



## LAUNTON LADIES & GIRLS FOOTBALL CLUB

### Health & Safety Policy

Launton Ladies & Girls FC (Hereafter referred to as LLFC) is a voluntary organisation operated entirely by volunteer management committee and volunteers team of coaches / managers.

As a club our policy is that every child or young person who plays or participates in football through our club should be able to do so in an enjoyable, healthy & safe manner.

We provide clear instructions and information appropriate training to ensure our volunteers are appropriately qualified and competent as required by both the National Football Association and Oxfordshire Football Association.

In conjunction with this we follow all FA policies & procedures for Safeguarding Children. Children come first and their health, Safety and Wellbeing is our primary concern, above and beyond the game of football itself.

### LLFC Club Procedures for Health & Safety

The Manager / Coach being demonstrably 'competent' is our main Health and Safety control measure. The specified Manager / Coach is the responsible person for their 'Age Group Team' and this person has a duty to ensure that they are personally in date for both their FA Emergency First Aid and FA Safeguarding Children qualifications. They **MUST** hold an in date, FA Accepted Enhanced CRC together with a minimum of FA Level 1 Coaching award.

The following guidelines should be carried out by ALL Managers / Coaches:

#### 1. Equipment

- a. All players must wear Shin guards
- b. Is the ball safe (ie not damaged)
- c. All equipment must be used in accordance to Manufacturer's instructions
- d. Player's boots and the 'blades' or 'studs' should be checked regularly for safety. For youth football, players should be discouraged from wearing metal studs.
- e. All items of jewellery (necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, leather bands etc) are strictly forbidden and must be removed. Using tape to cover jewellery is not acceptable.

**Referees do have the right to inspect all player's boots before a match**

#### 2. Playing and Training Venues

- a. Check the pitch, sports hall, all weather surface or field for any obstacle, item or implement, which may cause harm or discomfort to any player, official or spectator. This is known as a **hazard**
- b. Check the goal post for security & safety
- c. Check that the corner flags and Respect barriers are used correctly in matches
- d. Check changing facilities for security & safety



### 3. Risk Assessment

By doing all checks above you are carrying out a dynamic risk assessment on all matches or venues used. Ensure that all 'control' measures to reduce both / or either the severity and probability of harm from any hazard occurring are put in place and checked.

All 'home' venues used by LLFC for training and Matches are hired from either LPFA, Bicester Town Council or Kidlington & Gosford Leisure Centre. Hence it is the venue owners responsibility to ensure that the venue is appropriately assessed and continues to be fit for purpose. However it is our responsibility to check for any hazards in the form of damaged facilities and report appropriately. Any issues arising should be reported to the LLFC Club Welfare Officer and Club Secretary. If anything is unsafe and cannot be made safe, then the match or training session should not take place.

For 'Away' venues and facilities, in the first instance raise any concerns with the 'home' team manager and should you be unsatisfied with the response or lack of response, then please notify the LLFC Club Welfare Officer and Club Secretary.

### 4. First Aid

Make sure a qualified first aider is present at all training and match venues with a suitable and in date first aid.

Also please ensure that you have copies of the *LLFC Emergency Action Plan* in the bag with your first aid kit.

### 5. Contact Details

Ensure you have either a complete and up to date emergency contact list for your team.

### 6. Goal post safety

FA Goal Post Safety Guidelines must be followed at all times. They are available from the FA Website. All Managers / Coaches are instructed to watch the short online video about goalpost safety, available at this link:

<http://www.uefa.org/video/grassroots/videoid=841238.html?autoplay=true>

All managers / coaches responsible for matches and training sessions should ensure that they are fully familiar with the guidelines and that they are followed.

Several serious injuries and fatalities have occurred in recent years as a result of unsafe or incorrect use of goalposts. Safety is always of paramount importance and everyone in football must play their part to prevent similar incidents occurring in the future.

The FA's guidelines for the safe use of goalposts state as follows:

- For safety reasons goalposts of any size (including those which are portable) must always be securely anchored to the ground
- Portable goalposts must be secured as per the manufacturer's instructions
- Under no circumstances should children or adults be allowed to climb on, swing or play with the structure of the goalposts



- Particular attention is drawn to the fact that if not properly assembled and secured, portable goalposts may overturn
- Regular inspections of goalposts must be carried out to check that they are properly maintained
- Portable goalposts should not be left in place after use. They should be dismantled or removed and placed in secure storage
- The use of metal hooks on goals has now been banned (since 2007-2008 season) and match officials will not commence matches where such fixings are in evidence
- Nets should only be secured with plastic hooks, net grips or tape

## 7. Pitch Inspections

Such extreme weather conditions, such as heavy snow, severe frost, waterlogging with puddles of standing water and/or areas of sinking mud/turf will result in matches being postponed. In this case, leagues and opponents should be advised as soon as is possible.

As a fundamental inspection rule, the ground should be able to take a stud and enable safe turning without slipping.

### *Frozen Pitches & Frosty Pitch inspections*

Youth soccer coaches have to be careful not to allow matches to go ahead on unsuitable pitches. There can often be pressure to allow the game to go ahead from your own team (who are usually keen to play no matter what the conditions) and the opposition (who may have travelled a considerable distance). However, this must be resisted. The health and safety of the players has to come first.

The article below was written by an experienced referee and offers some advice for coaches who are about to inspect a hard, frosty pitch.

- There is no scientific measure that can be used to deem a frosty ice covered field to be safe.
- Nevertheless, any experienced Referee will take the following into consideration before making a decision.
- It is the Referee's responsibility to make the decision and nobody else's.
- The whole of the field of play surface MUST be safe.
- There is a great danger that if 99 percent of the field of play surface is OK, and the game is allowed to be played, players will assume that 100 percent is OK, and play normally, and not compensate for any hard surface areas. In other words, playing on a hard field of play, which is partially 99% OK, is just as dangerous (if not more so) than on a field of play, which is totally hard. Neither game should be played.
- The Referee should not be influenced by the teams' opinion. If an accident happens, it is the Referee who cops it. The teams will deny any responsibility! Therefore, when a field of play inspection is carried out, the Referee should not do so in company of team managers or Club Officials, as they will try to influence the Referee's decision.
- When the weather is doubtful, the Referee should aim to arrive at the ground as early as he can to make an inspection. This may allow time for travelling teams to be warned of a cancellation. When the weather is doubtful, a check on the local weather forecast can help. For example, although a field of play may be frozen in the early hours of the morning, a



prediction of sunshine, will give the Referee a good idea of the possibility that the field may become playable later in the day.

- If the forecast is for snow or frost or freezing temperatures, then the chances are, that the game will not proceed. At lower level football, it can be useful for a local Referee to be contacted, to make an early inspection on behalf of the match Referee who lives some distance away from the ground. This can prevent unnecessary travelling.
- When completing the field of play inspection, a good indicator of the suitability of the surface, can be ascertained by inspecting the goalmouth areas and the centre circle area first. These are the areas that get more use, and are more likely to be rutted and hard due to frost.
- When completing the field of play inspection, other areas for close inspection, are places covered in shadow from buildings or trees. They are more likely to be frost bound, rather than those areas basked in sunshine. When completing the field of play inspection, if it is not immediately clear that the game cannot be played (i.e. the goalmouth areas are completely solid with frost and the game is definitely cancelled), the whole of the field of play surface MUST be inspected to eliminate any hidden areas of danger.
- A referee, who is seen to be completing a thorough field of play inspection, will have greater credibility when he decides to call off the game, than a Referee who only spends a few minutes making his inspection. The position of the sun and its path as the game progresses must also be taken into consideration. For example, if a field of play is 'just about playable', but the path of the sun means that its rays will disappear behind the trees or over the horizon, then the field of play surface on a cold frosty day, will get worse, not better.
- At local level, if it is clear, that waiting an extra 30 minutes or possibly up to an hour, will allow the sun to melt the frost, then play could be delayed with the agreement of both teams. But this depends very much on the weather forecast, the time of day and the team's agreement.
- Generally, it is better to make a decision quickly, based on the surface suitability at the time of the scheduled kick-off. The referee should wear a set of studded boots when inspecting the field of play, as this will give the best indication of the suitability of the playing surface.
- A surface which does not yield any purchase to studded boots, is dangerous, and the game should not be sanctioned. This includes, any part of the surface that does not yield, no matter how small an area. A field of play with hard deep frosted ruts and divots (a legacy of a muddy game played the day before) is less likely to be playable than a completely flat field with only crusty surface-frost to contend with.
- When the Referee has made his decision, it should be communicated to the teams as soon as possible.
- When a Referee is communicating his decision to the teams, that in his opinion, the field of play is not safe, the decision should be made confidently. If teams suspect any doubt in the Referee's decision, they will try and persuade the Referee to change his mind. In short, when a Referee makes his decision, he should not back down, and he should make it abundantly clear that the decision is his to make, and the game will not be played under his authority
- The inspection of a field of play covered in frost, and whether to sanction a game or not, is not a difficult decision to make for a Referee. It is fairly obvious to identify dangerous area that could potentially cause an injury. Common sense should be used. Young players are more likely to get injured on hard surfaces. Therefore, even greater care must be taken when making a decision to allow the game to be played or not. If there is any doubt (no matter how small), then the game must not be played.



## 8. Parental Responsibility

Children remain the responsibility of their parents /legal guardians at all times during football training, matches and other LLFC Activities and when arriving and departing at them. LLFC does provide all reasonable safeguards in terms of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (CRC checks), First aid qualified volunteers and a Club Child Welfare officer and acts as advised by The Oxfordshire Football Association and The Football Association in the conduct of its activities and affairs.

As a club of volunteers, our volunteers do have a Duty of care for the children in our membership but this does not extend to the level of that of teachers or registered childminders and as such parents/legal guardians must be advised against dropping their younger age group children off and leaving the site during football training, matches and other LLFC Activities. Should parents/legal guardians make any arrangements with other adults concerning their child and supervision and transportation for LLFC Football activities then this is at their own responsibility in their own legal capacity and not the responsibility of LLFC.

## 9. Outdoor all-weather pitches Health and Safety 'risk controls'

- Prior to anybody going into all-weather pitch (MUGA), Manager / Coach must inspect surface and clear any hazards. If unable to make safe, then training should be cancelled
- Any issues should be reported to Site Owner / Official and club officials immediately
- Managers/Coaches should have a first aid kit with them and mobile phone available, along with emergency contact details for all players
- Appropriate training kit and equipment to be worn and used ie: Astro boots or trainers and shin pads
- Managers / coaches should ensure MUGA is left clear and tidy any equipment, goals and rubbish away at the end of the session
- Dogs are not permitted on the MUGA Area
- No smoking allowed on the MUGA
- Children remain the responsibility of their parents / legal guardians at all times during football training and matches and when arriving and departing, although LLFC will ensure reasonable safeguards are assured.