

STARS Squad Scholarships

Programme information sheet



WHAT IS IT?

Experience has shown that small pockets of excellence appear for short periods of time and that these 'hot spots' of talent are critical to the future development of young athletes. The STARS (Supporting Talented Athletes on the Road to Success) Squad programme works with schools with clusters of exceptionally talented young athletes, to help them to create squads which will nurture their young athletes and offer them the best chance of realising their potential. The scholarships give successful schools financial and developmental support to create a squad system within each school.

The programme was piloted in 2008-09, when 14 schools were awarded STARS Squad Scholarships. The pilot proved a resounding success and as a result, this year additional funding has been secured and 16 schools have been selected to receive the scholarships.

THE GRANT

Each school receives a grant of £5,000, to invest in the development and support of their STARS Squad. Examples of typical grant expenditure include the following:

OUR SQUAD: Development work such as team building and workshop expenses and higher education institute links.

MY PERFORMANCE: Sport-specific, performance-related support such as medical insurance, physiotherapy and mentoring.

OUR TEAM: Parent visits and workshops to help the athlete and the athlete's support group balance the young person's educational, sporting, family and social lives.

OUR SCHOOL: Continuing professional development of school staff including training and visits to other schools to share best practice.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE DAYS

The scholarships include invitations to two National Performance Days. These days will help to build on each school's activity by challenging and inspiring the lead practitioner and the 4 squad members. The days will also provide squads with the opportunity to meet Athlete Role Models, experts and other squads, offering a platform to innovate practice, share experience and knowledge.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The STARS Squad Scholarships also include other support systems to maximise the impact of the project:

- Support through the school sport partnership including access to Junior Athlete Education Framework Training.
- Meeting Athlete Role Models and having the opportunity to network with athletes from other STARS squads.
- Practitioner and school support for wider gifted and talented in sport programmes and guidance.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

The objectives of the STARS Squads project are as follows:

- To recognise and support schools which have a cluster of at least four exceptionally talented young athletes.
- To support these schools to maximise the talent of the young athletes, fostering a squad approach to success.
- To support talented young athletes to achieve their long-term sporting and educational potential.
- To guide the young people to be able to manage the responsibilities of being a talented young athlete in the context of their support team and the wider responsibility of being a role models to their peers.
- To guide the schools to build best practice in gifted and talented personal development support programmes.
- To have a wider impact benefitting gifted and talented young athletes across the school's network.



WHO'S INVOLVED?

50 applications for this year's STARS squads were received. Filtering these down to the 16 schools listed below was exceptionally difficult, which is testament to the number of talented young sportspeople out there!

- The Deanes School, (Essex)
- Lymm High School, (Cheshire)
- King Alfreds Sports College, (Oxfordshire)
- Davenant Foundation School, (Essex)
- Ivybridge Community College, (Devon)
- South Dartmoor Community College, (Devon)
- Canterbury High School, (Kent)
- Barking and Dagenham Community College, (Essex)
- The Coopers' Company and Coburn School, (Essex)
- Allyn High School, (Staffordshire)
- Cedars School Sports College, (Tyne and Wear)
- Macmillan Academy, (Middlesbrough)
- Wright Robinson College, (Manchester)
- Fairfield High School for Girls, (Tameside)
- Bishop Challoner, (London)
- Harefield Academy, (West London)

The Youth Sport Trust look forward to working with these schools over the coming year and beyond, to make a real difference to the lives of talented young sportspeople.