

By Aman Jaleel



AKANKSHA™

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SPORTS

AT AKANKSHA





Akanksha schools provide children with the opportunity to engage in sports and games throughout the year, to build important skills like teamwork, and leadership, and to help relieve stress.

Dattatray Kadam, Sports Coordinator for Akanksha Mumbai Schools says that the students engage in both indoor and outdoor sports activities.

“For our indoor sports, we play chess, carrom, and badminton,” Kadam said. “And for our outdoor sports, we [mainly] play football and cricket. Other sports include Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Langadi, Athletics, Handball, Sepak Takraw, Rugby, Volleyball, Basketball, Yoga, Wrestling, Karate, Taekwondo, Baseball, Softball, Rope Mallakhamb, Boxing, and, KickBoxing.”



Some of our schools have playgrounds where students can play outdoor games and the schools that don't, take the students to the nearest ground to play. Students at Akanksha begin playing sports in the third grade, and 80% of students continue playing sports until the twelfth grade.

According to Kadam, football is the most popular sport among students. Each student has two 40-minute periods a week where they play sports. There are also other activities that involve before and after-school coaching. One of our ninth-grade student's at Mahatma Phule Market Mumbai Public School, Sidra Patni, says that Football and Karate are her favorite sports to play.

In Karate, she hopes to improve her karate kicks, and for football, she wants to work towards improving her goalkeeping skills. “I want to be a National champion, and I want to coach girls like me in Karate,” Patni said.

At Akanksha, balancing athletics and academics is important to us. Patni says her fixed schedule has helped her balance both athletics and academics.

“I have dedicated days and times for sports activities, so I sincerely follow my timetable which makes it easy for me to balance the two,” Patni said.





Participating in sports helps students in numerous ways. Kadam says that sports is a great outlet for students to relieve stress that can sometimes be caused by academics.



“Playing a sport is a great way for children to take a break from academics, and it also helps them live fuller, happier lives.” Kadam said. “Regular sports and fitness activities are not only known to provide physical benefits but also social and psychological benefits to children.”

According to Kadam, playing sports helps students develop a “never give up” attitude which is important at Akanksha. Not just that, sports also teaches students key life skills like patience, resilience, and perseverance, as students are taught that “practice makes perfect” in both athletics and academics. Patni says that playing sports has also helped her in the classroom. Through sport, I learn the quality of leadership,

“I learn that practice makes better, I learn that it is okay not to win sometimes and that it’s important to focus on being prepared,” Patni said. Within Akanksha, there are internal events that are held which include organized football matches. There are around four or five of these competitions that take place yearly. There are also local competitions in which students can choose to participate in.





Along with the internal competitions, some students also get the opportunity to participate in DSO, a Government entity that gives students a chance to participate in sports at a National level.



“Many students from our school are participating in DSO. This year, one of our sports teams got selected to play for the state in Touch Rugby,” Kadam said.

Patni says that her favorite memory from playing a sport was at DSO. “Recently, I won in the DSO Mumbai district Karate competition, something that was actually my dream!” Patni said. Before playing a tournament, Patni says it is important for her to prepare. There are numerous habits that she partakes in to become and feel prepared before a match.



Before matches, we do a lot of training, practice, we rest well, [and] eat healthy,” Patni said.



Although sports are usually fun for both coaches and players, they come with their own set of obstacles for each. Students at Akanksha make rules in their own classrooms, to ensure that there is fair play during sports.





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“We always try to build a culture in the class, so we decide on some rules,” Kadam said. “If you build that culture in the class, then there is less chance of conflict occurring.” Patni says that injuries can be difficult, but over time she has learned to work her way around them.

“[When I get injured] I make sure that I rest properly after an injury and keep working on my fitness,” Patni said.

Along with playing sports, students enjoy watching sports as well. Most students enjoy watching football and cricket. “Recently we had the chance to take students for the Under -19 International Federation of Association Football World Cup,” Kadam said.

“They will also be going for The Indian Premier League on the 16 th of April.” Patni says that her favorite athlete is Cristiano Ronaldo, from Portugal. “[I look up to him] Because he is very successful and he works very hard to accomplish his goals,” Patni said.

Due to the pandemic, the fitness level of all children around the world has gone down and so was the case with the children of Akanksha and in spite of having limited access to resources our students have given stellar performances in different games at different levels.

Some of their recent achievements include (Mumbai and Pune):

- Under 14 Boys and Girls: First place in district level in Rugby, Sepak Takraw
- Under 17 Girls: First place in district level Wushu, Touch Rugby, Sepak Takraw
- Under 17 Boys: First place in district level

Wushu, Touch Rugby, Sepak Takraw
Patni hopes more students continue to play sports and has advice for anyone who is new to playing sports.

“For proper training, rest your body well, and remember that it doesn’t matter if you win or lose”

