Case Study: Ellesmere College

This is what we have done, are doing and plan to do, at Ellesmere.

PE and Games, from start of lockdown, all went online.  We didn’t deliver any live sessions but drove content on our school platform and kept connected via teams at lesson time and through tutor groups.  I have sent weekly emails to all parents and students bespoke to the year groups to highlight what was available and we have updated resources weekly.  We chose this as it gave greater choice and flexibility for students to adapt their home setting.  We have had trick shot challenges, stravaclubs, podcasts etc and have received good feedback.  We also felt that with the increased demand on managing the academic workload at home, physical activity should be taken to best suit the individual and family circumstances.  We will continue to do this until the end of term.

From the start of this term we have had a dozen key worker children in, ranging from year 3 to year 10.  KS2 provision has been bespoke with a new timetable in place.  All other in school students have had two games slots and one activity slot per week.  We have taken the line to do no more or no less that what NGBs have recommended and have adapted as restrictions change.

Since half term we have had our year 6 back all bar three children.  These have been placed in academic bubbles and are taught games every afternoon for an hour in their bubbles.  We have rotated around a program of fitness/wellness, golf, cricket nets and tennis.  This has been set out for the entire term.  It seems to have gone down well.  The students like the variety.  We have used our PE staff to work with one bubble each and have shared resources.  The chance to shine resource has been brilliant for less experience teachers of cricket.

At the same time we have had a group of year 7,8&9 working together on a similar rotation.

We are lucky that everything is on our campus including the golf course.  Numbers have been manageable and we feel we can scale up as necessary.

For September the current thinking is choice from year 7 upwards.  KS2 we will rotate around sport so there will be variety but no open choice.  We are unsure how year groups will be organised yet and we may need to split our games afternoons but we intend to offer a wider range of sport with the flexibility for students to focus on one or potentially sample a few. We would review at first exeat and half term with the intention to return to a normalish games program as soon as practical. We intend to offer as wide a range of sport as we normally do assuming that restrictions allow at the time.

This structure, we feel, will allow our specialist coaches to work in their most comfortable sport and hopefully their knowledge base will allow for greater flexibility and agility in delivery.  We are also mindful of the transition for many from a home environment back into school.  We want sport to be engaging, fun and recapture their attention.  For some this will be easy for others we have a fresh start to reengage without conscription.

We have no directive, as yet, from our SMT about year group returns, bubbles etc for September and will not make any firm decisions until as late as possible.

We feel we would be flexible enough to put out say a cricket team in September if practical but personally I can’t see inter school sport retuning for quite a time.  Internal events have been discussed but no firm plans made yet.

Generally we feel pretty upbeat and staff are excited about coaching in a liberated manner even given the restriction that may be in place.  The idea of not turning out teams for matches immediately is very refreshing and allows development and safety to be paramount. I am sure some of what we do will be adopted going forward and will change our games program for the better.

I am very grateful for all colleagues and your organisation for the various inputs and advice.  It has been a huge help to reflect on the comments and I hope will help us all formulate a fertile games experience in September which reflects the uniqueness of all our schools yet remains supportive of each other.

Ian Williams

Director of Sport

Ellesmere College