



ENGLAND
FOOTBALL

Coaching 7-11 year olds



**YOUTH
LEAGUE**



Supporting our diverse grassroots
coaching community



@EssexCountyFA



EssexFootball



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www.essexfa.com

Introductions from the League

- **Mike Jackson**
 - Co-Chairman
- **Laurence Bough**
 - League Secretary
- **James Harrington**
 - U7 Secretary/Festival Co-Ordinator
- **Caroline McLaren**
 - League Admin Officer



Why are you involved?

**What do you want the
children to experience this
season?**

**What do you already do to
help?**

What could be better?

Primary age player snapshot

Motivated but
easily distracted

Love to
play

Limited attention
span

Dependent on
adults



Limited spatial
awareness

Curious &
imaginative

Like to try
something new

Lack understanding
of time

Coaching behaviours

Listen

Use simple
language

Use 'match like'
activities

Keep it simple!



Give lots of
praise

Be patient

Provide
variety

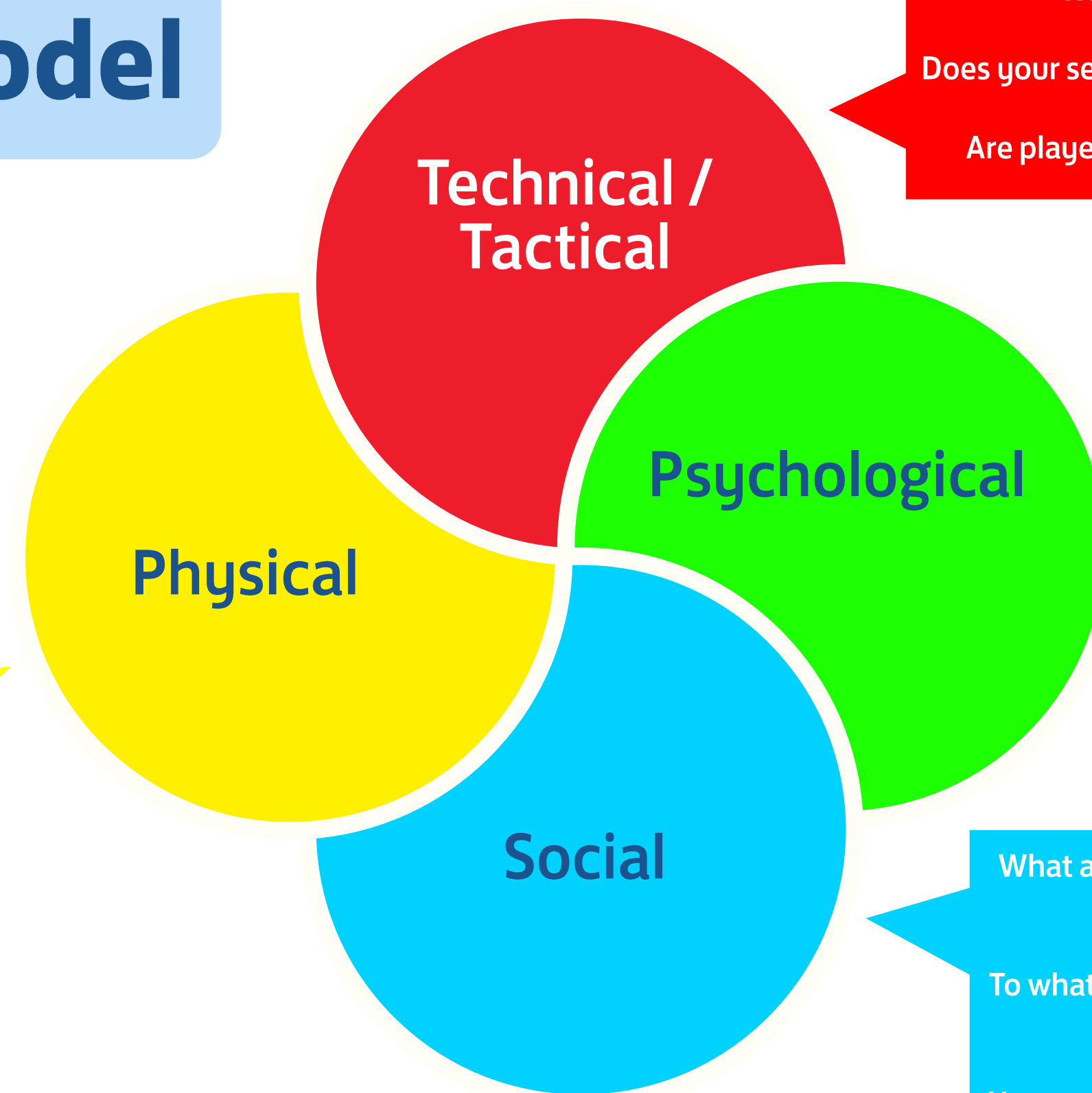
Talk to the
players, not at
them

4 Corner Model

What stage of the season are you working at?

What time of day is your session?

What else is happening in the players lives which may affect them?



What are the technical abilities of your players?
Which areas do they need to develop?

Does your session allow for various levels of development?

Are players aware of their own development needs?

How do your players work in varying levels of pressure?

What are the confidence levels of your players? Who needs most support with this?

What has happened recently in the players lives which may impact their psychological state?

What are the relationships and friendships like within your team?

To what extent do your sessions look to develop connections within your team?

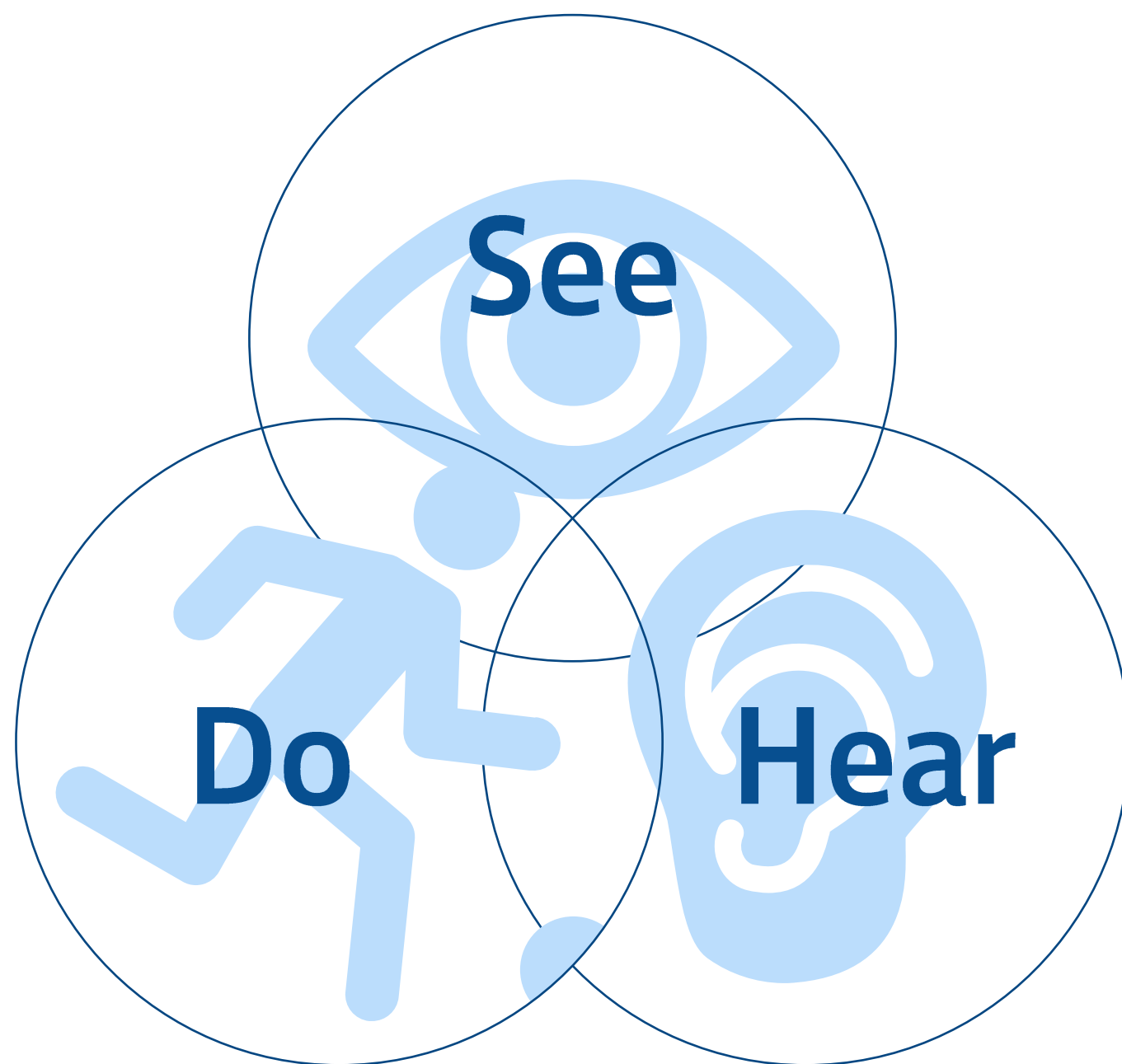
How much ownership do players have over their own development?



COACHES

Helping players understand...

Communication



COVERING ALL SENSES...
What about read?

CONSIDER ALL INTERVENTIONS...

Show

Ask

Task

Tell

Do

Coach challenges...

Support the player
whilst the practice runs
(coach without
stopping the practice)

Adapt the
practice/task to
provide greater links to
the theme for the
player/session

Link one player task to
another player task

Players to set up part
or all the practice
(release ownership)

Up to 15 seconds to tell
the player what you
want them to do

2 minutes to ask
questions – have the
player speaking more
than you

Establish a problem to
solve; don't provide a
solution

Observe the player(s)
in action. Say nothing –
note your
observations.

Positive and respectful interactions are the foundation of a **positive matchday experience...**





What do you currently do
to support positive
behaviours?

What are the consequences of negative behaviours...



LEARNING



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SAFETY

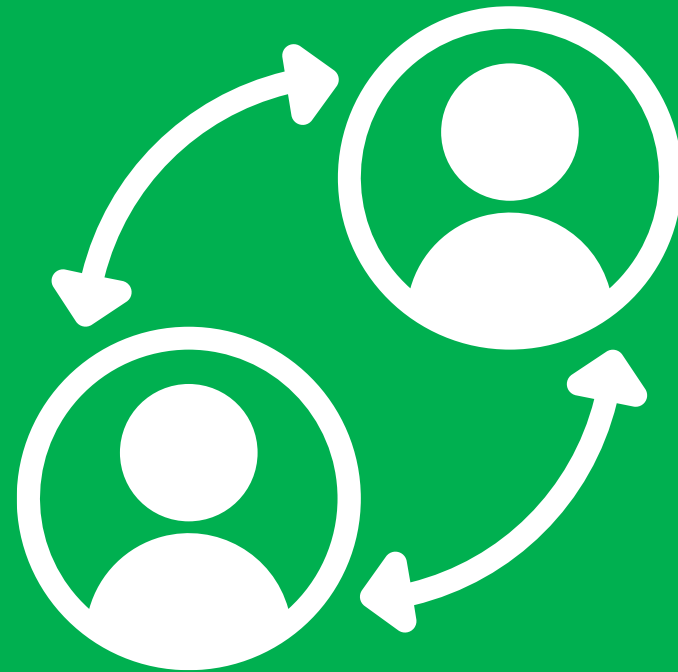


RESPECT

What are the benefits of positive behaviours...



LEARNING



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SAFETY



RESPECT



BCFA Festivals

James Harrington – U7 Fixture Secretary

Season Key Dates



- Festivals start Saturday 4th October
- No matches on half term Saturdays
 - 25th Oct & 1st Nov
 - 20th & 27th Dec
 - 14th & 21st Feb
 - 28th Mar & 4th Apr
- Season End 16th May 2026
- U7 Season: Two formats –
 - Festivals (x3 short 15min matches) – BCFA League Festival Website
 - 1v1 (single 40 min match) – F.A. Full Time

Why Festivals?



- Our aim via the Festival format is to provide 6-year-olds with an initial positive football experience via short 15-minute matches. Facilitating players to feel good about their football, building confidence, focusing on development and encouragement
- Matching teams football levels is critical to support above, large scorelines destroys confidence etc. The start of U7 football has no real relative understanding of football levels to avoid mismatching teams
- Festival format helps minimise those negative experiences: The short matches minimises heavy defeats that adversely impact young players...., loose one...but then win one, draw one
- Helps us quickly understand the teams relative football levels going forward, and set divisions for 1v1 formats

Season Start



- Three Festival divisions – North, Central, South
 - The divisions have no reference to geographical location
 - Clubs Secretaries upon application to the league have rated your team's strength on a scale 1-8
 - Teams will be placed into the above divisions based on that rating
 - Festivals will be arranged between teams within a division
 - The divisions are not fixed; you can be moved at anytime based on Festival results
 - Thus, to accommodate that level of flexibility to move teams based on results, fixtures are only issued a week in advance. Fixtures are issued on the Monday for the match on Saturday
- Your weekly result submission is thus mandatory - Results to be sent in by latest Sunday after the match via the league website!

Booking a Festival

- There is not a traditional fixture schedule, Festivals are issued on a weekly basis
- Flexibility - You decide when you want to play, and you tell us by booking a Festival via the league website
 - Some teams want to play every week
 - Some teams Bi-weekly
 - Some as and when
- You will be issued a login ID for your team to book a Festival for your team
 - You can book up to 10 days in advance for any given Saturday
 - **Cut off Sunday** to book a Festival for the following Saturday
 - Festivals will then be issued by COB Monday – **Do not chase me!!**
 - Late bookings will only be considered if I have gaps to fill, first come first serve
 - **No Results – No Festival.** Website will not let you book a Festival if you have outstanding results. You may have already booked a Festival, but if no result from Saturday, I will not issue a Festival

Festival Format

- Default Festival consists of 4 teams, with one team hosting providing two pitches to enable matches to be played simultaneously. Teams playing 3 x 15min matches. Host to decide order of play.
- When booking your Festival, you have the option play away or offer to host, confirming the number of pitches and KO time.
- If you offer to host this does not mean you will be given a hosting fixture
- Wetter winter months, grounds with good drainage and astroturf surfaces become important to ensure boys play football and to minimise cancellations
- If the number of teams requiring matches on a given Saturday is not devisable by 4, then I need to deviate from the default 4 team Festival to ensure everyone plays on the day
 - 3 and 5 team Festival – unfortunately a team needs to sit out/train
 - This is where I will consider a late booking after the Sunday cut off to balance the Festival, so no one has to sit out
 - 1 v 1 match – adjust match time!

Match Play



- Please provide positive support and encouragement to the players v the loud bellowing across the pitch – young players find this intimidating
- Mismatch of team levels: Powerplay, team challenges, player challenges – please drop me a note to say that you used this.
- Retreat to half-way line: Please ensure teams are retreating prior to start of play
 - League encourages to adopt this when the goal-keeper has the ball in the hands (but please agree prior to start of match)
- No throw in's (from a static ball either dribble on or pass, player cannot score directly from the kick without touching another player), no heading of the ball



Festival Website

[BCFA](#)

Transition to 1v1 Matches



- Timing of transition - TBD

Key Differences:

- FA Full Time system to be used for fixtures, new divisions created based on results e.g. 3-4 divisions will be created from the Central Festival division
- You do not need to book fixtures & you are required to play each week
- Fixtures are issued in advance in blocks, then a review to see if changes are required based on results. Typically, I will not make changes until the block of fixtures have been completed
- 1v1 matches 40 mins duration
- Results submission is mandatory; Full Time will send a SMS Saturday morning, and you reply to the text with the result



BCFA Ethos & Principles

- Children First
- Respect for all
- Expect good/outstanding behaviour from all:
Players, Coaches, Spectators, Opposition
- **Don't ever tolerate bad behaviour, challenge it/report it - BCFA website incident report**
- No SMASHINGS, think about a variety of modifiers
- Matches should be about Friends coming together
- Responsible for the whole environment - all of the players on BOTH teams, plus parents/spectators and coaches, be inclusive

MATCHDAY ENVIRONMENT PACK





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SAFETY

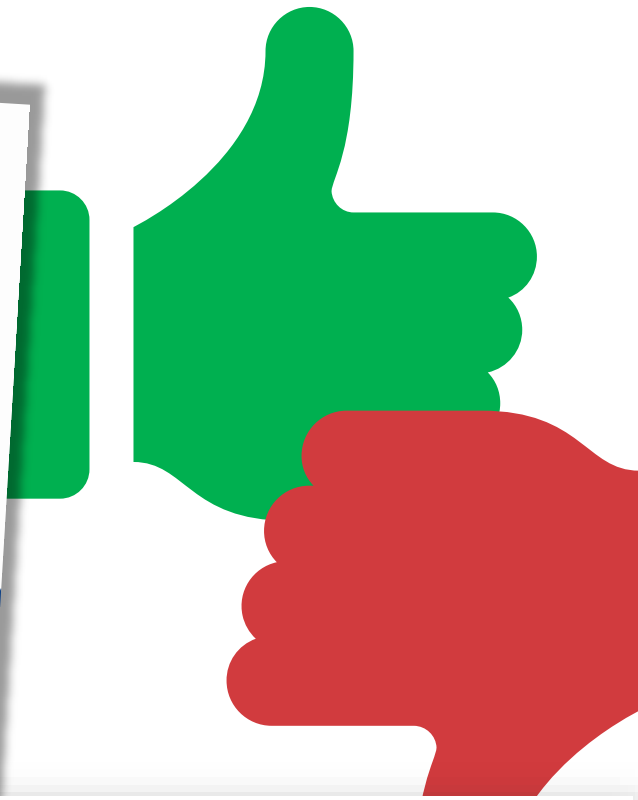


RESPECT

THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF MATCHDAY BEHAVIOUR FOR COACHES



...towards COACHES ENGAGE and greet opposition coaches as you would wish to be treated, before, during and after a match Role model positive touchline behaviours in a calm, RESPECTFUL and professional manner	Do not ENGAGE in DISRESPECTFUL and unprofessional touchline behaviour with opposition coaches
...towards CLUBS RESPECT the opposition, and the badge and values of your own club Ensure the SAFETY of all through pitch and equipment inspections, and the use of RESPECT barriers and technical areas	Do not DISRESPECT the other teams coaches, players or staff, report any concerns through the official channels Do not affect the SAFETY of others by entering the pitch or other areas without reasonable judgement or permission
...towards PLAYERS ENGAGE players through meeting their needs first Allow players equal opportunities to LEARN RESPECT players by being clear, consistent and caring with your behaviours Use simple, relevant and appropriate language to help players LEARN	Do not DISENGAGE players using negative or intimidating language Do not create an UNSAFE and uncertain psychological environment through the use of inconsistent behaviour
...towards SPECTATORS ENGAGE parents in the LEARNING outcomes before the match Remind spectators of their obligations to be RESPECTFUL before, during and after the match	Do not DISRESPECT referees through negative or intimidating behaviours Do not create an UNSAFE environment for referees by allowing poor behaviours from your own members to go unchallenged
...towards REFEREES ENGAGE referees through meeting, greeting and thanking Inform the referee if your players need more support with LEARNING the laws of the game	Do not allow spectators to create an UNSAFE and DISRESPECTFUL environment by allowing poor behaviour from the sidelines





LEARNING

FA Coaching Pathway

Visit englandfootball.com

Play Phase



Playmaker



Introduction to
Coaching
Football



UEFA C License



UEFA B License

Additional Courses:

Goalkeeping
Futsal
Medical
Disability
Talent ID

Safeguarding
Children
Course

Introduction
to First Aid
in Football

England Accredited Clubs:
Minimum of one
coach/manager per team to
also hold Introduction to
Coaching Football Course and
Introduction to First Aid in
Football Course



Safeguarding

Visit essexfa.com/safeguarding-and-welfare

Youth Football requirements:

Enhanced FA DBS

FA Safeguarding
Children Course



Open Age Football requirements:

FA Player Welfare in Open Age Football
(+ Enhanced FA DBS if working with U18's)

Essex County FA Safeguarding

Department contacts

Helen Hever

Safeguarding Manager
helen.hever@essexfa.com
01245 393098

Jasmine Henry

Deputy Safeguarding Officer
Jasmine.Henry@essexfa.com
01245 393093



Coaches

Visit essexfa.com/coaches



Workshops with
Essex FA

Club Coach
Development



League Coach
Development

Half-Time Club



Email us coaching@essexfa.com

Don't Hesitate... Escalate!

The FA's Whistleblowing Policy



If you have reported a safeguarding concern about a child or young person and are dissatisfied with the manner in which the concern has been handled, there are a number of organisations you can (and should) escalate the concern to.

Within Football:

Club Welfare Officer

Check your club website, ask your coach or committee members

TOP TIP: Know who your CWO is and have their contact details!

League Welfare Officer

Check your league's website or ask their committee members

Essex County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) & Child Welfare Officer (CWO)

Helen Hever, helen.hever@essexfa.com, (01245) 393098

The FA's Safeguarding Team

safeguarding@thefa.com

External to Football:

Local Authority Designated Safeguarding Officer

Check your local authority website

The NSPCC

(0800) 800 5000
help@nspcc.org.uk

The Police

Non-Emergency: 101
Emergency: 999



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Thanks for attending!