Harris Academy Clapham go head-to-head with sporting stars to champion the importance of school sport

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 17, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Year 7 pupils at Harris Academy, Clapham took part in a special football and netball tournament designed to celebrate the power of sport, with guidance from football creator and UEFA B coach Harry Cain and former England netball international and Commonwealth Games gold medallist Beth Durant.



The students of Harris Academy Clapham alongside Chairman of MandM, Mike Tomkins, football creator Harry Cain and Commonwealth Games gold medallist Beth Durant

The pupils competed across football and netball fixtures before taking part in skills demonstrations, Q&A sessions and discussions with Harry and Beth about their own sporting journeys, including the lessons and opportunities sport has given them.

The event highlighted the positive role sport can play in young people's lives, helping to build confidence and teamwork while encouraging more children to stay active from an early age.

The tournament was delivered as part of online retailer MandM's wider partnership with The Harris Federation, a group of 55 schools throughout London, aimed at raising awareness around the rising school uniform and PE kit costs and concerns around physical activity levels among young people.

The event comes against the backdrop of new Department for Education research which found that required school uniform and PE kits costs an average of £442.25 for a secondary school pupil, rising to £454.31 for girls. PE kit alone accounts for around £170 of that spend, with costs 55% higher when all items must be purchased from a school or designated supplier.

Those financial pressures sit alongside a wider challenge around youth participation in sport, with London Sport estimating that 594,600 young Londoners, equivalent to 53%, are not meeting recommended activity levels.

The tournament marked the latest collaboration between the Harris Federation and MandM, with the retailer having already provided more than 6,000 personalised football kits worth £250,000 to children across London.



The Year 7 students took part in a football and netball tournament

Harry Cain, football creator and UEFA B coach said: “Through sport you learn key skills such as teamwork and leadership that shape the person you become. It was great to see pupils right at the start of Year 7 throwing themselves into everything and supporting their teammates. Giving more young people the chance to have experiences like that by providing them with the correct kit and equipment is hugely important, because the lessons they learn stay with them for life.”

Mike Tomkins, Chairman, MandM said: “At MandM, we believe cost shouldn’t be a barrier to playing sport. Our whole proposition is built around making great brands and the right kit more affordable, and our partnership with the Harris Federation is an extension of that. By working with schools and providing children the kit and opportunities they need to take part, we can help more young people experience the confidence, enjoyment and life lessons that sport can bring. Off the back of the tournament, we have launched our biggest football offer ever”

Jenny Rose, Head of Academy, Harris Academy, Clapham said: “Sport provides a platform for young people to excel, thrive and develop critical life skills. For many young people, it allows a sense of escapism - an opportunity to reset their physical, emotional and mental well-being.

The opportunity provided to Harris Academy Clapham has left a milestone in the secondary school journey for our year 7 students. As Head of Academy, I am extremely grateful for the support provided by Brandnation and MandM Direct. It really was an amazing day!”

Beth Durant, former England netballer and Commonwealth Games gold medallist added: “Playing sport changed my life, but girls can’t experience those benefits if we’re losing them before they’ve had the chance to start. When girls are getting less access to facilities or don’t feel comfortable in what they’re expected to wear it isn’t surprising to that participation falls away.

I want young girls to see women in sport and think, ‘there’s a place here for me too’. The talent is there so we need to make sure the opportunity is too. It was fantastic to see the energy from the pupils and how willing they were to get involved. The more we can do to give girls those positive experiences, the better chance we have of keeping them active.”

The tournament comes as MandM launches its biggest ever football offering, giving players of all ages access to an extensive range of football boots, kits and equipment from leading brands at affordable prices.

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