



# **COACH HANDBOOK**

## **LOVES FOOTBALL**

# Private & Confidential

It's important that you treat this document as Private & Confidential - i.e. it's for your eyes only!

This means you are not to print it, show it to anyone or forward it on

## Before we get stuck in...

Second important announcement...

This document is not a stick to beat you with!

On a personal level, I am committed to supporting you to become the best coach you can possibly be.

On a business level I am committed to ensuring Loves Football becomes the No 1 choice of football coaching for parents in Birmingham.

Trust me when I say I have made loads of mistakes, and everything in here helps you steer clear of making the same mistakes.

I promise!

**James**

# THE START



# Where it all began...

I have two sons - Aidan and Niall.

Niall (my youngest son) started at 6 years old with his friends from school, and has been with them ever since.

I manage the team and from a very early stage, my priority was to provide somewhere for him to make friends and enjoy his football.

That was genuinely the height of my ambitions.

Niall has has a really positive grassroots experience: loads of game-time, top scorer for most of the years he's played, won a few trophies, has all his friends in the team, and (although he doesn't know it) Aston Villa have scouted him a few times.

Crucially, as a management team we always prioritised development and fun over results.

Aidan has had a **completely different experience.**

(Verbally) abusive coaches and parents, in-team bullying, and played for teams who were totally focused on results which meant lots of time on the bench for him.

He was falling out of love with football and ready to walk away from the sport. But, crucially, he was only falling out of love with this experience of Football - not Football itself.

**So I thought there must be lots of kids who love Football but don't like all the the drama and nonsense of grassroots football. And so, Loves Football was born!**

# PHILOSOPHY, PRIORITIES, IMPORTANCE



# Philosophy

To create a fun, confidence-building environment where kids can make friends and develop their football skills.

## Our Priorities (in order)

- Safety & Safeguarding
- Fun
- Health
- Technical development

## Why is this important to you?

**"People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it"**  
**Simon Sinek**

(Check Simon out on Youtube, he is a very bright man)

90% of people check out a business before they buy from them.

This means that most people who book their children into our sessions have the same philosophy we have.

This is the differentiator between ourselves and other academy-style football companies. They sell a **solution** (i.e, "we'll get your child into academies"), we believe in a **philosophy**.

If you don't buy into or follow our philosophy then you are failing your customers.

**Less customers = less opportunities for you**

# SAFETY



# Understanding negligence

Loves Football hold personal and business insurances.

However no insurance policy will be valid in the event of negligence

You are expected to perform safety and safeguarding checks before every session.

By not doing so, in the eyes of the law, you are operating negligently.

## Safety, first

### Your safety check before every session:

- Unstable goals
- Damaged nets
- Spillages in and around the playing area
- Hazards and sharps in and around the playing area
- Equipment / objects in and around the playing area
- Well-stocked First Aid kit

### What to do:

1. Keep kids off the pitch / out of the hall
2. Explain the delay to parents
3. Remove the hazard
4. Adjust the session accordingly (usually, this means dropping the skills part of the session)
5. Report it on the Google Drive

# SAFEGUARDING



# Safeguarding

**"Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm." NSPCC**

According to the NSPCC, Safeguarding means:

- protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to children's health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

## **Warning signs - what to look for:**

- unexplained changes in behaviour or personality
- becoming withdrawn
- seeming anxious
- becoming uncharacteristically aggressive
- lacks social skills and has few friends, if any
- poor bond or relationship with a parent
- knowledge of adult issues inappropriate for their age
- running away or going missing
- always choosing to wear clothes which cover their body.

# Safeguarding - your responsibilities

The welfare of children is our number 1 priority; you can help by:

- Always taking the register
- Recognising the warning signs in child behaviour
- Escalating safeguarding concerns appropriately
- Ensuring children do not leave the pitch, hall or building without a parent / family member

## **If you have any concerns about player welfare:**

It is vital that you DO NOT SPEAK to the person(s) you believe to be the potential cause of the child welfare issue. This could be a Parent, Guardian, Family member or Coach

### **You must:**

- Speak to your Manager and...
- Complete the safeguarding form on your coach page - [www.lovesfootball.com/coachcentral](http://www.lovesfootball.com/coachcentral)

### **Or...**

- contact Childline on 0800 1111 or [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk)
- contact NSPCC on 0808 800 5000 or [nspcc.org.uk](http://nspcc.org.uk)
- contact the Police on 999 (if you are concerned about their immediate safety)

Remember: you could be the most important person in the child's life

No action, is an action in itself

**IF IN DOUBT, CALL IT OUT**

# Safeguarding Policy

## LOVES FOOTBALL FOOTBALL CLUB SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY

### 1. LOVES FOOTBALL

Football Club acknowledges its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of every child and young person and is committed to providing a safe environment for all. We recognise that a child is anyone under the age of 18 and subscribe to The Football Association's (The FA) Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.

### LOVES FOOTBALL

Football Club endorses and adopts the following key safeguarding principles:

- the child's welfare is, and must always be, the paramount consideration;
- all children and young people have a right to be protected from abuse regardless of their; age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marital status or civil partnership, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or belief, ability or disability, pregnancy and maternity;
- all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately; and
- working in partnership with other organisations, children and young people and their parents/carers is essential. We acknowledge that every child or young person who plays or participates in football should be able to take part in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from poor practice and abuse.

### LOVES FOOTBALL

Football Club recognises that this is the responsibility of every adult involved in our club.

### 2. LOVES FOOTBALL

Football Club has a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional harm and from neglect or bullying. It is noted and accepted that The FA's Safeguarding Children Regulations (see The FA Handbook [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules/fa-handbook](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/lawsandrules/fa-handbook)) apply to everyone in football whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, including coaches/managers, volunteers, match officials, helpers on club tours, or medical staff or other club officials/helpers.

### 3. We endorse and adopt The FA's Safer Recruitment guidelines and we will:

- Specify what the role is and what tasks it involves;
- Request identification documents;
- As a minimum meet and chat with the applicant(s) and where possible interview people before appointing them;
- Ask for and follow up with two references before appointing someone; and
- Where eligible require an FA-accepted DBS enhanced with barred list Check, in line with The FA's current Safeguarding Children Policy and Regulations.

### All current LOVES FOOTBALL

Football Club members working in eligible roles with children and young people, such as coaches/managers and physiotherapists, are required to hold an in-date FA accepted DBS enhanced with barred list check as part of safer recruitment practice.

# CODE OF CONDUCT



# Code of Conduct

## Safety & Safeguarding

- We prioritise Safety & Safeguarding above everything else
- We believe Safety & Safeguarding are everyone's responsibility

## Organisation

- We arrive on time
- We follow a structured training programme
- Our sessions are structured and run to time
- We read and reply to internal messages

## Parents

- We are warm and friendly to parents
- We listen to feedback and show empathy

## Coaching

- We're firm in our belief that we are an 'experience' business
- We're as excited to see the kids as they are to see us
- We use kids' first names
- We give clear, simple instructions
- We follow a Tell > Show > Demonstrate > Do approach to explaining sessions
- Our coaching sessions have intensity and are time-pressured and target-driven
- We are positive, vocal, energetic and expressive
- We believe kids should be active and have a ball as much as possible in our sessions
- We believe in small-sided games where kids get as many touches of the ball as possible
- We review every session with kids
- We believe in continued development for kids

## Self-development

- We're committed to continuous professional development

# SKILLS & GRADING



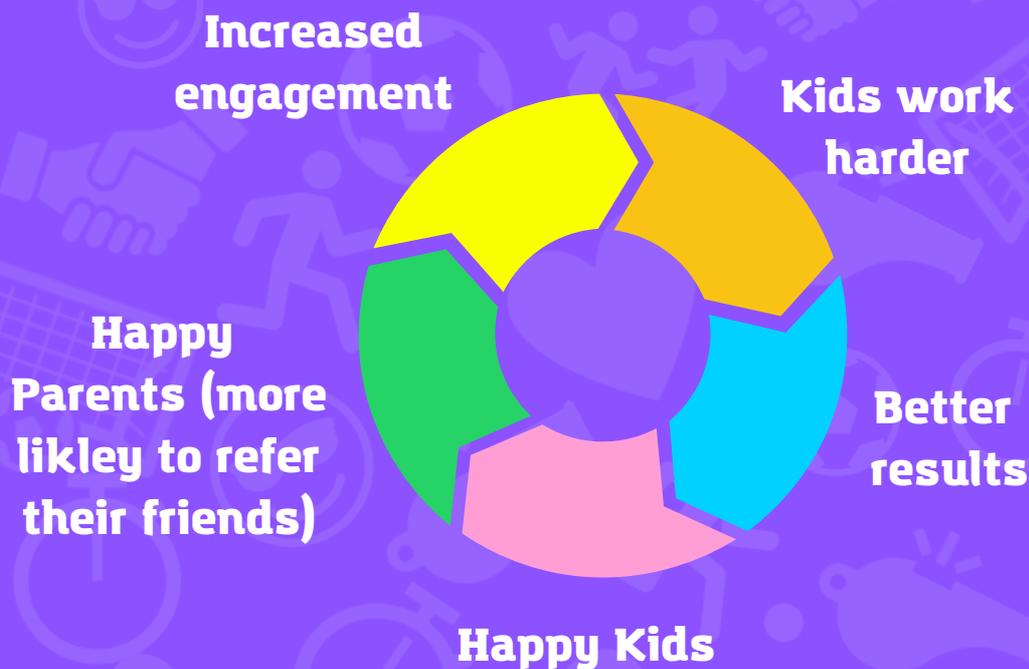
# Skills Programme & Grading System

To remain a successful business, we need to improve our retention strategy.

Retention rates increase when children are truly engaged in our sessions, and also when parents see their kids are developing.

Our grading system is CRUCIAL to ensuring that kids in the same age group develop at their own pace and don't feel left behind!

When kids have a target to work towards, and a reward at the end of it, they become more engaged in what they are doing.



**Why is this important to YOU?**

**The more kids we have in our sessions... the more opportunities, salary rises, and professional development I can provide you with.**



# Skills Programme - Achievement Book

## What happens next?

I will be giving 'Achievement Books' to all the kids in our groups so they can head off to YouTube to start practising...

N.B. Initially, I'll choose 1 or 2 groups and then roll it out to other groups once I have understood and overcome any teething problems.

**Kids!**

- 1 Check out our Grading Videos  
[youtube.com/homefootballcoaching](https://youtube.com/homefootballcoaching)
- 2 Start with the 'Core' Playlist and work your way up!
- 3 When it gets difficult, that's the 'Grade level' you need to work to :)
- 4 Write the colour level on the front of this book, and add the skills inside :)
- 5 Understand what the 'Footballs' mean (below)
- 6 Get training :)

**KEEP WORKING :)**

- Needs work - keep going :)
- Almost ready for Grading!

**PASS :)**

- Nailed it in the Grading session
- Smashed it in matches!!!

**parents!** Make sure you head to the link below so you understand how this works!  
[www.lovesfootball.com/grading](https://www.lovesfootball.com/grading)

[www.lovesfootball.com](https://www.lovesfootball.com)  
@lovesfootball.com

**LOVES FOOTBALL**  
EST. 2019

**this Achievement BOOK belongs to:**

YOUR NAME

GRADING LEVEL

# Skills Programme - Achievement Book

## Kids take ownership

Hopefully, kids will engage straight away, start working through their skills, figure out which level they are struggling with and jot it down in their Achievement Book.

## Understanding the colours

It's important we are honest with children and parents - the last thing we want is kids not passing on Grading Day.

**RED** - "Needs Work" - the child is currently not at the level required to pass Grading Day and is also unlikely to pass within 6 weeks. You should recommend (to the parent) they skip the next Grading Day and try again next term.

**ORANGE** - "Almost Ready" - the child is currently at the required standard, or you are very confident they will pass on Grading Day.

**GREEN** - "Passed" - the child has comfortably passed all targets set

**BLACK** - "Match ready" - you have consistently seen the child successfully perform the skill during a match. This is an automatic pass and they will not need to perform it during Grading Day

## KEEPY UPPY TARGET -

We don't measure this during the grading session. This is an 'honesty assessment' and kids will measure themselves at home. They can pass this at any time.

The image shows a sample page from the 'Skills Programme - Achievement Book'. It features a grid of skill assessment rows. Each row has 'Skill:' and 'Coach notes:' labels. To the right of each row are four colored circles representing achievement levels: Red, Orange, Green, and Black. The bottom right corner features a yellow sun icon and the text 'your keepy uppy target' with a note '(N.B. This is only for Yellows and above.)'

# Grading Process - grading sessions

We aim to run three Grading Days each year at the end of each term, with a 'Soft Grading' period towards the end of each half-term

As mentioned, we don't want any kids to fail Grading Day, so we need to let them know before how likely they are to pass BEFORE they go to grading. We do this during 'Soft Grading' sessions.

## What does 'Soft Grading' mean?

The 'Soft Grading' sessions are pretty much the same as the main one but with a bit less pressure - crucially it means we can tell the kids where they are with each skill.

## Entry requirement to Grading Day

Only kids who have achieved either Orange or Black by Grading Day will be allowed to take part.

## How will we run the Grading Days?

This is still a work in progress as you'd expect - sometimes you just need to try it to see what works and what doesn't!

I anticipate that one of the coaches takes a normal session (probably just a match), whilst at the same time outside the pitch, I will take a small group and run the grading process.

## Medals

Assuming they pass, the kids will inform their parents who can follow an easy step-by-step guide (on our website) to get their medal.

When the medals arrive we present them to kids :)

# Skills Programme - Your role

## Understanding the skills

I have set up playlists at each Grading category on YouTube. You'll need to check them out, and understand each skill and its wording.

(I don't expect you to be able to perform them, but it's a bonus if you can!)

This sounds like a lot of work, but in reality, most of the kids in our groups are probably in the first 3 or 4 categories (Core to Orange)

## Assessing Performance

I don't expect you to run the Grading Days (not yet anyway!), but I do expect you to run the Soft-Grading session in the groups.

You should also be providing constructive advice and feedback on a weekly process :)

## Treat every child the same

Whilst you might have your favourites, it's important you remain completely impartial when you are assessing them

This exercise is partially designed to take opinion out of the equation when it comes to player performance.

## Managing expectations

Managing child and parent expectations is absolutely key - we should ONLY recommend a child attempts the Grading Day if we are convinced they will pass.

The grades get progressively more difficult, and if we pass kids when we shouldn't have, then we are setting them up for a huge fail at the next level.

# Skills Programme - FAQs

## **"What happens if it is raining?"**

We won't run either Soft Grading or Grading. We don't want kids standing around in the rain or Achievement Books turning to mush because they are all wet.

## **"I don't have a pen"**

Get one from home!

## **"How do we mark the Achievement Book?"**

Add your initials over the relevant football and comment if needed.

## **"What happens to the book when they pass?"**

I'll give the kids/parents a new book.

## **"What happens if they lose the book?"**

They will need to buy one from me

## **"What happens if the kids bring the books outside the Soft Grading or Grading?"**

Don't mark them, but you can tell them where you think they broadly are (i.e Red or Orange). This must not become a distraction.

## **"What happens if kids miss Soft Grading session?"**

They'll have to wait for the next Soft Grading session. You can only run a grading session if the child has been marked Orange / Black in each category.

## **"What happens if kids miss Grading Day?"**

They will have to wait for the next Grading session

## **"What happens if we're unable to run a Soft Grading or Grading session?"**

We'll run it in the next possible week.

# Skills Programme - FAQs cont'd

## **"How do we incorporate it in the session?"**

Rather than telling the kids what skills they are working on, ask them which ones they are struggling on currently.

Pick 3 or 4 of their responses and use the same time-pressured, target-driven intensity you usually would.

Use this as the basis of your 5 mins skills section at the start of each session.

## **"Could we merge the groups by skill colour?"**

Yep - that is a possibility, e.g. so all 'Whites' train together.

## **"What about new kids or kids who don't know their colour?"**

I'll be communicating this to all new and existing parents. It's the responsibility of the parents and kids to know what grade they are at.

## **"One of the kids doesn't want to be graded"**

No problem, but they can still take part in the Skills part of the session.

# WHATS IN IT FOR YOU?



# Opportunities

## The environment

The positive environment we have created doesn't just extend to the kids. Mistakes are totally normal, and we'll work with you every step of the way.

## Great coaching team

Whilst most of our team are young, talented, ambitious coaches, we have plenty of older, experienced, highly qualified FA coaches for you to learn from.

## The real stars

The kids in our group are so positive, friendly and eager to learn :)

Many of them in our groups are trying football for the first time, this can make training them a bit more challenging at times!

Simply, highly-talented young footballers are easier to train as they are totally committed to the sport and generally pick things up a bit quicker.

We really believe that if you can coach the kids in our groups, you can coach anywhere.

Indeed, one of our coaches has just been picked up by WBA!

# Opportunities

## Structured development

We have a tried and trusted method to develop coaches from Trainee up to Head Coach :)

We will gradually increase your comfort zone so you develop more quickly than anywhere else.

You'll receive clear, easy-to-achieve targets that will help you every step of the way.

## Excellent salary

Most employers base salaries on the 'National Minimum Wage'. We prefer to base ours on the Cost of Living wage - which is always higher.

We pay 10% above the equivalent 'Cost of Living' grades.

We've also benchmarked our salary grades against other football coaching companies in the area, and we are comfortably one of the highest-paying employers.

Our salary grading structure ensures you have clear and realistic targets to achieve your salary rises.

## Age is no barrier

If you're good enough, you're old enough - and some of our aspiring Head Coaches are 18/19 years old.

That means they are running large coaching sessions and are responsible for training junior staff.

# Opportunities

## Extra sessions

You are only limited by your own availability :)

We have a growing number of sessions and locations, and always offer new opportunities to our current coaches before new coaches.

## Qualifications

In 2022 alone we supported 10 junior coaches to become FA qualified. We are committed to providing financial support as you progress your qualifications. There are many courses available but the most common include:

- FA1 - Introduction to Football Coaching
- UEFA C Licence (i.e. FA2)
- Introduction to Futsal
- National Goalkeeping Course

## Continuous Professional Development

We encourage our coaches to take ownership of their self-development, and we'll support you every step of the way.

## Manage a team

We have close links to Kings Heath Sports FC and every season we create opportunities for our coaches to manage a grassroots football team competing in the Central Warwickshire Youth Football League.

## Franchises

We're bringing a consultant on board who will enable us to set up Franchise opportunities for you. This means Coaches are able to have full-time roles in football and run their own business