

E S F A



English Schools' Football Association

Membership Matters

Chairman's Statement

Dear Schools' Football Colleagues,

I concluded my message in the previous edition of Membership Matters by expressing my belief that better days are ahead. With the recent FA announcement that football can restart, albeit under certain conditions, we are hopefully on course for those better days.

School leaders and their staff have worked exceptionally hard over the past four months to keep their schools open for vulnerable children and those of key workers, as well as organising countless hours of online lessons, carrying out risk assessments and doing all of the other tasks that characterise a school. Some staff are retiring without having had a proper opportunity to say farewell to students and colleagues (I know of one headteacher who is retiring at the age of 67 having completed 30 years of headship in one school!). Many students have completed their school careers and will be moving to new pastures and challenges.

Now, after a school year like no other, we need to look forward and work to overcome the challenges to secure those better days. There will be difficulties and setbacks, but over a million young people who play schools' football are dependent on our collective efforts to overcome those, and in so doing provide them with the great opportunities that they experience at intra-school, inter-school, inter-district and international levels.

Within the "bubbles" to which students will return in September, there will be opportunities for intra-school football. And other sports too – I know that some schools are planning to focus on summer sports such as cricket and athletics in Term 1. Hopefully, inter-school football will follow in Term 2 – currently our modelling is based on starting our national competitions at this point. For inter-district and inter-county football, it may now be possible to aim to start playing matches earlier, within the new guidelines and based on robust risk assessments that keep players, parents / carers and staff safe. We will help you with this process, beginning with a model risk assessment for trials that you can adapt to suit your particular circumstances, as well as a control measures document.

Our ESFA COBRA group this week ratified these documents and they accompany this edition of "Membership Matters". We also agreed to proceed with plans to stage the past season's National Finals, and to contact the schools, districts and counties involved to share our plans. As always, our decisions have been driven by focussing on what is in the best interests of the young people we serve. As far as National Finals are concerned, the players who have reached them in 2019-20 may only have this one opportunity – a unique and special experience. [Click here to be directed to these documents on our website.](#)

I am grateful to the many colleagues around the country who have been in touch by phone, e-mail, or social messaging with ideas, feedback, comments and concerns. Please keep them coming. As you plan for next season in your district or county, do take time too to enjoy the summer with family and friends and to re-charge your batteries. Above all, stay safe and well.

With best wishes

Phil Harding
ESFA Chairman

Don't forget...

15 Benefits of Schools' Football

Look out for our new "15 Benefits of Schools' Football" campaign on the [website](#), YouTube and our social media channels

Updated COVID guidance

The guidance which the ESFA has adapted for schools' football from The FA's recent document can be found on the ESFA website

Risk Assessments

New Risk Assessment documents will be circulated by the ESFA next week. Please ensure you are completing these as usual alongside COVID-19 assessments for activity