

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION PROGRAMME FOR EXCELLENCE FEMALE REGULATIONS 2010-11

FA Rule C4 (b) applies to all players within The Football Association Programme for Excellence.

1. Purpose

The purpose of The Football Association Programme for Excellence is to identify players of outstanding ability and place them in a technical and educational programme designed to produce football excellence in conjunction with personal development.

2. Scope

Any club or organisation may not designate any technical or educational programme as a Centre of Excellence unless that Centre of Excellence is licensed by The Football Association under these regulations.

3. Quality Control

3.1 Requirements to authorise the award of Licences:

3.1.1 Grant Aid Business Plan – To be submitted annually and to reflect the agreed regulations. The business plan is to be made available for review at the request of The Football Association Women's Football Committee.

3.1.2 Log Books – Each Centre will be provided with Log Books by The Football Association to be completed on a weekly basis by each player under the supervision of the Centre Director.

3.1.3 Monitoring – The Football Association to institute a programme of visits to monitor the regulations.

3.1.4 Reports – Each visit to a Centre of Excellence to be reported and copies of the reports to be available for review on the request of The Football Association Women's Football Committee.

3.1.5 Financial Monitoring – Each Centre will submit a financial monitoring report and the FA cash flow template twice yearly to The Football Association.

3.1.6 The Football Association Women's Football Committee has the right to refuse / withdraw a Centre's licence with immediate effect.

3.2. Registration:

3.2.1 The Football Association to be responsible for providing registration forms for the registration of all players at a Centre of Excellence.

3.2.2 Centres may de-register players by mutual consent or an appeal may be made to The Football Association. Any player who de-registers may not re-register for that Centre, or any other Centre, during the current season without the permission of The Football Association.

3.2.3 Age registration to operate from 1st September of each year.

3.3 Fixtures

The Football Association are to provide a full programme of fixtures for Centres of Excellence.

3.4 Fees

Registration fees and Licence fees to be at the discretion of The Football Association.

3.5 Learning Programme and Support Service

The Football Association to outline the required learning programme and provide the necessary support service to assist Centres to deliver their programme.

3.6 Football Calendar

In agreement with the football calendar, a minimum of four weekends (Friday p.m. to Sunday p.m.) to be allocated throughout each season, without Centres of Excellence fixtures, to be used for:

- International Development
- Selected Players Courses

3.7 Communication

The Football Association to provide for parents/carers and players (on any occasion that a player signs a registration form annually) the rules and guidelines relating to Centres of Excellence, with regards to: registration, welfare, educational needs, priority of activities and Respect Codes of Conduct.

This information must be given at a dedicated player and parents/carers meeting at the commencement of the annual programme.

3.8 Quality Audit

The Football Association, through its FA Centres of Excellence Committee will evaluate the performance of Centres of Excellence on objective criteria (including academic, tactical, technical and welfare).

4. Safeguarding Children:

- 4.1 All staff and volunteers involved at a Centre of Excellence must be registered with the Centre. The register must be kept up to date and no person who is not registered shall have any involvement with the Centre of Excellence. This requirement shall apply to all persons involved at the Centre of Excellence, including coaching, physiotherapy, administration, welfare and ancillary staff and volunteers, talent scouts, drivers etc.
- 4.2 The register shall be liable to inspection and verification at any time by The Football Association as appropriate.
- 4.3 The recruitment process for all staff and volunteers must comply with The FA guidance as set out in the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and Regulations. This includes the taking up of at least two references, interviewing and completion of Enhanced CRB Disclosures via The FA CRB Unit and where appropriate register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) as directed by The FA and / or Premier League or Football League [see 4.5].
- 4.4 All persons who are given a specified role to work with children and young people at a Centre of Excellence must submit and complete an Enhanced CRB Disclosure via The FA CRB Unit when the offer of the post is made.

All such persons shall be required to be trained in safeguarding children issues at least to include satisfactory completion of The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Workshop.

- 4.5 A Centre of Excellence is defined as "regulated activity" by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA), 2006, and or any subsequent guidance regulations and amendments. All those working in "regulated activity" must register with the ISA at such time as required by Law and subsequent phasing arrangements.
- 4.6 All persons in a specified role to work with children and young people at a Centre of Excellence shall be required to be trained in safeguarding children issues at least to include satisfactory completion of The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Workshop.
- 4.7 One person at each Centre of Excellence shall be designated as having responsibility for safeguarding children issues as part of the promotion of the welfare of children attending the Centre of Excellence and issuing identification to all Centre staff members. All parents / carers and players must be made aware as to whom this person is and how to contact them. They shall be known as the Centre Welfare Officer and, in line with FA affiliation criteria must have attended the Welfare Officer Workshop.

5. Criteria to Operate a Centre of Excellence

Centre of Excellence Licences to be awarded by The Football Association in accordance with regulations laid down by The Football Association, to be renewed annually.

- 5.1. Centres of Excellence must operate at Under 10s, Under 12s, Under 14s and Under 16 age groups.
- 5.2 An organisation may only operate one Centre of Excellence.
- 5.3 Public liability insurance is required with a minimum of £5m indemnity. A copy of this cover must be submitted to The Football Association with the annual business plan. Player to player liability is recommended but is not mandatory. The Football Association does not provide Personal Accident Insurance, therefore it is recommended that Centres address this independently through other agencies.
- 5.4 A written reporting system to be provided to players and parents, annually at the end of the season.
- 5.5 All Centres of Excellence are required to comply in full with The Football Association's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and Regulations. It is essential that all Centres of Excellence have a safeguarding children policy statement and procedures for dealing with concerns about the welfare of a young person that are made available to all staff and volunteers, Parents/Carers and players.
- 5.6 Centres of Excellence may register the following maximum numbers:
 - Under 10 – 20 players per year band
 - Under 12 – 20 players per year band
 - Under 14 – 20 players per year band
 - Under 16 – 20 players per year band
- 5.7 Each Centre to run for a minimum of 30 weeks, ideally 36 weeks, between the months of August and May. The major trial period is to be held in the month of June.

Players currently registered at Centre

Between the 26th – 30th May every Centre player should be told in writing whether they:

1. Will receive an invitation to re-sign for their current Centre for the next season if they choose to accept it.
2. Will need to trial to re-secure a place at their current Centre for the next season.
3. Will be released by their current Centre and not be asked to trial for next season.

Players can decide to accept the offer and therefore may or may not decide to trial at another Centre. If they accept the offer, after July 1st they will be registered for the next season with their existing Centre.

Players that want to trial at another Centre will be available to do so from the 1st June.

- 5.8 A player registered with a Centre of Excellence may not trial for any other Centre.

- 5.9 Centres of Excellence must give seven clear days' notice of approach in writing to the registered youth team with which the trialist plays as per Football Association Rule C2 (a)
- 5.10 A Centre may not approach, directly or indirectly, any player registered with another Centre of Excellence from 1st July until 31st May
- 5.11 Centres are required to clearly outline to parents, players and staff in respect of educational needs, priority, objectives and welfare.
- 5.12 Registered players must receive a minimum of two training sessions per week. One of these must be a minimum of 90 minutes and the other a minimum of 60 minutes. This is in addition to the agreed Saturday programme of fixtures and training.
- 5.13 Centres must adhere to a maximum 90 minutes travelling time to the Centre for all age groups.
- 5.14 A player is not entitled to be coached by a Centre of Excellence or to participate in games, tours or tournaments, unless the player is registered with that Centre or is on trial.

6. Facilities

6.1 The following minimum facilities are required for at least one of the weekly training sessions in the playing season:

- Adequate showers, washing facilities and toilets
- Separate treatment room
- Rapid access to qualified medical expertise
- Appropriate size of coaching area per age band:

U10s & U12s – one third of an Astroturf/Grass pitch for each group – minimum 50 yards x 30 yards (45m x 27.5m)

It is good practice if the U10s train indoors but not mandatory

U14s & U16s – one half of an Astroturf/Grass pitch for each age group - minimum 65 yards x 45 yards (60m x 40m)

6.2 The following minimum facilities are required for the additional weekly training sessions in the playing season:

- Adequate showers, washing facilities and toilets
- Separate treatment room
- Rapid access to qualified medical expertise
- Appropriate size of coaching area per age band dependant on the activity taking place, i.e. SAQs, fitness training, gym work, etc

6.3 The following minimum facilities are required for the fixture programme:

- Adequate showers, washing facilities and toilets
- Separate treatment room
- Rapid access to qualified medical expertise
- U10s to play on a maximum pitch size of 60 yards x 40 yards (55m x 37.5m)
- U12s to play 9 v 9 on a maximum pitch size of 80 yards x 50 yards (75m x 45m)
- U14s to play 11 v 11 on a maximum pitch size 90 yards x 55 yards (82m x 51m)
- U16s to play 11v11 on a maximum pitch size of 100 yards x 60 yards (91m x 56m)

7. Staff

7.1 General Requirements:

All coaches registered and authorised to coach in Centres of Excellence must by 1st of August of each playing season hold the appropriate qualification to coach at that level, as outlined in the regulations:

- 7.1.1 One UEFA A Licence Centre Director or Level 3 coach. If the Director is a Level 3 coach then they must have held this award for a minimum of 18 months and shall be working towards UEFA A Licence within a maximum 3 year period. The Centre Director must also have completed or be working towards the FA Youth Award – Modules 1, 2 & 3 within 12 months and must have completed the Coach Mentoring course within 18 months.

The Centre Director must be present at all times (if this is not possible a deputy who meets this criteria must be identified as a replacement) and will oversee the programme.

- 7.1.2 Each age group shall have one Head Coach and one Assistant Coach. All Head Coaches should be Level 3 preferred but Level 2 essential, working towards Level 3 within a maximum 3 year period. The Head Coach must also hold or be working towards the Youth Award – Module 1 & 2 within 12 months. All Assistant Coaches must be a minimum Level 2 and must also hold or be working towards the Youth Award – Module 1 & 2 within 12 months. At least one coach with each age group should be female.

It is clearly best practice to have female coaches with each age group. This will support FA Centres of Excellence with meeting the requirements of the FA Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures - Travel, Trips and Tournaments. Also, The Football Association is committed to mentoring and developing female coaches, particularly in the Centre environment, where they can be nurtured and supported.

- 7.1.3 All female coaches Level 2 or above to be mentored through the Centre Director and registered as part of The FA National Coaches Mentoring Strategy. The support for female Level 1 coaches is encouraged but only as volunteers at the Centre and they must not coach at any training session until they have the Level 2 award.

- 7.1.4 One minimum Level 2 in Goalkeeping Award (shall be working towards Level 3 in Goalkeeping within a maximum 3 year period) Coach to provide a minimum of 2 hours per month per age band.

- 7.1.5 Access to a Physiotherapist who is a Chartered Physiotherapist and is a registered member of the Health Professions Council or who holds The FA's Diploma in the Treatment and Management of Injuries (or equivalent).

As an absolute minimum there should be a person in attendance at every match and training session, who is available to deliver emergency and first aid. They should hold the FA Emergency Aid Training Certificate and FA/1st4Sport First Aid for Sport Certificate (or equivalent).

- 7.1.6 The Football Association to provide Centres with a programme of in-service training for coaching staff which will include a Continuing Professional Development Plan.

- 7.1.7 A Centre Administrator / Co-ordinator must be nominated.

8. Centres Football

8.1 Players are licensed in 3 categories as outlined below:

- A International Football and The FA Centres of Excellence Programme
- B All Schools Football
- C Local Youth Leagues including County Representative Matches

Players registered with FA Centres of Excellence will be eligible to play in Category A football. They may be released to play in County FA and County Schools Under 16 representative competitions.

Players registered with FA Centres of Excellence shall not play in local youth leagues as it is expected that all girls will be participating in a full fixture programme.

Players NOT registered with a Centre of Excellence will play in Categories B and C only.

It will be the responsibility of the Director of the Centre of Excellence to monitor the number of games in which the player takes part.

The recommended number of games per season is 40. This number falls in line with the Long Term Player Development (LTPD) Strategy that the FA has embraced. This figure has been worked out based on these principles:

- The average:
- 1. number of league, cup and international fixtures
 - 2. length of the season
 - 3. of one game per week

The conclusion and the recommendations based on LTPD guidelines is to prevent overuse, especially in young players, burn out and encourage longevity and greater practice to match ratios.

8.2 Avoidance of Conflict of Fixtures

It is hoped that conflict will be avoided between Schools, Counties and FA Centres of Excellence football.

Centre of Excellence players should not play more than 1 game in any given weekend.

A national programme of fixtures will be provided by the Football Association and each Centre is asked to provide this information to their County Schools and County FA representatives. This programme will include a number of 'Open Weekends' where priority will be given on those dates to County FA and County Schools Under 16 representative matches.

County Football Associations and The English Schools Football Association will advise, in writing, the dates of their matches to a Centre of Excellence with which the player is registered, no less than 14 days prior to the match. Except in the case of postponed matches where the rearranged date shall be agreed by mutual consent and preferably during mid-week. This mid-week rearranged date will take priority over a Centre training evening.

- 8.3 FA Centres of Excellence may only play matches against other Centres of Excellence. In exceptional circumstances a Centre may apply to The Football Association for permission (by written request) to play against another organisation outside of the Excellence programme.
- 8.4 Once a player has been identified by a Centre of Excellence member of staff as having potential to be in a Centre the member of staff must inform the Centre Director.
- 8.4.1 The Centre of Excellence Director must give seven clear days' notice of approach.
- 8.4.2 Players, including registered players and trialists, must only play one match in one day. Centres may include no more than two players from one junior team and no more than four in total on a trial basis in any one match. The normal trial period shall be regarded as four matches after which players should either become signed to the Centre or released.
- 8.5. Directors of Centres of Excellence should offer the following:
- U10s to play between 4v4 to 7v7 on a maximum pitch size of 60 yards x 40 yards (55m x 37.5m)
 - U12s to play 9v9 on a maximum pitch size of 80 yards x 50 yards (75m x 45m)
 - U14s to play 11v11. This format is there to ensure that U14 players will get some experience of the full game to prepare for the possibility of U15 international fixtures. This does not in anyway invalidate the Long Term Player Development aims
 - U16s to play 11v11
- 8.6. Matches for Under 10, Under 12 and Under 14:
- to be organised as coached games and must be played in at least three periods
 - the host club to be responsible for appointing qualified match officials
 - a qualified First Aider to be in attendance
 - to have repeat substitutions
 - to have footballs and pitches of appropriate size
 - to have no results published
 - to be played on a "friendly" basis, i.e. no competitions.
- 8.6.1 Matches for Under 16:
- to be organised as coached games and can be played as per FA Regulations for the 11 a-side game
 - the host club to be responsible for appointing qualified match officials
 - a qualified First Aider to be in attendance
 - to have repeat substitutions – to be agreed prior to the commencement of fixture between both Centre Directors
 - to have footballs and pitches of appropriate size

8.6.2 Matches for 16 Year Olds:

- 16 year old players that are still registered with a Centre and want to play senior football should only play one fixture per weekend whilst still registered at the Centre. Centre fixtures must take priority over senior fixtures unless written permission is given by The Football Association.

8.6.3 Respect

- To adopt all 'Respect League' processes at each age group at every game.

8.7 Information to be kept by each Centre:

- details of each match played
- date
- venue
- names of all participating players

8.8 Players who are cautioned or dismissed from the field of play will be reported directly to appropriate County Football Association and the English Schools Football Association.

9. Grievance Procedures

In the event of a player, parent /carer or member of staff having a grievance against a Centre of Excellence or employee of that Centre which is FA licensed.

The grievance should be made in writing to the Centre Director in the first instance. An outline of the grievance should be forwarded to the Centre Director in an envelope marked confidential stating the nature of the grievance and the player's full name.

In the event of the grievance being against the Centre Director the outline of grievance should be forwarded to the employing body.

The grievance shall be investigated by the Centre Director or employing body and following the investigation the findings shall be reported the person lodging the grievance in writing within 7 days of the investigation.

If the player is not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance procedure then an appeal may be made to The Football Association.