

Do you do sports at school? In the UK everyone has to do some sort of sports at school until the age of 16 but it's not just football or netball these days.

Sports in secondary schools

All pupils in the UK have to do PE, or Physical Education, at school until they are 16. The sports you can do at school depend on your school as each one offers different activities. The most popular sport at school is football, played by girls and boys. Pupils play other traditional team games such as rugby, field hockey, netball and rounders or do individual physical activities like athletics or gymnastics. Today, some schools offer more modern sports and physical activities such as dance, fitness, dodgeball or Ultimate Frisbee.

Traditional and new school sports

Here are some traditional and new team sports played at school that you might not know.

- Netball** This competitive sport is played between two teams. There are seven players on each team and you score goals by throwing the ball into a net. It is similar to basketball, but you can't run with the ball. At UK schools mainly girls play this sport.
- Rounders** This team sport is similar to baseball or softball. One team hits the ball with a bat and runs around four posts or bases in the field. The other team throws the ball and tries to catch it or touch the post with the ball.
- Dodgeball** In this team sport, players throw the ball at the players on the other team and try to hit them with the ball. If the ball hits you, you are out! The balls are soft and many balls are used at the same time.
- Ultimate Frisbee** A game played by two teams of seven players on a field. You score goals by throwing the Frisbee (a plastic disc) into the 'endzone', but be careful, you can't run with the Frisbee!

How much sport do secondary students do?

On average, 14- to 16-year-olds do about 100 minutes of sport a week at school, but this reduces to 30 minutes a week for 17- and 18-year-olds. Pupils who enjoy PE can do out-of-hours school sport at a school sports club after school or at lunchtime. Schools often have teams that play in intra-school (within the school) and inter-school (between two or more schools) leagues and competitions. Many schools also have links to sports clubs in the same town or city. These local sports clubs work together with schools to encourage young people to do more sport.

What do the pupils think?

My favourite subject at school is PE. I like team sports, especially basketball. I play for the school team on Saturdays.

Blake, 15

I like dance in the gym, but I hate doing sport outside in winter when the weather's cold and wet.

Megan, 14

I think PE is boring and I'm not good at any sport. I prefer playing computer games.

Jared, 17

I play football for our school team and I love it. We train after school and play matches against other schools every week.

Drew, 16

We all hated our school PE kit, the T-shirt and shorts were so old-fashioned! So our school had a competition to design a new PE kit and my design won!

Ella, 15

The London Olympics and Paralympics

Teachers and educationalists tell us that young people should do sport and need to understand that fitness is important to be healthy and do well at school. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games in London was a great opportunity to create lots of programmes and initiatives in the UK to make sport more popular with young people. These include inter-school games, multi-sports festivals and inviting UK sports stars to go into secondary schools to teach young people about sport.