

# 3 Ways to Tackle Your Venue Search.



# Introduction

We understand that good venue spaces aren't always easy to come by. Whether it's size, access to the right facilities, a good location for you and your customers - there's lots to consider.

2020 gave challenge after challenge, and with more risk to consider, how do you begin to find suitable venues if your search isn't going well?

We've heard from lots of activity club owners on how finding a venue space right now seems like an uphill struggle. The task seems impossible. If that sounds like you, then you're reading the right thing!

To help you with your venue search, in this guide we tackle:

 **How To Approach Venues**  
to give you the best chance of success

 **How To Think Outside The Box**  
when you cannot find venue spaces

 **How To Approach Schools & Nurseries**

# How To Approach Venue

to give you the best chance of success.

# Starting Your Search

If you have a venue in mind, there are a few things you'll need to do before approaching them to hire the space. **But what if you don't know where to start your venue search?**

To make your search easier, you may want to look closer to home and rely on local contacts. You may even want to look at other clubs within your area to see where they are running their lessons from; some will be in their own venues, but others may be hiring spaces.

Leave sometime to look at venue listing sites such as **SchoolHire** who work with facilities across the UK that are available for hire.



**TIP** : It's best to avoid looking at your direct competitors or those operating in an industry similar to yours. To get started, try researching clubs in other activity industries.



Social media is also a great starting place to research and find information. **Why not try joining a 'kids activity group' on Facebook?** These groups were designed with you in mind! Groups are a space to ask questions, share experiences and seek support for the challenges you are facing.

We've seen some great conversations and support between kids activity business owners recently on social media. Here's what some had to say...

Join Group



Anyone else running a drama club or youth theatre.  
What are your thoughts on the latest restrictions?

A venue of ours has just emailed to cancel our return to group because of this but I was hoping our activities would be exempt  
I guess we're at the mercy of the venues choices

 3

25 comments

Hi there, are there any drama club owners out there who would be willing to let me have a look at their covid financial policy with procedures for 'what ifs'? - i.e. in the event of a lockdown, if a child is missing a session due to self isolation, if the class is cancelled due to a covid case, if you go to Zoom session...will they continue to pay? when will you refund? I'd be really interested to hear your plans in various scenarios if anyone has set out there plans in a ...  
**See more**

 3

8 comments

Hi. Thank you so much for adding me. How many of you are wearing a face visor in sessions? I will be taking sessions in large halls and limiting numbers and also advising the 2 metre distance once I start up next week along with other precautions, but have recently seen a few group leaders in action wearing them. Any thoughts would be much appreciated.

 1

13 comments

# What You'll Need.

So now you've started the venue search, how do you approach venues? And what will you need when approaching them? While venue searches aren't typically something businesses like yours struggle with, COVID has made this process harder. And venues are feeling the impact too.

From the weight of implementing new rules accurately to following government guidance, venues are seeing changes to their processes too. So before speaking to venues, spend time researching what they need from you so you can prove you're well prepared to abide by new rules.

Remember that venues are businesses too. They do want extra customers, but they're just being cautious. They will be looking for you to have relevant, up-to-date policies in place, so it's a good idea to have the following prepared:

- Risk assessment form (adapted to each venue)
- Public liability insurance proof
- PAT testing for any electrical equipment
- First aid policy
- Accident and injury policy
- Fire Risk Assessment
- An online 'track and trace' system like ClassForKids.

# Download Your Free Risk Assessment Guide.

[DOWNLOAD HERE](#)





Each venue will specify what they require from you, but the list on the previous page is a good starting point for your preparation. Venues will need time to review and process applications, so submit your application in plenty of time (at least 4 weeks before you wish to hire the venue space).

With the paperwork out of the way, you'll be ready to start speaking to venue providers. You should always try and talk to venue providers face-to-face (even if that's a virtual meeting) rather than just emailing.

This allows you the opportunity to ask questions, showcase what your club has to offer and gauge whether the venue space is worth your consideration.

# How To Think Outside the Box

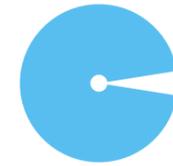
when you cannot find venue spaces.

# Finding Alternatives...

We don't have a miracle cure - but if you're finding there is a lack of venue spaces, it's time to think outside the box and look for other opportunities.

You may consider offering 1-2-1, outdoor lessons and charging a higher premium for this service. Or you may set challenges for kids who usually attend your club to compete. This could be made into a fun activity book for kids to complete, with an award at the end.

Remember this is only a temporary solution until venue spaces become available. You may even consider blended learning models if you have limited options until you find a suitable space.



**TIP** : If you've only tried the conventional venues that you're used to - village halls, community centres and local church halls - have you considered widening the possibilities beyond these usual suspects? Find out more in the next section.



StageAbility are getting ready to return to some of their venues and while they wait for more to re-open, they'll continue to offer online classes. Owner Jackie sees this as a good way to combat temporary venue issues, but it's also a way helping parents and children who are nervous about going back to in-person classes.

Although your situation may be different, your customers are familiar with online lessons. Make it easy for them: keep your social media channels up to date, communicate regularly, make lesson content easily accessible.



# How To Approach Schools & Nurseries

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# Here's Why

Schools and nurseries are a fantastic option when it comes to venue spaces.

Sure, it's not as simple as meeting up with parents or advertising your amazing capabilities on social media or emailing to check availability, but it's worth all the hard work. Why?

Because we've worked with 100s of businesses just like yours who have gained long-term, loyal customers through working in schools and nurseries. Children enjoy the lessons so much that parents are willing to sign their children up to classes outwith the nursery/school setting.

And there's more... Nurseries and schools are a great source of advertising for your business. From sharing on their social media channels to word of mouth amongst parents, putting the time and effort in now will mean you reap the rewards later.



**TIP:** As they are more conventional in their ways of communication, it's crucial to get in front of the right people when it comes to schools and nurseries.

Actively seeking to work with schools and showcasing your club is definitely more effective than trying to get noticed by email.

Try and meet with the decision makers at schools or nurseries in a face-to-face context (even if that's virtual) rather than just emailing. Meeting with the people who makes decisions will make this process more efficient for both parties.

# A Closer Look

Football Star Academy are a great example of a club who have worked in schools and nurseries recently.

By taking time to establish a good relationship with their respective nursery and school, both clubs have been able to expand their venue options and open their doors again.

Football Star Academy have not only achieved this, but they also have the support from the local nursery on social media for parents to continue booking





# Getting Started

Not all schools and nurseries will have facilities available but here's a simple step-by-step process to get you started:

- 🕒 **Send detailed proposals with examples of classes you run** and how you would deliver them. Be sure to get your brand across by sharing some fun pictures and videos that you have;
- 🕒 If a current customer of yours attends the school, **ask parents to vouch for you and give you a glowing recommendation;**
- 🕒 **Offer to come in for free trials or host a few free classes when things are running normally again.** The schools may not be in a position to fund you, but opportunities will lie with having access to the kids and their parents. Invite them to attend your current term, and you'll have new customers!
- 🕒 Have all **supporting documents ready** that we referred to at the beginning of this document (risk assessment, accident and injury policy etc.)

[Head to Our Blog to Find Out More](#)

Consider starting your search with venue listing sites like **SchoolHire**. They ease the process of searching for available schools in your area.



**Why should booking school facilities be so painful? It should be a frictionless process. SchoolHire solves the problem of finding suitable facilities, makes it simple to speak with the right people and easy to book venue spaces - as it should be. We're now the market-leading school lettings booking platform with over 400 schools nationwide currently listed.**

**- Charlie Gothold** Director, SchoolHire

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# Main Takeaways

Now you're ready to tackle your venue woes. Here's our top takeaways for you to digest:



- Start by researching potential options in your local area;
- Join a kids activity club owners group on Facebook;
- Have all necessary documents prepared beforehand;
- Apply to venues well ahead of your class start dates;
- Look to the outdoors;
- Consider online lessons;
- Communicate with your customers;
- Don't just stick with your usual options, expand your
- Search to schools and nurseries;
- Keep your search going - don't give up!

# Was this Helpful?

Want to know how to achieve long-term, sustainable growth for your activity club? Great! Get in touch with one of our friendly business coaches - they'd love to hear from you.

GET IN TOUCH



**ClassForKids** has been game changing. We have all the money upfront and know our cash flow in advance, so we are much more organised. It's simple for parents to use and we have more time on our hands to think about advertising and growth. I would say to other companies - **DO IT!**"

- Ashley, Skillz

