

Activity for 4 and 5-year-olds



Safeguarding Requirements and Guidance

SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE



Some clubs already provide activity for children under the age of 6, others are keen to start. It's essential that everyone is clear about the additional safeguards required for this younger age group categorised as 'Early Years' by the education sector and previously referred to as U6 Development within Whole Game System (WGS).

'At the start of the 2023-2024 season clubs will be able to affiliate 4 and 5-year-olds under the new title of Play Phase'.

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) if they are 4 or 5-years-of-age at each club session they attend. It should be noted this is not about providing childcare.

Whatever your club has planned for 4 and 5-year-olds, creating a supportive environment and a culture that meets the specific needs of these young children must be your priority.

Your focus should always be - **having fun** in a **safe and supportive** way - with the right people leading the sessions. 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.

Clubs who decide to provide activity for 4 and 5-year-olds for the 2023-2024 season are required to effectively manage the additional safeguards required for this young age group.

¹School Key Stage: Early Years, Class: Reception

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 and 5-year-olds under the new title Play Phase must ensure the above safeguards are also applied to all activity intended for this age group as well as specific safeguarding requirements for this younger age group as outlined below.

Safeguarding risk assessments²

Clubs must complete a safeguarding risk assessment that addresses the specific needs of, 4 and 5-year-olds 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

'Children of this young age may be more vulnerable due to the early stages of their speech development. They need to feel safe, protected, and able to identify a trusted adult'.

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 activity³.

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.

²Please refer to '[Safeguarding risk assessment and template](#)'

³The Governments Early Years and Foundation Stage sets indoor space requirements as 2.3 m² per child for children aged three to five years.

Registration process

The arrival of excited or potentially anxious children with parents/carers in tow requires a warm, well organised welcome. **Registration on arrival is essential**, this can be supported by an online or manual sign-up process, but clubs must have **a record of attendees** for each session. Managing the departure is just as important, so require parents/carers to **sign out** as well as in! 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, ratios and missing child protocol

When calculating adult to child ratios **only those aged 18** or over can be included. U18s can assist with activities but they can't be responsible for them 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 club session organiser.

The club organiser is responsible for the activity at all times. If a parent/carer wishes to formally assist the sessions then they must be **appropriately recruited** into a specific club role 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 ratios⁴**, remembering that children at this age require a closer level of supervision and 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 'registration' and 'supervision/ratios' criteria should mean the children are always well supervised. However, clubs still need to have a **'Missing child protocol'**, often included in the booking information by venues, please ask when enquiring about facilities. It's your responsibility to be familiar with the venues 'Missing child protocol' if they have one and share this effectively. If there's no protocol, or you are using your own venue you may wish to refer to the **example provided in Appendix 1**.

Personal and intimate care

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

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. See Appendix 4

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/CARERS

Its important clubs are **proactive when communicating with parents/carers** of children this age. The following information about activities being offered for 4 and 5-year-olds and the **clubs' expectations of parents/carers should be shared** before their child(ren) participate.

Clubs must share information about:

1. the ethos when activating 4 and 5-year-olds;
2. the range and type of activities and experiences for this age group;
3. how the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities;
4. the club's safeguarding policies and procedures, including what happens in the event of a child going missing , or away from, the setting;
5. parents/carers being required to supervise their child(ren), including intimate care needs;
6. the staff delivering the activity;
7. the duration of the session;
8. 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/carers must be required to:

1. sign up to the club ethos when activating 4 and 5-year-olds;
2. reinforce a consistently positive environment;
3. bring their child(ren) ready changed to play in loose comfortable clothing;
4. ensure their child(ren) have been to the toilet beforehand;
5. bring a change of clothes in case of toileting issues;
6. support the inclusion of their child by outlining and assisting where necessary with any additional needs their child may have;
7. collect their child prior to the activity finishing if requested and as soon as requested;
8. comply with the sign in and departure arrangements;
9. comply with the protocol for managing allergies and communicable diseases e.g., chicken pox
10. ensure their child has their own water bottle with them , which is clearly named.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Missing Child Protocol and Form

Appendix 2 - Safeguarding Requirements Checklist

Appendix 3 - Top Tips

Appendix 4 - Responding to a 4 or 5-year-old child who is unwell or contagious

Appendix 1

MISSING CHILD PROTOCOL AND FORM

If a child goes missing during our club's activity for 4 and 5-year-olds 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

Child's Name:	Age of child:
Male or Female:	D.O.B.:
Time and place child last seen:	Time event staff informed:
Hair Colour:	Clothing (Colour & Pattern):
Eye Colour:	
Ethnicity:	Any other relevant information:
*..... Participant or Other:	
*Add name of club	
Parent/Carer name:	Phone Number:
Is parent/carers on site? Yes / No	Address:
Action taken:	Time:
Venue security informed:	
Police informed:	
Other:	

Appendix 2

SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS – CHECKLIST

CLUBS OFFERING ACTIVITY FOR 4 AND 5-YEAR-OLDS		In progress	Complete
MUST:			
1.	Apply the safeguards required for youth teams, to all activity for 4 and 5-year-olds e.g., a minimum of 2 FA DBS checked adults with a clearly defined role, a process to obtain children's medical needs and medicine(s) (see page 3)		
2.	Complete a safeguarding risk assessment that addresses the specific needs of, 4 and 5-year-olds (see page 2)		
3.	Have a documented registration process (see page 3)		
4.	Proactively communicate the availability of toilets and handbasins suitable for the age group		
5.	Inform parents/carers that they are required to supervise their child's personal and/or intimate care needs		
6.	Have a missing child protocol and form (see Appendix 1)		
CLUBS OFFERING ACTIVITY FOR 4 AND 5-YEAR-OLDS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO:		In progress	Complete
7.	Communicate effectively with parents/carers as outlined on page 5		
8.	Ensure parents/carers are aware they are required to give advance notice if they won't be attending a session. The name and contact details of the person going to 'stand-in' and their relationship to the child must be provided and recorded by the club.		
9.	Have a procedure for responding to children who are unwell or infectious (see Appendix 4)		
10.	Share two contact names (including relationship to child) and emergency contact number for the club		

Appendix 3

TOP TIPS

WHEN	TOP TIP SUGGESTION
Prior to sign up – parent, carer enquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an introductory leaflet or introductory details on your club website/social media page • Share the club's philosophy when involving this age group • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model the club philosophy for this age group from the start • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocate time for small groups of children to take a comfort break supervised by their parent/carer, whilst the club organiser continues to supervise the remaining children and keep a headcount

Appendix 4

RESPONDING TO A 4 OR 5-YEAR-OLD CHILD WHO IS UNWELL OR INFECTIOUS

RESPONDING TO A 4 OR 5-YEAR-OLD CHILD WHO IS UNWELL OR INFECTIOUS

Children should not be at [add club name here] if they are unwell, this procedure aims to:

1. ensure that children who become unwell whilst at [add club name here] are treated with sensitivity and respect
2. help to protect other children at the club from illness and the spread of infection.

[Add club name here] **Commitment**

We will follow these procedures to ensure the welfare of all children within our club:

If a child becomes ill during the session, the parent(s) will be asked to take their child home as soon as possible. During this time the parents/carer will remove their child from the session and ideally be cared for in a quiet, calm area, this may be the parent/carers car if other space is unavailable.

- Whilst it's acknowledged that most club sessions will run once weekly it's important to note that a child with an infectious disease, such as an ear infection or sickness and diarrhoea, should not attend any club sessions until they have been clear for at least 48 hours.
- Illnesses of this nature are very contagious, and it is highly likely this will expose other children to the risk of an infection.
- The club reserves the right to refuse access to a club session to a child who is unwell. This decision will be taken by the session leader and is non-negotiable.

Diarrhoea and vomiting

All children must be kept away from the club for a minimum of 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting. If a child is sent home from the club session the 48 hours exclusion still applies. Children should only return to club sessions when they are well enough and have regained their appetite.

Fever

All children must be kept away from club sessions for a minimum of 24 hours or until their fever has returned to normal. If a child is sent home from the club session the 24 hours exclusion still applies.

NB - The club will not administer any medicine – this is the direct responsibility of the parent/carer.