

Traversing Wall Proposal: Gulval School

Climbing has experienced a dramatic change from an original outdoor hobby to today's indoor profession. Simple concrete indoor walls with single, unmovable holds were created to accommodate the climbers desire to train during the winter months. Indoor walls have advanced from the walls of the 1960's in England to the X-Games of the present time. The French reinvented the indoor wall's system by utilising interchangeable handholds allowing for various climbing routes. Climbing walls are now seen indoors and outdoors, permanently fixed and transportable, hosting national and international competitions.

A major and tamer component of the climbing wall is the 2m high, laterally running, bouldering section (See picture). Traverse (bouldering) sections are basic in hand and foot hold construction. Traversing hones in on developing techniques as well as building and/or maintaining the climber's strength with no aid needed from safety equipment.



The Gulval School proposal is to build a traversing wall to benefit pupils and staff. Staff believe that a traversing wall would allow them the chance to challenge their pupils by having them think about the next step, leading the child to progressively take responsibility for his or her own security; the links to core curriculum subjects are very relevant and crucially important. Therefore, climbing is a unique and stimulating pedagogical tool highly important to the creation of a myriad of learning activities and pedagogical experiences. The approach to climbing increases the recognition of an individuals strengths and weaknesses without focusing on competition.

This project is supported by Mittelstaedt's philosophy that "through participation and practice, a climber will develop a unique combination of fitness that includes strength and power, endurance, flexibility, and mental tenacity" (Mittelstaedt, 1997). Novice climbers and younger pupils can enjoy the sport as much as a skilled climber based on the requirements that a beginner needs the skills only necessary to use a ladder. Climbing will enhance problem-solving skills while trying to negotiate through routes. In following and/or choosing routes on a climbing wall the climber will strengthen their mind, both halves of the brain, by using logic, spatial awareness, problem solving skills, ingenuity and imagination, all under physical exertion (McNeal, 1994).

Pupils and staff can directly experience opportunities to bring together and integrate physical, emotional, social, intellectual and aesthetic aspects of their personalities. Teachers recognise the ability of climbing to build personal stamina, flexibility, muscle strength and self-discipline and

confidence while educating, as well as encouraging children into a sport not easily naturally accessible.

Climbing undoubtedly has become an exciting alternative source for reaching physical fitness. The physical and mental benefits include the following:

- **Muscular endurance** (the body's ability to generate sub-maximal force over an extended period of time). Climbing is a sport composed of multiple and various small moves never requiring a singular maximal burst. With experience in climbing, an individual will gradually acquire the ability to achieve more and more moves along a wall.
- **Flexibility** (the range of motion at a joint). Constant stretching and reaching requires the body to be able to manoeuvre over distance. Well- rounded fitness and training programs including flexibility exercises reduce one's risk of injuries.
- **Muscular strength** (the amount of weight the body can move through gravity in one maximal force). A climber moves and adjusts himself with and against gravity with every move along the wall. Transferring and manipulating the body weight adds resistance to the muscles building the strength in an inviting and enjoyable fashion, without mundane lifting, allowing for dynamic "crux," a push-up-style or pull-up-style: moves including great demands on the leg muscles.
- **Mental fitness** will increase the person's self-discipline and confidence by his or her remaining calm and not listening to the "inner voice" bowing out under the extreme and strenuous situation in completing challenging routes, expanding the climber's power to use logic, spatial awareness, and problem-solving skills, ingenuity and imagination.
- **Aerobic work** is gained with repetition. Raising the heart rate, expanding the lungs and resisting gravity provide incomparable aerobic workouts.

Gulval School recognises through experience that children want to climb for fun and fitness and also identifies that long-term fitness and wellness is acquired only when the participants can enjoy the time spent during activities. By offering a traversing wall, we will give pupils a chance to enhance themselves and experience a sport not found easily in this area. Beneficiaries will be the whole community, staff, and pupils as well as those who are invited or come to visit and take advantage of such a great opportunity. Part of a future ALAT school games perhaps?

Project Goals and Objectives

Goal

To build a traversing climbing wall for pupils and staff

Objectives

1. Build a 17m long by 2m high traversing wall on an outside wall of the school.
2. Develop a climbing wall curriculum to include all pupils, Reception to Y6.
3. Develop a climbing wall program, linked to the Thrive Approach for pupils needing support with social and emotional learning.
4. Develop a series of events/competitions between PPE schools based on both speed and agility

Construction

The climbing wall will be designed and installed by Cornwall Outdoors, a recognised provider in the South West.

Maintenance

A traversing wall has low maintenance with proper assembly. All equipment utilised by the pupils is made of stainless steel or concrete. A weekly checklist will be sufficient in maintaining the wall. A simple checklist will consist of the following:

- Tightening loose handholds
- Cleaning all handholds
- Checking for loose T-Nuts (anchors for climbing holds)
- Check for any obstructions within a 2m radius of the wall

Total Cost £5500

Plans

