



Leighton United Football Club

PLAYING POLICY

Player Recruitment

- The club implements open recruitment where the recruitment base is all parts of the local community.
- There are numerous ways in which potential players could be attracted to the club. These may include open days, pre-season trials, mini-soccer centres, tournaments, advertising, parent/carer networking etc.
- All recruits who want to sign up will be asked to complete a player registration form and to comply with the player code of conduct. The club will maintain a register of current players on the Football Association (FA) Whole Game System.
- New teams will be established when there is sufficient demand.
- Pitch capacity/availability at the club's premises and off-site and coach availability may limit recruitment.
- Coaches/team managers should inform parents/carers face to face if a player will not be recruited or is no longer to be part of a team squad. This should not be done via electronic communications (including email and social networking).

Playing Fees

- Playing fees will be determined in accordance with club rules and detailed in the Playing Fees Policy, which will be reviewed annually.

Playing

- Player competing for the club must be registered with the FA and in compliance with the relevant league or competition rules.
- Any coach/team manager who knowingly plays an unregistered player risks disciplinary action being taken.
- Players booked should be promptly substituted, provided that substitutes are available.
- Substituting substitutes should not happen, unless due to injury.
- Only team captains should speak with match officials.

Player Discipline

- Players will be required to comply with the club's Code of Conduct for Players and FA Rules at all times.
- Disciplinary fines will be picked up by the Club Secretary (e.g. via the FA Whole Game System), settled by the club (to reduce the risk of being surcharged and/or the player and the team being suspended for late payment) and the relevant coach/team manager then asked to retrieve payment from the player's parents/carers or from the individual concerned.
- Failure to settle disciplinary fines risks the player being suspended from future matches until the debt is settled. Coaches/team managers will be advised in writing (email) by the Club Secretary of the starting date and duration of a suspension.
- The use of foul or abusive language is prohibited at all times when a player is representing the club.

Playing Time

- In accordance with FA rules as stated in The FA Handbook, maximum player playing time per day for **competition matches** should be:
Under 7 and Under 8 – 40 minutes
Under 9 and Under 10 – 60 minutes
Under 11 and Under 12 – 80 minutes
Under 13, Under 14, Under 15 and Under 16 – 100 minutes
Under 17 and Under 18 – 120 minutes

'Competition' includes leagues.
- In accordance with FA rules as stated in The FA Handbook, maximum competition match duration should be:
Under 7 and Under 8 – 40 minutes
Under 9 and Under 10 – 50 minutes
Under 11 and Under 12 – 60 minutes
Under 13 and Under 14 – 70 minutes
Under 15 and Under 16 – 80 minutes
Under 17 and Under 18 – 90 minutes
- In accordance with FA rules as stated in The FA Handbook, maximum player playing time per day for **tournaments, trophy events and festivals** should be:
Under 7 and Under 8 – 60 minutes
Under 9 and Under 10 – 90 minutes
Under 11 and Under 12 – 120 minutes
Under 13, Under 14, Under 15 and Under 16 – 150 minutes
Under 17 and Under 18 – 180 minutes

Minimum Number of Players for a Competition Match

- In accordance with FA rules as stated in The FA Handbook, the minimum number of players that constitute a team for a competition match are:

5x5 – 4
7x7 – 5
9x9 – 6
11x11 - 7

Squad Sizes

- In accordance with FA guidance, squad sizes should not be more than double the team size, e.g. not more than 10 for 5 aside, 14 for 7 aside, 18 for 9 aside and 22 for 11 aside.

Club Colours and Shirt Numbers

- All teams will have the same colour playing kit.
- In accordance with FA rules as stated in The FA Handbook, no team or player, including goalkeepers, will be permitted to wear black or very dark shirts.
- Goalkeepers must wear colours which distinguish them from all other players and match officials.
- Shirt numbering should be in line with the number of players in the squad, i.e. no random numbering.

Playing Kit

- All playing kit (that used for matches) remains the property of the club and must be returned at the end of every football season, unless kept for the following season. The annual playing fee only covers the use of the kit during that season – it does not infer player ownership of playing kit.
- In accordance with FA rules the wearing of protective shinpads or guards, whether at training or matches **is compulsory. No player will be allowed to participate without them.**
- Playing kit will be managed by the Kit Manager. New kit will be issued as and when deemed to be required, when existing kit is life expired or is no longer fit for purpose, i.e. it will not be renewed at prescribed frequencies.

First Aid

- A FA certified first aider must be present on all club team footballing occasions.

- The coach/team manager (as an FA certificated trained first-aider) has responsibility to attend to any injury incurred during training or a match.
- If an injury occurs, then the coach/team manager must treat the situation as a priority with the informing of parents/carers secondary. If hospital treatment is required, an official of the team or the club will travel with the player. In this event, an incident/accident report form must be promptly completed in accordance with the club's accident management policy and submitted to the Club Secretary.
- If a player is suspected of having concussion following an injury, they must be immediately removed from play or training and not return to play that day. The FA's concussion guidelines must be followed.
- The coach/team manager is responsible for the upkeep of the team's first-aid kit.
- There is a defibrillator at the club's premises. Coaches/team managers should familiarize themselves with how to use it.

Matches And Training Sessions

- The club accepts full responsibility for players during official club footballing activities.
- It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that players are taken to venues and collected in accordance with the timetable set by the coach/team manager.
- Players should arrive ready changed in football kit, unless informed otherwise by the coach/team manager.
- All club matches and training sessions must be supervised by a coach/team manager with a FA coaching qualification. If one is not available for any reason, then the coach/team manager should cancel the match or training session.
- Good timekeeping is essential. Players/parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that timings set by coaches/team managers are met. Failure to do so may result in a player not being selected for a particular match.
- Players/parents/carers are responsible for notifying the coach/team manager as soon as possible if a player is not available for training or a match. Failure to do so may result in the player not being selected.
- The coach/team manager is responsible for team selection and team organisation. This includes coaching practices.
- In the event of insufficient pitch capacity at the club's premises, some older age group teams may be asked and be prepared to play some home games off-site as determined by the club. Whenever possible alternative venues will be arranged by the club.

- Friendly matches must not be arranged that would coincide with club events relevant to the team.
- Participation in football festivals, tournaments and tours in the club's name organized by other organisations may only be undertaken with the prior approval of the club (via the Head Coach, Club Secretary, Events Manager or Chair). Not doing so could have insurance implications.

Respect Pitch Barriers

- To comply with FA requirements, a Respect barrier must extend the full length of the pitch on the side where spectators are present.
- Coaches/team managers, team helpers and substitute players should be on the opposite side of the pitch.
- No spectators should be stood behind goals.

Travel to Matches and Training

- The FA say lift sharing is fine when it's a private arrangement between parents/carers, but coaches/team managers should not be travelling alone in a car with children who are not their own. This is to safeguard the children and protect the coach or team manager from allegations.
- If a club coach or team manager asks a parent to give a lift to another player, that driver will become a "club official" and will need an FA DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) criminal records check and appropriate insurance. All car-sharing arrangements should therefore be private arrangement between parents/carers and not organised by the club.

Insurance

- The club take out public liability and professional indemnity insurance cover via the County FA by being an affiliated member of the FA.
- Insurance cover coincides with club FA affiliation and runs until 30 June annually. If reaffiliation is delayed beyond 1 July then cover will not recommence until the affiliation date so there is a risk that club footballing activities in the meantime may not be insured. Coaches/team managers should check with the Club Secretary.
- **Friendly matches:** The insurers say that friendly matches are covered provided they are sanctioned by the County FA. Matches are automatically sanctioned if both clubs have current FA affiliation. Coaches/team managers should contact the Club Secretary who will in turn contact the County FA if friendly matches against non-affiliated clubs are planned.
- The club accepts absolutely no responsibility for incidents that are not directly related to official club footballing activities.

Financial Commitments

- No financial commitment, i.e. hiring or booking of venues, booking of tournament and festival participation, transport etc. in the club's name where it is expected the club will pay should be made until approval by the club has been obtained via the Treasurer.