**COMPETITION RULES PART THREE**

**MATCH RELATED RULES**

**6. QUALIFICATION OF PLAYERS**

**Players who are under six years of age on 1st September in any playing season shall not be allowed to participate in competitions sanctioned by ESFA.** A child who has not attained the age of ten years at midnight between 31 August and 1 September shall not play and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play in a match between sides of more than seven players in that playing season.

The relevant age for each Player is determined by his or her age as at midnight on 31 August of the relevant Playing Season i.e., children who are aged 6 as at midnight on 31 August in a Playing Season (together with those who attain the age of 6 during the Playing Season) will be classed as Year 2 Players for that Playing Season. Children who are aged 7 as at midnight on 31 August in a Playing Season will be classed as Year 3 Players for that Playing Season, and so on.

The age groups that children are eligible to play in are set out in the table below, along with the permitted football formats for each of those age groups.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School Year Group | Maximum Permitted Format | Minimum pitch Size | | Maximum pitch Size | | Recommended goal sizes in feet | Ball size |
| Yards | Metres | Yards | Metres |
| Year 2 | 5v5 | 30 x 20 | 27.45 x 18.3 | 40 x 30 | 36.3 x 27.45 | 12 x 6 | 3 |
| Year 3 | 5v5 | 30 x 20 | 27.45 x 18.3 | 40 x 30 | 36.3 x 27.45 | 12 x 6 | 3 |
| Year 4 | 7v7 | 50 x 30 | 45.75 x 27.45 | 60 x 40 | 54.9 x 36.6 | 12 x 6 | 3 |
| Year 5 | 7v7 | 50 x 30 | 45.75 x 27.45 | 60 x 40 | 54.9 x 36.6 | 12 x 6 | 3 |
| Year 6 | 9v9 | 70 x 40 | 64 x 36.6 | 80 x 50 | 73.15 x 45.75 | 16 x 7 | 4 |
| Year 7 | 9v9 | 70 x 40 | 64 x 36.6 | 80 x 50 | 73.15 x 45.75 | 16 x 7 | 4 |
| Year 8 | 11v11 | 90 x 50 | 82.3 x 45.75 | 100 x 60 | 91.44 x 54.9 | 21 x 7 | 4 |
| Year 9 | 11v11 | 90 x 50 | 82.3 x 45.75 | 100 x 60 | 91.44 x 54.9 | 21 x 7 | 4 |
| Year 10 | 11v11 | 90 x 50 | 82.3 x 45.75 | 110 x 70 | 100.58 x 64 | 24 x 8 | 5 |
| Year 11 | 11v11 | 90 x 50 | 82.3 x 45.75 | 110 x 70 | 100.58 x 64 | 24 x 8 | 5 |
| Year 12 | 11v11 | 100 x 50 | 91.44 x 45.75 | 130 x 100 | 118.87 x 91.44 | 24 x 8 | 5 |
| Year 13 | 11v11 | 100 x 50 | 91.44 x 45.75 | 130 x 100 | 118.87 x 91.44 | 24 x 8 | 5 |

A Child in the age ranges Under 7 (Year 2), Under 8 (Year 3), Under 9 (Year 4), Under 10 (Year 5), Under 11 (Year 6), Under 12 (Year 7), Under 13 (Year 8), Under 14 (Year 9), and Under 15 (Year 10), must not play, and shall not be permitted or encouraged to play in a match where any other player is older or younger by two years or more than that child.

The following apply to Competitions involving Players in full-time education.

1. Whilst a player is receiving full-time education in accordance with the Education Acts, priority must be given to school or schools’ organisations activities in accordance with FA regulations.
2. The availability of children must be cleared with their head teacher (except for Sunday league competitions).
3. If the Competition and / or Sanctioning Authority has any doubt over the qualification of a player taking part in any competition, it shall have the power to call upon the player’s Association or School to which he or she belongs to prove that he or she is qualified according to the rules and failing satisfactory proof the offending School or Association shall be disqualified from the competition.
4. Mixed-gender matches shall be played in line with current FA regulations. However, in all Competition matches in the U12, U13, U14, U15 and U16 age groups which may involve players of mixed gender then only players from the same chronological academic year group shall take part.
5. A player may only play for the School or College he/she is currently attending and on whose roll he/she appears at the time of the game in which he/she is playing.
6. A pupil shall not play for more than one School / Association / County in the same competition during any season, except by permission of the Management Committee.
7. Pupils under the statutory school leaving age who are not on the roll of a school may apply to the Management Committee to participate in representative football for the District Association in which they reside.
8. Eligibility for Schools’ Football

What is full time education? At least 15 hours per week, on average, for the full academic year.

What is an eligible institution? An institution with a Department for Education number.

What is an eligible player? On a full time, programme in an eligible institution.

1. Eligibility for Representative Football
2. Players must be in full time education at a DfE registered institution to be eligible to represent their District, County or Country.
3. A player shall be eligible for selection for the County Schools’ FA in which they attend school.
4. A player shall be eligible for selection for the District Schools’ FA in which they attend school.
5. For those attending a Pupil Referral Unit, eligibility to play for a District or County shall be determined by the location of the school/unit in which they are primarily registered, unless the pupil has been prohibited from playing football as part of the terms of his/her exclusion, in which case such pupils would not be eligible for selection. PRU-educated pupils able to play for their District/County Association are eligible for national selection.
6. Those who are home educated shall be eligible to play for the District/County in which they reside, unless they are registered with a school for exams, in which case the school’s locality shall define eligibility. Players eligible to play for their County are eligible for national selection.
7. Representative Football Eligibility
8. To play for the County the player must go to school within the defined County Boundary: the same principle shall apply for Districts and Crown Dependency Associate Members as defined by ESFA.
9. Crown Dependency Associate Members shall, through the Association Secretary, be able to directly nominate players to the international programme but players participating in District competitions, under the auspices of the ESFA’s regulations, shall not be individually eligible to represent any County.