



PLAY PHASE



 BY ENGLAND FOOTBALL

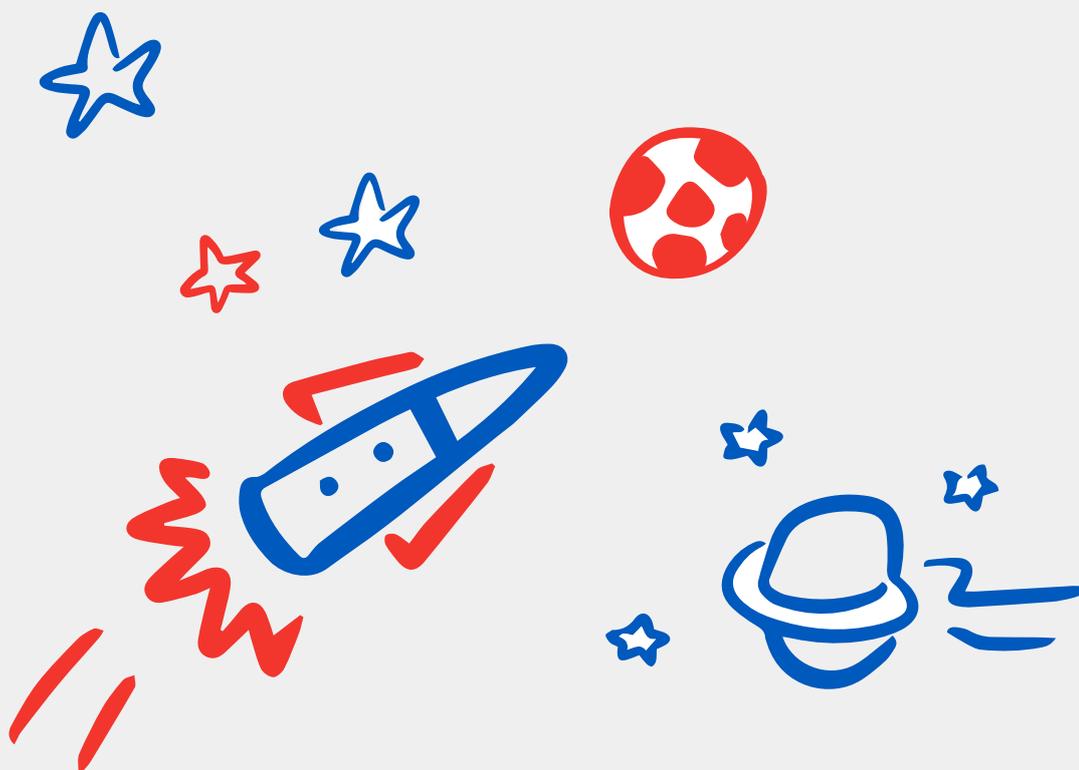
Safeguarding Guidance and Requirements



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INTRODUCTION



Play Phase is all about giving children aged 4 – 6 the best possible start, both in terms of their development and their first steps into football.

As a Captain of Play, your goal is to create a safe space where children can play. This resource will guide you through the safeguarding requirements for Play Phase.

You will be building on the safeguards already set out for youth football. There are new resources provided inside as well as links to useful safeguarding guidance available on [TheFA.com](https://www.thefa.com).

You can also speak with your Club Welfare Officer if you need further help - if you are not sure, please ask.

Your focus should always be - **having fun** in a **safe and supportive** way. An **inclusive** and **positive** outlook, a **welcoming** smile, an encouraging and **patient** nature will be of greater benefit to these younger children than football knowledge.

Children this age need to be supported to **experiment**, encouraged to **explore**, and allowed to be **creative** in a consistently **positive environment**. Clear, simple communication with lots of demonstration will help them to have a great time.

"Play Phase - it's more than just a phase. it's a philosophy."



Please note: The FA does not affiliate activity designed for children younger than 4 years of-age. The FA requires parents/carers to supervise their child(ren) of this age during each session. It should be noted this is not about providing childcare.

SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS

Where to start

Affiliated clubs with youth teams are required to have the following safeguards in place:

- ☺ A **safeguarding children policy** and procedures
- ☺ Safer recruitment procedures including **FA DBS** checks
- ☺ **Safeguarding trained** club and team officials
- ☺ A **club welfare officer**.

In addition, there should be clear guidance on social media, photography, and videoing, managing personal data, medical and development needs, travel and overnight stays and giving children a voice.



Please note: Clubs who affiliate 4, 5 and 6-year-olds for Play Phase must ensure the above safeguards are also applied to all activity intended for this age group.

Safeguarding Risk Assessments¹

Clubs must complete a safeguarding risk assessment that addresses the specific needs of, children of this young age including, but not limited to:

- ☺ The suitability of facilities and access to toilets
- ☺ Adult supervision and staff ratios
- ☺ Personal and intimate care
- ☺ Medical and development needs.

Facilities

Providing activity inside and out adds to the fun for young children. Care should be taken in relation to all playing surfaces and weather conditions need to be considered. The allocated space for the activity needs to be suitable for the age, size of group and type of activity.²

Various different spaces e.g., public playing fields, parks, leisure centres, club owned facilities may be utilised, but whatever the venue, reasonable steps must be taken to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises/playing space.



¹Please refer to '**Safeguarding risk assessment and template**'

²The Governments Early Years and Foundation Stage sets indoor space requirements as 2.3 m² per child for children aged three to five years.

SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS

Welcome and departure

The arrival of both excited and potentially anxious children with parents/carers in tow requires a warm and well organised welcome. **Registration on arrival is essential**, this can be supported by an initial online or manual sign up process, but clubs must have a **record of attendees** for each session. Managing the departure is as important as planning the welcome. Having taken a register on arrival, parents/carers must also be **required to sign out**.

Children must only be released into the care of individuals who have been notified to the club by the parent/carer, as responsible for that child(ren).

Supervision and ratios



When calculating adult to child ratios only those **aged 18 or over** can be included. U18s can assist with the activity but they cannot be responsible for the activity and must always be **supervised by an appropriate adult**.

Parents/carers can be encouraged to actively support their child(ren) during activity, under the guidance of the Captain of Play.

The Captain of Play is responsible for the activities at all times. If a parent/carer wishes to formally assist the programme then they must be **appropriately recruited** as another Captain of Play and comply with the necessary safeguards e.g., FA DBS check/safeguarding training.

The clubs **safeguarding risk assessment must inform the clubs decision on staffing ratios³**, remembering that their must always be a **minimum of 2 FA DBS checked adults** with a clearly defined role, present at all times.

Following the above 'welcome/departure' and 'supervision/ratios' criteria should mean the children are well supervised at all times. However, clubs are still required to have a 'Missing child protocol'. This is often provided by venues as part of the booking information, please ask when enquiring about the venue's facilities. It's your responsibility to be familiar with the venues 'Missing child protocol' if they have one and share this effectively. If such a protocol does not exist or you are using your own venue you may wish to refer to the example provided in Appendix 1.

³Please refer to download [5.5 Ratios of Adults to Children](#)

SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS

Personal and intimate care

Parents/carers are required to supervise their child's personal or intimate care needs.

Clubs must ensure parents/carers are aware of their responsibility to provide advance notice if they won't be attending a session. They should provide the name and relationship of the adult e.g., grandparent/family friend who will have responsibility for their child(ren) and this should be recorded.

By the age of 4 years most children are toilet trained however protocols need to be in place to deal with any toilet accidents, including:

- ☺ Parents/carers made aware they are to supervise their child's toileting needs;
- ☺ Children have a change of clothes;
- ☺ Suitable changing facilities;
- ☺ Emergency contact information in the event of an accident;
- ☺ Appropriate PPE to clean up.



HEALTH, ACCIDENT OR INJURY

Clubs must have a process to obtain children's medical needs, medicine(s) required and keep this information up to date in line with the club's data privacy policy. Parents/carers must remain responsible for the oversight and administering their child's medication.

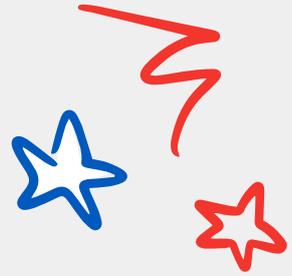
Ensure you inform parents/carers not to bring their child(ren) to a session if they are unwell and or have a temperature and remind them, they must administer any medication their child(ren) require whilst at the club.

There must be a procedure, discussed with parents/carers, for responding to children who are ill or infectious, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action if children are ill.

In general, if a child is considered too unwell to attend nursery, it is likely they are too unwell to attend a club session. The NHS provide helpful guidance on this available [here](#). There is also a poster you can download [here](#).



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



It's important clubs are proactive when communicating with parents/carers about Play Phase. The following information, including the **club's expectations of parents/carers should be shared before their child(ren) participate.**

Clubs must share information about:

- ☺ The Play Phase philosophy (see Appendix 2);
- ☺ The range and type of activities and experiences for this age group;
- ☺ How the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities;
- ☺ The club's safeguarding policies and procedures, including what happens in the event of a parent/carer failing to collect their child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting;
- ☺ Parents/carers being required to supervise their child(ren), including intimate care needs;
- ☺ The staff delivering the activity;
- ☺ The duration of the session;
- ☺ A club contact name and number to use in an emergency.

It's also useful to let prospective newcomers know where/how to find out more information about the club generally.

Parents and carers are required to:

- ☺ Accept the Play Phase philosophy;
- ☺ Reinforce a consistently positive environment;
- ☺ Bring their child(ren) ready changed to play in loose comfortable clothing;
- ☺ Ensure their child(ren) have been to the toilet beforehand;
- ☺ Bring a change of clothes in case of a toileting issues;
- ☺ Support the inclusion of their child by outlining and assisting where necessary with any additional needs their child may have;
- ☺ Collect their child prior to the activity finishing if requested and as soon as requested;
- ☺ Comply with the sign in and departure arrangements;
- ☺ Comply with the protocol for managing allergies and communicable diseases e.g., chicken pox;
- ☺ Ensure their child has their own water bottle with them, which is clearly named.

APPENDICES



1. Missing Child Protocol

2. Play Phase Philosophy

3. Safeguarding Requirements Checklist

4. Top Tips



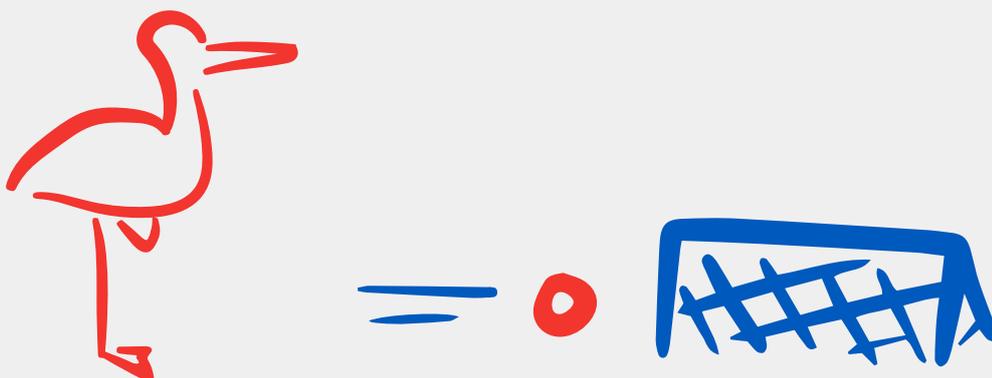
APPENDIX 1



Missing child protocol

If a child goes missing during our Play Phase activity we will:

- ☺ Ensure all the other children continue to be supervised appropriately while a search for the missing child is carried out.
- ☺ Organise the remaining appropriate adults to conduct a search of the surrounding area, having allocated a specific area to each adult. Everyone involved in the search will be asked to report back within a short time, dependent upon the size of area to be searched. The name and mobile number of a designated point of contact for the club will ideally be shared with the adults involved in the search.
- ☺ Following a good search of the immediate surroundings, if the child is not found, and the parents are not present, contact the parents to advise them of the concern and reassure them everything is being done to locate their child.
- ☺ Record the circumstances in which the child has gone missing, where they were last seen, provide a detailed physical description to include; eye and hair colour, height, and build, clothing they were wearing as this will be required by the Police. If a photograph were taken as part of the activity this may be useful to the Police.
- ☺ Contact the Police if the search is unsuccessful after 20 minutes.
- ☺ Follow the Police guidance.
- ☺ Report the incident to the Club Welfare Officer/Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- ☺ Ensure everyone involved in the search is informed ASAP if the child is located.

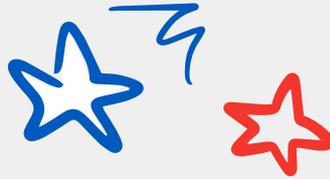


MISSING CHILD FORM



Play Phase Provided By: [Name of Club]			
Child's Name:		Age of Child:	
Male or Female:		Date of Birth:	
Time and place child last seen:		Time event staff informed:	
Hair Colour:	Eye Colour:	Ethnicity	Clothing (Colour / Pattern):
Is the child a Participant or Other?		Any other relevant information:	
Parent/Carer Name:	Is parent/carers on site? (Yes/No)	Phone Number:	
		Address:	
Action Taken:		Time:	
Venue security informed:		Police informed:	
Other:			

APPENDIX 2



**“Play Phase – it’s more than just a phase,
it’s a philosophy.”**

Play Phase exists to help children to:

- ☺ Gain confidence
- ☺ Develop a positive sense of self
- ☺ Create strong relationships
- ☺ Understand their own emotions and how to control them
- ☺ Become critical thinkers and problem solvers
- ☺ Work out how to achieve goals
- ☺ Develop better control over mind and body



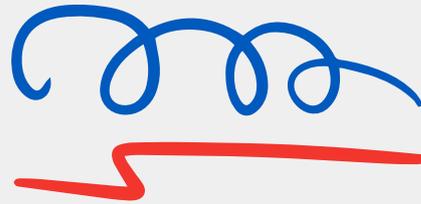
APPENDIX 3



Safeguarding Requirements Checklist

Clubs offering activity for 4 and 5-year-olds must:		In Progress	Complete
1	Apply the safeguards required for youth teams, to Play Phase (see page 4)		
2	Complete a safeguarding risk assessment that addresses the specific needs of 4, 5 and 6-year-olds (see page 4)		
3	Have a registration process (see page 5)		
4	Have a minimum of 2 FA DBS checked adults with a clearly defined role present		
5	Have a missing child protocol (see page 5, Appendix 1)		
6	Inform parents/carers that they are required to supervise their child's personal and/or intimate care needs		
7	Ensure parents/carers are aware they have to provide advance notice if they won't be attending a session		
8	Have a process to obtain children's medical needs and medicine(s) required and ensure parents/carers are aware they must remain responsible for administering their child's medication		
9	Have a procedure for responding to children who are unwell or infectious		
10	Communicate effectively with parents/carers as outlined on page 8		

APPENDIX 4



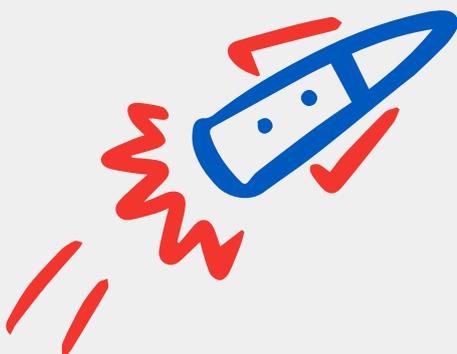
Top Tips

Parents and Carers Enquiries:

- ☺ Have an introductory leaflet or introductory details on your club website/social media page
- ☺ Share the Play Phase philosophy
- ☺ State the maximum group size you offer
- ☺ Be clear about parents/carers being required to supervise their child(ren), including intimate care needs
- ☺ Remind parents to ensure their child has their own water bottle with them.

Pre Arrival:

- ☺ Ask parents/carers to toilet their child(ren) before bringing them to the session
- ☺ Pre-prepare a list of children's names include any learning and/or development needs and parent/carer contact details
- ☺ Set out the equipment.



On Arrival:

- ☺ Model the Play Phase philosophy from the start
- ☺ Sign in every child
- ☺ Engage with excitable children and support those who may be anxious
- ☺ Record the headcount for the session
- ☺ Quickly learn the children's names and consistently use these to enhance engagement and build strong relationships.

During the Session:

- ☺ Allocate time for small groups of children to take a comfort break supervised by their parent/carer, the club organiser/Captain of Play continues to supervise the remaining children and keep a headcount



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