**Having a ball**

Pioneering New College Lanarkshire programme with St Maurice’s High School, Cumbernauld sees access to professional football coaching improve attendance and behaviour.

**Overview**

Since Autumn 2024 New College Lanarkshire has developed a successful program bringing around 70 third- and fourth-year students from St Maurice's High School to our Broadwood campus for football coaching. UEFA-licensed coaches provide professional training, which has made a remarkable difference in student engagement.

The program runs three two-hour sessions per week. Even within six months there has been dramatic improvements in behaviour and school attendance among participating students.

**David Robb, Academic lead Sports and Fitness New College Lanarkshire.**

“What makes this unique is that we're offering SQA credits while providing a practical, engaging experience. The students are treated more like adults here than at school, which seems to resonate well with them. The program also serves as a pathway to our football performance courses and other sports-related qualifications.

It's proving to be a win-win situation - schools retain students who might otherwise leave, while we're seeing increased interest in our college courses. We're ben especially pleased to see good participation from female students, which aligns with our goal of growing our women's football program. We're now looking to expand this model to other local schools.”

**Nicole James. PE and Home Economics Principal Teacher at St Maurice's Hgh**

“The program's success has been remarkable. We have 100% participation when students are at Broadwood, and attendance levels exceed 98%. Before we began students signed a contract committing to good behaviour and attendance across all subjects before they were allowed to participate so parents are fully involved in this commitment.

The impact has been significant, especially for students who struggle academically or behaviourally. We've seen one particular student who was at a crossroads make positive life choices and join a local football club. The program serves as an incentive - we can use it as motivation when we see dips in academic performance.

The college staff have been extremely supportive. There's constant communication with David and his team about the program's progress, content, and future development. Coming from a school of around 900 pupils, is having an impact on the whole culture of the school and creating an alternative curriculum path that's really engaging our students.”

**Daniel, 16, student at St Maurice's High School**

"Coming to Broadwood is better than normal PE because I get to play football with proper coaching. It's taught me to behave better - if you don't, you don't get to do it. That's actually helped me stay out of trouble at school."

**Rebecca, 15, St Maurice's High School**

"Coming down to Broadwood has given me more confidence. I can really tell the difference when I'm playing with my own team at Cumbernauld Colts - I'm more involved, shouting for the ball more. I enjoy sport and find football fun, so when the teachers offered this option, I thought it was worth taking. It's a lot more engaging than normal PE, and it's made my whole school experience better this year."

**Samuel Bishop, 15. St Maurice's High School student**

"When I heard about this opportunity from my PE teacher, I instantly wanted to do it.

It's really opened my eyes and helped me develop both physically and mentally. I've learned to control my emotions while playing - if you get too angry, you get penalized. That's taught me patience and how to stay calm, which has helped me approach problems more clearly rather than emotionally in other parts of school too."