

THE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION PROGRAMME FOR EXCELLENCE

REGULATIONS 2011-12

FA Rule C4 (b) applies to all players within The FA Programme for Excellence. There are two types of recognised and Licensed Centres of Excellence for the purpose of FA Rule C4 (b), to be known as Centres of Excellence and Football Academies.

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of The FA 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

2.1 The Programme for Excellence incorporates the following activities:

- Centres of Excellence
- Football Academies

2.2 All FA Premier League Clubs are encouraged to operate a Football Academy.

2.3 Clubs operating a Football Academy may not operate a Centre of Excellence.

2.4 FA Premier League and Football League Clubs may not designate any technical or educational programme as a Centre of Excellence or Football Academy unless that Centre of Excellence or Football Academy is licensed by The FA Premier League and Football League under these regulations.

3. QUALITY CONTROL

3.1 The Football Association authorises The FA Premier League and the Football League to award Licences for Centres of Excellence and Football Academies to FA Premier League Clubs and Football League Clubs, providing the control requirements, as outlined, are met.

3.2 The FA Premier League is authorised to award Licences to operate Football Academies and Centres of Excellence to FA Premier League Clubs.

3.3 The Football League is authorised to award Licences to operate Centres of Excellence and Football Academies to Football League Clubs.

3.4 Requirements to authorise the award of Licences:

- It is a requirement of The FA Premier League and Football League to award Licences in accordance with the criteria as agreed by The Football Association.
- The FA Premier League and Football League agree to the following Quality Control mechanism to ensure The FA Criteria, as determined by The FA after full consultation, are maintained.

3.4.1. **Applications Forms** – To reflect the agreed criteria and be available for review on request of the Technical Control Board.

3.4.2. **Monitoring** – The FA Premier League and the Football League to institute a programme of visits to monitor the criteria. Each Centre of Excellence and Football Academy to be visited a minimum of three times per season.

3.4.3. **Reports** – Each visit to a Centre of Excellence/Football Academy to be reported and copies of the reports to be available for review on the request of the Technical Control Board.

3.4.4. **Review** – Each Centre of Excellence/Football Academy to be provided with an annual review, based on a minimum of three visiting reports. The annual reviews to be made available to the Technical Control Board for review.

3.4.5. Registration

- 3.4.5.1. The FA Premier League Academy Department, and the Football League Academy Department, to be responsible for the registration of all players on Football Academy Forms. Age registration to operate from September 1st of each year.
- 3.4.5.2. Registration Forms to be agreed by The Football Association.
- 3.4.5.3. Registration to be via either a Centre of Excellence or Football Academy form.
- 3.4.5.4. The FA Premier League and Football League to be responsible for the registration of all Centres of Excellence forms. Age registration to operate from September 1st of each year.
- 3.4.5.5. Players registered as Associate Schoolboys before July 31st 1998 will have their registrations maintained until the completion of their full time education.
- 3.4.5.6. Players registered as Associate Schoolboys before July 31st 1998 or registered on Centres of Excellence forms, with a Football Academy or Centre of Excellence, and unable to comply with the travelling time requirements, may receive coaching until completion of their full-time education in 1999 or 2000 at either a satellite Football Academy or satellite Centre of Excellence, or a Centre of Excellence or Football Academy operated by another club with permission of that club.
- 3.4.5.7. The Associate Schoolboy registration to be abolished from August 1998 and no players to be registered on Associate Schoolboy forms after August 1st 1998. All the existing benefits of the Associate Schoolboy Registration Scheme to be retained under the regulations regarding the Centres of Excellence Scheme – with the exception of distance registrations.
- 3.4.5.8. Players signed on Football Academy forms are not under any requirement to play football for teams provided by the player's school, Schools FA, or Football Academy. The player's activities should be organised in the best interest of the player's technical, educational, academic and social welfare with the approval of the parents in conjunction with the player's school, and the Football Academy Director.
- 3.4.5.9. Schoolboys registered with The FA Premier League and Football League as Football Academy players, may not register with another affiliated club during that playing season.

3.4.6. **Fixtures** – The FA Premier League and Football League to provide a programme of fixtures for Football Academies and Centres of Excellence as outlined below. Academy Football: friendlies and affiliated competitions to be organised and administered on behalf of Academies by The FA Premier League, in consultation with the Football League, on the basis of one game per week – a maximum of 30 games per season – recommended as:

- Under 18 years of age – maximum 14 teams per league (strictly youth football)
- Under 21 years of age – maximum 14 teams per league (and a maximum of three over-age players per team).

Normal disciplinary measures will be in operation, i.e. players cautioned or sent off will be reported to The Football Association.

- 3.4.7. **Compensation** – The FA Premier League and Football League to agree a procedure for appeals with regard to compensation. The safeguards and systems currently operating with regard to the Associate Schoolboy Scheme would be replicated and maintained. Compensation will be no less than is currently operating.
- 3.4.8. **Rules** – The FA Premier League to incorporate the criteria for Football Academies and Centres of Excellence into the rules of The FA Premier League. The Football League to include the criteria for Football Academies and Centres of Excellence in the rules of the Football League.
- 3.4.9. **Appeal** – Clubs may appeal to The Football Association with regard to decisions of The FA Premier League and Football League concerning the operation of Centres of Excellence and Football Academies.
- 3.4.10. **Fees** – Registration fees and Licence fees to be at the discretion of the Leagues.
- 3.4.11. **Learning Programme And Support Service** – The FA Premier League and Football League recognize the role of The Football Association to outline the required learning programme and provide the necessary support service to assist clubs deliver their programme.
- 3.4.12. **Football Calendar** – In agreement with The Football Association, a minimum of four weekends (Friday p.m. to Sunday p.m.) to be allocated throughout each season, without Academy and Centres of Excellence fixtures, to be used for:
- International Development
 - Selected Players Courses
 - In-Service Training of Coaches and Staff
- 3.4.13. **Communication** – The FA Premier League and Football League to provide for parents (on any occasion that a player signs a registration form and annually) the rules and guidelines relating to Football Academies and Centres of Excellence, with regard to: registration Welfare, educational needs, priority of activities.
- 3.4.14. **Technical** – Academies to provide a Broad Learning Programme regarding Technical and Academic outcomes, as agreed by The Association.
- 3.4.15. **Quality Audit** – The FA Technical Director will evaluate the performance of Football Academies on objective criteria (including technical, academic, welfare and disciplinary aspects).
- 3.4.16. **Child Protection**
- 3.4.16.1. All staff and volunteers involved at a Football Academy/Centre of Excellence must be registered by the Football Academy/Centre of Excellence. The register must be kept up to date and no person who is not registered shall have any involvement with the Football Academy/Centre of Excellence. This requirement shall apply to all persons involved at the Football Academy/Centre of Excellence, including coaching and administrative and ancillary staff and volunteers, talent spotters, drivers etc.
- 3.4.16.2. The register shall be liable to inspection and verification at any time by The F.A.P.L./F.L. as appropriate.
- 3.4.16.3. All persons who may come into contact with minors through their involvement at a Football Academy/Centre of Excellence must complete and submit to the Football Academy/Centre of Excellence a selfcertification form in relation to child protection issues. All such persons may also be the subject of criminal and other record checks with the Police or Social Services. The self-certification form shall be as determined by The Football Association from time to time.

- 3.4.16.4. One person at each Football Academy/Centre of Excellence shall be designated as having responsibility for child protection issues as part of the promotion of the welfare of children attending the Football Academy/Centre of Excellence. Each such person shall be required to be trained in child protection issues at least to include satisfactory completion of The Football Association/English Sports Council Child Protection Awareness Programme or equivalent scheme designated by The Football Association. It shall be the responsibility of the designated person to liaise with children, staff and volunteers and the Police, Social Services and FA Premier League/Football League (as appropriate) in relation to any child protection issues that may arise; to promote awareness of child protection issues that may arise; to promote awareness of child protection issues generally and specifically best practice amongst staff and volunteers, and to monitor compliance.

INDEPENDENT CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE

The Association reserves the right to award a Licence to operate an Independent Centre of Excellence, to a bona fide body (e.g. County Football Association, Local Authority, Schools Football Associations, Non-League Clubs).

Independent Centres of Excellence must meet all the criteria outlined for Centres of Excellence and will be subject to all controls, registration, and inspection as provided by the Football League.

Applications for a licence for an Independent Centre of Excellence will only be considered where players cannot, within the stipulated travelling time per age, attend a Centre of Excellence operated by a Football League Club, or a Football Academy.

4. CRITERIA TO OPERATE A FOOTBALL ACADEMY

Football Academy Licences to be awarded by The FA Premier League and Football League in accordance with criteria laid down by The Football Association, to be reviewed annually.

4.1. Age

- 4.1.1. Football Academies must operate at every age level from Under 9 years of age to under 21 years of age. The criteria refer to all aspects of 9–21 year football in Academies.
- 4.1.2. Clubs operating Academies may not operate a Centre of Excellence and are only allowed to register players on Football Academy Forms for these age ranges, and the appropriate Football League or FA Premier League forms where necessary (in order to be eligible for first team football).
- 4.1.3. A Club may only operate one Academy. Clubs may seek permission from The FA Premier League or Football League to operate one Satellite Centre to the main Academy (at Under 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 years of age) providing the following criteria are met:
- The overall number of registered players for the Academy as a whole does not exceed the stated number. (See 4.2.2. below.)
 - All other criteria regarding the establishment of a Football Academy must be met at the satellite centre (with the exception of the specifications of the indoor area).
 - The players in the satellite centre are coached or play with the players at the main Academy at least once per week.
 - Preference to operate a satellite centre will be given to clubs with:
 - limited catchment areas (e.g. coastal clubs)
 - with particular travel problems (e.g. London)

- wishing to operate a Football Academy in an area poorly serviced by Academies or Centres of Excellence, i.e. players having difficulty in attending a Football Academy or Centre of Excellence within the travelling time.

4.2. Registration

- 4.2.1. Registration is to the respective League (FA Premier or Football League) on the Football Academy Form. Football League to notify FA Premier League of their registrations immediately (and vice versa).
- 4.2.2. Academies may register the following maximum numbers:
 - Under 9 – Under 12 – 40 players per year band
 - Under 13 – Under 14 – 30 players per year band
 - Under 15 – Under 16 – 20 players per year band
 - (Until the end of the 1999/2000 season, any player signed as an Associate Schoolboy are included in this number.)
 - Under 17 – Under 21 – 15 players per year band
- 4.2.3. Clubs must adhere to a one hour travelling time to the Academy for ages Under 9 years to Under 13. For age ranges Under 13 to Under 16, this is increased to 1.5 hours.
- 4.2.4. A six week trial period is allowed for unregistered players from Under 9 to Under 16 years of age.
- 4.2.5. Trials are not permitted for registered players at other clubs operating Football Academies or Centres of Excellence.
- 4.2.6. Between Under 9 and Under 12 registration will be annual.
 - 4.2.6.1. From the player's twelfth birthday, the player must sign for a minimum of two years.
 - 4.2.6.2. From the player's fourteenth birthday, the player must sign until the end of the Under 16 season.
 - 4.2.6.3. At any time, on or after the player's twelfth birthday, with the parents' consent, the club may extend the registration until the end of the Under 16 season.
 - 4.2.6.4. After the player's fourteenth birthday, the club may offer the player a Scholarship for the Academy from 16–19 years with a two-year option until 21 years of age, held by the club. Such offers to be mutually respected by all participating clubs and incorporated into FA Premier League and Football League rules. Any time after a player's 17th birthday, a player may sign a professional contract but is required to continue the required educational and technical programmes until the end of the season of his 21st birthday. In the season of the player's 19th birthday, the Club must inform the player by 30th September whether he is to be retained at the end of the season. Between 16–19 years of age, the player will receive an agreed annual salary and, in addition, a provision will be made to recognise the player's progress (e.g. appearance bonus for its team football). From 19–21 an agreed minimum annual salary will be paid if either party fails to reach an agreement.
 - 4.2.6.5. Players to be informed in writing by 3rd Saturday in April in the season where registration ceases whether they are to be retained or released.
 - 4.2.6.6. A club may not approach, directly or indirectly, any player registered with another Centre of Excellence or Football Academy.

- 4.2.6.7. A player is not entitled to be coached by a club operating a Football Academy or to participate in games, tours or tournaments, unless the player is signed on Football Academy forms (or subject to a six-week trial process).
- 4.2.6.8. Academies may de-register players by mutual consent any time after 12 years of age.
- 4.2.6.9. Academies are required to notify in writing to the player and his parents the rules and guidelines concerning Academies with regard to: registration, welfare, educational needs, priority and objectives. This process to be repeated on each occasion a boy signs a Registration Form.

4.3. Technical Requirements

- 4.3.1. Minimum number of hours to be provided within the season per week excluding games:
- Under 9–11 yrs. – not less than 3 hrs. (2 sessions)
- Under 12–16 yrs. – not less than 5 hrs. (3 sessions)
- Under 17–21 yrs.* – not less than 12 hrs.
(*not applicable to players in the club's first team squad)
- 4.3.2. The Football Academy Director to ensure the following games are provided:
- Under 9–11 yrs. – Min. 24/Max. 30 – all small-sided
- Under 12–16 yrs. – Min. 24/Max. 30
- Under 15–16 – Min. 24/Max. 36 (including international games)
- 4.3.3. It is a condition of a player's registration with a Football Academy that the player commits himself to a maximum number of all games for all teams for the season as follows:
- Under 9–11 – Max. 30 (all small-sided games)
- Under 12–16 – Max. 30
- The Academy Director is required to ensure that the minimum number of games are:
- Under 9–11 – Min. 24 (all small-sided games)
- Under 12–16 – Min. 24
- 4.3.4. Football Academies may not affiliate teams to any other Youth Leagues.

4.4. Learning Programme

- 4.4.1. Academies to provide a Broad Learning Programme regarding Technical and Academic outcomes as agreed by The Football Association.
- 4.4.2. The Learning Programme to incorporate annual Technical and Academic goals, review and feedback.
- 4.4.3. A simple written reporting system to be provided to players and parents, and head teachers whilst in full time education, as a minimum twice a year, regarding players' progress towards agreed goals, technical and academic.

4.5. Facilities

- 4.5.1. *Technical*
- Minimum total requirements (a maximum of artificial surfaces to be one indoor area and one outdoor artificial surface.)
- 9–Under 11 – one 60x40 yd. area for each 40 players registered
 - Under 12–Under 16 – one 60x40 yd. area for each 30 players registered

- Under 17–Under 21 – one full size pitch for every 30 players registered
 - One indoor area – min. 60x40 yd.
- 4.5.2. *Medical*
- Treatment and Examination areas.
- 4.5.3. *Study*
- Homework and study area for a minimum of 40 young players.
- 4.5.4. *Parents*
- Parents Lounge*.
- 4.6. **Staff**
- 4.6.1. *General Requirements*
- All coaches registered and authorised to coach in Football Academies must by 1 August 2004* hold the appropriate qualification to coach at that level, i.e.
- 7–11 years:
FA Youth Coaches Award – Junior
- 12–16 years:
FA Youth Coaches Award – Schools
- 17–21 years:
FA Youth Coaches Award – Youth
- A 12-month dispensation will be provided for those coaches who have undertaken the course of training but not yet been assessed by these dates.
- *In Centres of Excellence by 1 August 2005
- Retention*
- To retain the award all coaches (including those awarded under APL) must complete one FA Youth Award Refresher Course for the appropriate age range within every three years beginning from 1 August 2004.
- APL*
- APL will be awarded to holders of The FA Advanced Coaching Licence Youth Option.
- Transfer of Age-Specific Qualification*
- Should any coach in future years wish to qualify at a different age group, he/she must complete the relevant age-specific modules.
- 4.6.2. *Minimum Full-Time Staff Required*
- One Director of Academy
 - One Assistant Director of Academy (8–16 years)
 - One Assistant Director of Academy (16–21 years)
 - One Academy doctor – not first team doctor unless full time
 - Two full-time Physiotherapist
 - One Education/Welfare Adviser (8–21 years)
- 4.6.3. *Technical Staff (either full or part time)*
- A maximum ratio of players to coach – 20:2. One coach may be an assistant working towards the required qualification.
 - All Academy goalkeepers should have access to specialist goalkeeping sessions for a minimum of 50% of the technical practice (see 4.3.1.)
 - Academy teams to be managed under the control of coaches working with the same children during the week.

4.7. Education and Welfare

- 4.7.1. Each Football Academy shall provide appropriate and adequate educational arrangements for its registered students at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary levels. Such arrangements shall be notified to, and approved by, The FA Premier League or Football League.
- 4.7.2. The Education and Welfare Officer to hold qualified Teacher status and experience of teaching in a Primary or Secondary School or a College of Further Education.
- 4.7.3. Commitment to screening, profiling, monitoring and recording key aspects of the players' physiological growth and development, as determined by The Association.
- 4.7.4. The interchange of research data and information between The Football Association and Academies and between Academies. This process will not compromise individual rights to confidentiality.
- 4.7.5. Adequate player insurance.

4.8. Developing Liaison and Links.

(These could be achieved through the Clubs' Football in the Community Scheme.)

- 4.8.1. Academies to include at least one Junior Football Centre providing regular small-sided football for a minimum of 100 non-registered players (under 10 years of age) under Charter Mark criteria.
- 4.8.2. Academies under Charter Mark guarantee to provide liaison with, and services for an agreed programme. A minimum of 100 Junior Schools, 10 Secondary Schools, 50 Junior Football Clubs.

4.9. Conduct

All staff and parents and players to commit themselves to and promote the Code of Conduct, as determined by The Association.

4.10. Administration

- All Registration and Player Profiles to be computerised
- All Academies to have e-mail and Internet link to The Football Association, FA Premier League (and Football League if applicable) at the site of the Academy.

4.11. Time-Scale Clubs intending to operate a Football Academy for the season 1999-00 must:

- Make application by February 1st 1999.
- Ensure all staffing arrangements are in place by August 1st 1999.
- A commitment to provide all the necessary facilities by August 1st 2001.
- Any club promoted to The FA Premier League, which has not previously applied to operate a Football Academy, must ensure that all staffing arrangements are in place by August 1st of the following year and that a commitment is made towards completing all facility requirements within two years of promotion to The FA Premier League.

4.12. Grievances

An agreed grievance procedure will be instituted.

4.13. All Football Academies are required to comply in full with the conditions of the 1989 Children's Act.

5. CRITERIA TO OPERATE A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Centre of Excellence Licences to be awarded by the Football League and FA Premier League in accordance with criteria laid down by The Football Association, to be renewed annually.

5.1. Age

- 5.1.1. Centres of Excellence may operate at any age level. They may specifically operate from Under 14 years to Under 16 years.
- 5.1.2. Clubs operating Centres of Excellence may not operate a Football Academy and are allowed only to register players on Centres of Excellence forms and the appropriate Football League form where necessary, to be eligible for Reserve and 1st Team Football with the exception of the Girls' Centres of Excellence.
- 5.1.3. A Club may only operate one Centre of Excellence. Clubs may seek permission from The Association to operate one satellite Centre to the main Centre (at any age) providing the following criteria are met:
- The overall number of registered players for the Centre as a whole does not exceed the stated number. (See 2.2. below.)
 - All other criteria regarding the establishment of a Centre of Excellence must be met at the satellite centre.
 - Preference to operate a satellite centre will be given to clubs with:
 - limited catchment areas (e.g. coastal clubs).
 - with particular travel problems (e.g. London).
 - wishing to operate a Centre of Excellence in an area poorly serviced by Centres of Excellence or Academies, i.e. players having difficulty in attending a Centre of Excellence or Football Academy within the travelling time.

5.2. Registration

- 5.2.1. Registration is to The FA Premier League or Football League on the Centres of Excellence form.
- 5.2.2. Centres of Excellence may register the following maximum numbers:
Under 9 – Under 12 – 40 players per year band
Under 13 – Under 14 – 30 players per year band
Under 15 – Under 16 – 20 players per year band
(Until the end of the 1999/2000 season, any players signed as an Associate Schoolboy are included in this number.)
- 5.2.3. Clubs must adhere to a one hour travelling time to the Centre for ages Under 9 years to Under 13. For age ranges Under 13 to Under 16, this is increased to 1.5 hours.
- 5.2.4. A six-week trial period is allowed for unregistered players from Under 9 to Under 16 years of age.
- 5.2.5. Trials are not permitted for registered players at other clubs operating Football Academies or Centres of Excellence.
- 5.2.6. Between Under 9 and Under 12 registration will be annual.
- 5.2.7. From the player's twelfth birthday, the player must sign for a minimum of two years.
- 5.2.8. From the player's fourteenth birthday, the player must sign until the end of the Under 16 season.
- 5.2.9. At any time, on or after the player's twelfth birthday, with the parents' consent, the club may extend the registration until the end of the Under 16 season.
- 5.2.10. After the player's fourteenth birthday, the club may offer the player a Scholarship for the Centre from 16–19 years with a two-year option until 21 years of age, held

by the club. Such offers to be mutually respected by all participating clubs and incorporated into FA Premier League and Football League rules.

- 5.2.11. Players to be informed in writing by the 3rd Saturday in April in the season where registration ceases whether they are to be retained or released.
- 5.2.12. A club may not approach, directly or indirectly, any player registered with another Centre of Excellence or Football Academy.
- 5.2.13. A player is not entitled to be coached by a club operating a Centre of Excellence or to participate in games, tours or tournaments, unless the player is signed on Centre of Excellence forms (or subject to a six week trial process).
- 5.2.14. Centres may de-register players by mutual consent any time after 12 years of age.
- 5.2.15. Centres are required to clearly outline the rules and guidelines concerning Centres with regard to: registration, welfare, educational needs, priority and objectives.

5.3. **Technical Requirements**

Centres of Excellence may coach young players on an unlimited number of occasions and be involved in Centres of Football. (See 7.)

5.4. **Facilities**

The following facilities are required:

- Adequate showers, bathing facilities.
- Separate treatment room.
- Rapid access to qualified medical expertise.
- Appropriate size of coaching area.

5.5. **Staff**

5.5.1. **General Requirements:**

All coaches registered and authorised to coach in Football Academies must by 1 August 2004* hold the appropriate qualification to coach at that level, i.e.

7–11 years:

FA Youth Coaches Award – Junior

12–16 years:

FA Youth Coaches Award – Schools

17–21 years:

FA Youth Coaches Award – Youth

A 12-month dispensation will be provided for those coaches who have undertaken the course of training but not yet been assessed by these dates.

*In Centres of Excellence by 1 August 2005

Retention

To retain the award all coaches (including those awarded under APL) must complete one FA Youth Award Refresher Course for the appropriate age range within every three years beginning from 1 August 2004.

APL

APL will be awarded to holders of The FA Advanced Coaching Licence Youth Option.

Transfer of Age-Specific Qualification

Should any coach in future years wish to qualify at a different age group, he/she must complete the relevant age-specific modules.

- 5.5.2. **Minimum Staff Required:**
- A Director of the Centre of Excellence
 - Coaches
- 5.5.3. **Technical Staff** (either full or part time)
- A maximum ratio of players to coach – 20:2. One coach may be an assistant working towards the required qualification.
 - All Centres of Excellence goalkeepers should have access to specialist goalkeeping sessions for a minimum of 50% of the technical practice. (See 3.1.)
 - Centre of Excellence teams to be managed under the control of the coaches working with the same children during the week.
- 5.6. 5.6.1. Adequate player insurance is required.
- 5.6.2. A simple written reporting system to be provided to players and parents, and head teachers whilst in full time education, as a minimum twice a year, regarding players' progress towards agreed goals, technical and academic.
- 5.7. Grievances An agreed grievance procedure will be instituted.
- 5.8. All Centres of Excellence are required to comply in full with the conditions of the 1989 Children's Act.
- 5.9. **Centres Football**
- 5.9.1. Players will be licensed in the categories as outlined below:
- There will be three categories for all young players. (See below.) Players registered with Centres of Excellence will play in Categories A and B only.
- Players NOT registered with a Centre of Excellence will play in Categories Band C only.
- Where insufficient football games are provided in Categories A or B a player may be released to play in Category C football. He may only do so with the written permission of the Director of the Centre of Excellence with which he is registered.
- It will be the responsibility of the Director of the Centre of Excellence to monitor, consult and control the type and number of games in which the player takes part.
- | Category | TYPE OF FOOTBALL |
|----------|--|
| A | International Football
Professional Football Clubs
Junior and Youth Teams
Centres Football and Coaching |
| B | All Schools Football |
| C | Local Youth Leagues
Community Football Activities |
- 5.9.2. **Priority List**
- 5.9.2.1. International Matches
- 5.9.2.2. Preparation for International Matches
- 5.9.2.3. Trials for selection of Squads for International Matches
- 5.9.2.4. FA Programme for Excellence Age Group Development Courses
- 5.9.2.5. The total number of games which outstanding young players play, must be reduced to a maximum of 60 games, including international games and preparation and trials for those games.

5.9.3. Avoidance of Conflict

It is hoped that conflict will be avoided between Schools' Football and Centres Football.

It is recognised that the prime objective in the Programme for Excellence is to give more time for coaching talented young players and for those talented young players to play in coached games against other talented players. It is, however, recognised that in the early part of the season, September and early October, and the late part of the season, late February and March, priority will be given to Schools' Football should there be a clash between Centres of Excellence coaching and Schools' matches.

Players registered in The Football Association Programme for Excellence in the Under 16 age group should be released to participate in County Under 16 representative competitions. There will be no more than six matches per season, which will be extra to The FA Centres Football and Schools Football allocation as shown above.

County Football Associations will inform, in writing, the Centre of Excellence with which the player is registered no less than 14 days prior to the match. Representatives of the County Football Association will be advised of the dates on which no FA Centres Football Fixtures are to be arranged in each region and will be invited to a meeting of the "cluster" of Centres of Excellence with the Monitor and Regional Director.

County Football Associations will endeavour to move to a common fixture calendar to be coordinated with The FA Centres Football Fixtures as organised by The Football Association. All efforts will be made to avoid any clash of fixtures.

5.9.4. Matches to be played between

- Football League Clubs
- E.S.F.A. Schools' Associations

Centres of Excellence may play up to twenty-five matches per season.

- 5.9.5 (i) Players must be registered in the respective age groups within the Football League.
- (ii) Clubs must not include boys who are registered with any other club's Centre of Excellence or Football Academy. Clubs wishing to include "trialists" may only do so by:
- giving 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)
 - this procedure will require clubs to "clear" the player seven days in advance.
- (iii) Players, including registered players and trialists, must only play one match in one day. Clubs may include no more than two players from one junior team and no more than four in total on a trial basis in each match. The normal trial period shall be regarded as four matches after which players should either become signed to the club or released.
- It will be in order for players to be combined in consecutive age groups to play against teams of a similar nature. A fixture list will be compiled by the Football League and forwarded to The Football Association and The English Schools' Football Association.

Any matches subsequently re-arranged should be similarly notified.

- 5.9.6. Directors of Centres of Excellence are only allowed and encouraged to develop games in the Under 12 age range as small-sided game rules as specified by The Football Association.
It is expected that in the 13–16 age groups games will be 11v11.
- 5.9.7. Members of staff responsible for the work at Centres of Excellence should in the main be those who are conducting Centres Football with the players.
It is expected that those conducting Centres Football on behalf of both professional clubs and Centres of Excellence will be qualified as outlined by The Football Association.
- 5.9.8. Matches
- (a) to be organised as coached games and to be played in three periods
 - (b) the host club to be responsible for appointing qualified match officials
 - (c) a qualified First Aider to be in attendance
 - (d) to have unlimited substitutions
 - (e) to allow players to return to the pitch after having been substituted
 - (f) to have footballs and pitches of appropriate size
 - (g) to have no results published
 - (h) to be played on a “friendly” basis, i.e. no competitions.
- 5.9.9. Information to be kept by each club
- details of each match played
 - date
 - venue
 - names of all participating players
- 5.9.10. It will be permissible for Centres of Excellence to play against each other:
- Age Group 9/10/11/12 (small-sided games)
 - Age Group 13/14/15/16 (11v11 games)
- All games to be conducted under the criteria as outlined above and within the Rules and Regulations for the Programme for Excellence.
- 5.9.11. Players who are cautioned or dismissed from the field of play will be reported directly to The Football Association.