
Executive Principal	Accountable SLT officer; approves the policy and provides executive oversight.
Director of Sport	Owns and implements the policy; leads programme design, selection standards, welfare oversight, staffing and communication.
Heads/Leads of Games or Sport	Support consistent application across phases and sports; oversee coaches and resolve operational issues.
Coaches and PE Staff	Plan safe, inclusive provision; select fairly; communicate expectations; safeguard students; record and escalate concerns.
Students and Parents	Meet the conduct, communication, attendance and welfare expectations set out in this policy and its appendices.



19. Monitoring, Review and Linked Policies

19.1 The Director of Sport will monitor implementation through participation data, fixture and selection patterns, student/parent feedback, incident records, injury trends and staff review.

19.2 The policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if there is a material change to school provision, safeguarding expectations or external competition rules.

19.3 This policy should be read alongside current ABS policies and procedures relating to:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection;
- Behaviour and Character;
- Inclusion and Students of Determination;
- Medical and First Aid;
- Attendance and Leave of Absence;
- Educational Visits and Trips;
- Transport;
- Photography, Media and Data Protection;
- Staff Code of Conduct and Professional Boundaries.

19.4 The Director of Sport is responsible for ensuring that competition-specific requirements issued by DASSA, BSME and other organising bodies are checked annually and reflected in operational practice.



Appendix A - Student Code of Conduct

When representing ABS, students agree to the following standards:

- I will represent ABS with pride, humility and respect.
- I will attend training and fixtures punctually and communicate unavoidable absence as early as possible.
- I will listen to coaches, work hard and respond positively to feedback.
- I will respect teammates, opponents, officials, staff, venues and equipment.
- I will not use abusive, discriminatory, intimidating or disrespectful language or behaviour.
- I will accept officials' decisions and will not argue or show dissent.
- I will report injury, pain, fatigue or wellbeing concerns honestly.
- I will support teammates whether I am starting, substituting or not selected.
- I will manage my academic responsibilities and catch up on work missed because of sport.
- I understand that selection and playing time are earned and may vary between fixtures.

Representation The way a student behaves before, during and after a fixture is part of representing Arcadia British School.



Appendix B - Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct

Parents and spectators support the ABS sporting culture by agreeing to:

- encourage effort, learning, teamwork and sportsmanship rather than focusing solely on results;
- respect coaches' professional selection decisions;
- avoid coaching from the sideline or contradicting the team coach;
- respect officials, opponents, host schools and other spectators;
- avoid public criticism of students, staff or officials;
- raise concerns through the agreed communication route and not during the emotional period immediately before or after a fixture;
- communicate foreseeable absences and clashes as early as possible;
- support honest reporting of injury, fatigue and wellbeing concerns;
- use photography, messaging and social media responsibly;
- model the behaviour ABS expects from its students.

Serious or repeated breach of these expectations may result in a parent or spectator being asked to leave a venue or being restricted from future sporting events.



Appendix C - Selection and Playing-Time Principles

The following principles are intended to make selection clear and consistent across sports while preserving appropriate coach judgement.

Area	ABS principle
Selection	Based on technical/tactical ability, physical readiness, attitude, effort, attendance, current performance, team balance, positional need, welfare and competition eligibility.
External sport	Club/academy participation does not guarantee school selection.
Training attendance	Normally expected; reasonable communicated absence does not automatically prevent selection.
Squad size	May exceed the number required for an individual fixture.
Playing time	Not guaranteed to be equal in every fixture. Developmental rotation should be used where appropriate to age and competition level.
Non-selection	Should, where practical, be accompanied by developmental feedback.
Playing up	Permitted only where rules allow and where physical, technical, emotional and welfare readiness support the decision.
Final judgement	The coach selects within this policy. The Director of Sport oversees consistency and significant exceptions.



Appendix D - Injury, Concussion and Return-to-Play Principles

This appendix provides policy principles only and should be applied alongside the school's current medical procedures and professional healthcare advice.

- Remove a student from activity immediately where a significant injury or suspected concussion is identified.
- Do not allow a same-session return to contact activity following suspected concussion.
- Record and communicate injuries in line with school medical procedures.
- Follow medical advice and any required graduated return-to-play process.
- Ensure coaches know relevant emergency action plans and medication requirements.
- Where uncertainty remains, prioritise student safety over participation or selection.
- For off-site sport, ensure emergency contact and relevant medical information are accessible to responsible staff.
- Modify outdoor activity where heat or environmental conditions create unreasonable risk.

Safety first: No fixture, tournament or selection decision takes precedence over medical advice or the safe return of a student to activity.



Appendix E - Glossary

Term	Meaning
ASA	After-School Activity.
BSME	British Schools in the Middle East.
DASSA	Dubai Affiliated School Sport Association.
Development Sport	A sport offered primarily to broaden participation and skill development, with competition where appropriate.
Flagship Sport	A sport in which ABS invests enhanced preparation because of significant competitive opportunity or strategic importance.
Focus Sport	A sport with structured seasonal coaching and regular representative competition.
Games	Timetabled sporting provision focused on participation, performance and team experience.
Playing Up	Selection of a student to compete in an older age category where rules and developmental readiness permit.
Representative Sport	Sport in which a student is selected to compete on behalf of ABS.
Student of Determination	A student who requires additional or different provision to access learning or school life, consistent with the school's inclusion framework.

