



National Cup Competitions

Season 2023-2024

For fixture issues and queries, please email competitions@schoolsfa.com

ESFA INTER-SCHOOL CUP GUIDANCE

Please refer to ESFA Cup rules for specific information

Many thanks for joining us for another season of English Schools' FA National Cups! Over 7,300 teams have registered to participate in this season's competitions, with over 2400 of those being girls' teams.

Like the thousands of teachers in secondary schools across England, we believe it is as important as ever that we continue to encourage schoolchildren to play schools' football and offer them the opportunity to participate and experience quality National Cup competitions. The benefits of leading an active and healthy lifestyle have been proven and the life skills that schools' football teaches young students (resilience, teamwork, problem solving, etc) will help develop our youngsters as they progress through their school careers.

We understand that the additional time and financial pressures being placed upon schools and PE departments is making matters increasingly difficult as the years go by, so you are commended for your commitment in helping develop the national game and offering the children the opportunity to participate in competitions that, we hope, will really capture the imagination of the students and create memories which will last a lifetime.

Important Rule Change

There has been an important rule change regarding this season's ESFA Boys' Inter-School Cup competitions which will be applied as follows:

Rationale: the proliferation of "academy" type football programmes is manifesting itself in ESFA competitions and is creating unfair advantage for such schools who are not playing against comparable opposition. In order to provide a suitable route which accounts for these pupils without undermining the integrity of ESFA national competitions, it is proposed to accommodate such schools as described below:

"Save for ESFA Elite Schools' Cups and ESFA Girls' Cups, establishments operating a 'football academy' during school curriculum time, shall not be eligible to participate in ESFA Schools' Cups (ESFA Schools' Cups, ESFA Small Schools' Cups or ESFA B Team Schools' Cups). Such schools shall be permitted to enter up to two teams in each age group of the Elite Schools' Cup. 'Football Academy' status shall be applied at the discretion of the ESFA Council."

What do we offer?

The ESFA offers the following competitions:

	Boys' Elite Cups	Boys' Schools' Cups	Boys' Small Schools' Cups	Boys' B Team Cups	Girls' Schools' Cups	Girls' B Team Cups	Girls' Small Schools' Cup
U12	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
U13	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
U14	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
U15	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
U16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
U18		✓		✓	✓		
U18 Super League	✓				✓		

The English Schools' FA has developed a framework of national competition which is designed to promote participation, but also cater for those talented footballers who are within our school football system, through a tiered level of competition: elite, participation and development.

Girls' Schools' Cups

These competitions are specifically designed to aid the development of girls' football. Therefore, boys are not eligible to participate in this competition. Girls can compete in boys' football (mixed football) up to and including the Under 18 age group and should not be prevented from doing so if the player is of the required ability to be selected.

Girls' B Team Cups (9v9 format)

To achieve U13 B Team Cup eligibility, a school must have entered and fulfilled a fixture in an ESFA 'A' Team Cup at both U12 and U13 age groups.

For U15 B Team Cup eligibility, a school must have entered and fulfilled a fixture in an ESFA 'A' Team Cup at both U14 and U15 age groups

Girls who have played a fixture in an ESFA 'A' Team Boys' or Girls' Cup become ineligible to play in the B Team Cup.

ETC (Emerging Talent Academy) and PGA (Professional Game Academy) players are not permitted in this category of competition (this is the structure replacing RTCs in The FA's Girls' Talent Pathway from 23-24 onwards).

Girls' Small Schools' Cup (9v9 format)

A school must have fewer than 130 girls on roll in the specific year group to be eligible for this category of competition. (U13 Cup = fewer than 130 pupils in years 7 & 8 | U15 Cup = fewer than 130 girls in Years 9 & 10).

Boys' Elite Schools' Cups

This category of competition allows those schools with more than 3 academy players in a team to play against other schools of a similar standard, which will hopefully, offer more competitive fixtures to help the development of the individual players involved.

Boys' Schools' Cups

These competitions are for what we would classify as 'normal' school football teams. Teams cannot name more than 3 professional club academy players in squad for a fixture, which will hopefully, give those schools a chance to compete at a level that is appropriate to their players' ability. To be eligible to play in the U18 Schools' Cup, players must have been on roll at the school for the formal GCSE examinations in Year 11. A team may be permitted to name 4 players in the matchday squad that joined the school post 16

Boys' Small Schools' Cups

We offer these competitions for those schools which feel they cannot compete against the larger schools within England. To be eligible to submit a team into this category of competition a school must have fewer than 65 boys on roll in the specific year group.

Boys' B Team Cups

This category of competition is designed to increase participation amongst our member schools. To be eligible to enter a team into the B Team Cup, the school concerned **must** have entered a team into the A Team Cup for that age group and fulfilled a fixture. Only players who have not represented their school in the 'A' Team Cup are eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup. Players registered with a professional club academy are not eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup.

U18 Super League (Men's and Women's)

This competition is specifically designed for those schools / colleges which offer a football academy / development programme at sixth form level and is organised using a group phase format before Christmas, followed by a knockout phase after Christmas. Schools and colleges can enter more than one team into this competition. Schools and colleges may enter more than one team but players will need to be registered with a specific team, via the ESFA.

Planning Fixtures and Reporting Results

To view your ESFA National Cup fixtures go to your account at www.esfa.co.uk/schools and login using your ID number and password (or you can view the full draw at www.esfa.co.uk/competitions).

Once you have logged into your ESFA account you can view your fixtures by clicking the 'ESFA Team Fixtures' link on the right hand margin menu. Please contact your opponents at the earliest opportunity to make arrangements to play National Cup matches before the published deadline dates. **Both Home and Away team managers have equal responsibility for initiating contact to arrange fixtures.** We strongly recommend that date offers are made via email so that you have some evidence available should a dispute arise further down the line.

Reporting fixtures & results: Please report the date, venue and kick-off details in advance of your fixtures and submit results promptly after each match (with goal scorers' names for both teams) by logging into your school's account. This facility will also allow you to view your next opponents as well as your previous results in the competition. If you have colleagues in your PE Department that help run teams, please advise them of the facility and login details. You can also submit results via www.esfa.co.uk/submitmyscore

When accessing fixtures via your account, clicking on the name of the team you are drawn against will bring up the contact details for the team manager / secretary, which in many cases, makes contacting opponents much easier than looking through a copy of the handbook.

Deadline Dates

Deadline dates for completing each round are published online and in the handbook. The deadline dates must be strictly adhered to as failure to comply with them may result in your School or College being withdrawn from the competition or being charged an admin fee for submitting a late result. Any requests for an extension to a deadline date must be made via email to competitions@schoolsfa.com detailing the reasons why the match cannot go ahead on time or if you have any issues regarding your fixtures. Permission to play during the week following a published deadline date will only be considered if both teams are mutually agreed to go beyond the deadline date. The ESFA reserves the right to decide the winning team via a computer generated win if no result has been received by the deadline date. This is to ensure that the competition can move forward in accord with the date structure.

Summary of Rules

The complete rules for the competitions are published online at <https://schoolsfootball.org> and printed in the handbook. You will need to refer to the 'General Competition Rules' and also the rules stated under the specific competition title. Please pay particular attention to the age qualifications for each competition!

	BOYS						GIRLS					
	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U18	U12	U13	U14	U15	U16	U18
Age Qualification (only use year groups stated)	Year 7 only	Year 8 only	Year 9 only	Year 10 only	Year 11 only	Years 11 - 13	Years 6 & 7	Years 7 & 8	Years 8 & 9	Years 9 & 10	Years 10 & 11	Years 11 - 13
Format:	9v9	11v11	11v11	11v11	11v11	11v11	9v9	9v9	11v 11	11v11	11v11	11v11
Match Duration	2 x 30 mins	2 x 35 mins	2 x 35 mins	2 x 40 mins	2 x 40 mins	2 x 45 mins	2 x 30 mins	2 x 35 mins	2 x 35 mins	2 x 40 mins	2 x 40 mins	2 x 45 mins
Extra Time	2 x 7 mins	2 x 7 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 7 mins	2 x 7 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins	2 x 10 mins
Penalties (no replays)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Size of Match Ball (teams can mutually agree to use size 5)	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5
Number of Substitutes / Substitutions (R = Repeated subs are permitted)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)	5 (R)

- U15 Girls' B Team Cup & U15 Small Schools' Cup is played using the 9v9 format
- Age qualification relates to the year in which the pupil is born, so please pay attention to the specific competition rules regarding dates of birth
- Rules cater for a Saturday competition; teams can play in midweek if mutually agreed
- All matches are played on grass (3G and 4G pitches can be used where the 'home' team gives sufficient notice to the 'visiting' team and the venue holds a valid test certificate and appears on The FA's national FTP register).
- Sand-dressed, sand-filled and water-based Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) can be utilised for basic football training, but are not suitable for mini soccer or 9v9 or 11v11 football matches.
- No financial assistance is available towards travel or accommodation in any round of Inter-School National Cups this season

Appointing Match Officials and teamsheets: The appointment of Match Officials is the responsibility of the 'home' team. Your local Referees' Association Secretary or County Schools' FA / FA Referees' Officer may be available to assist with the appointment of Match Officials. If you are unable to appoint a neutral and qualified referee, then you should inform your opponents before they travel as a matter of courtesy. Teamsheets are available to download from the ESFA website. The forms should be completed and submitted to the match referee at least fifteen minutes before kick-off.

It is important to note that all match officials, if they are not part of your school staff, must hold a current and valid FA DBS / Criminal Record Check to officiate in a fixture involving children.

Discipline: Full information regarding discipline procedures is available to view via the discipline section of the ESFA website.

Important notice regarding Academy Players: In Boys' Individual School/College competitions, a maximum of three players who attend an FA Licensed Academy run by a professional club which employs contract players can participate in a match. This rule applies to all schools and colleges, regardless of whether they are officially partnered with a professional club academy. In the Elite Schools' Cup there are no restrictions on the number of academy players that can be fielded by a school or college.

3G and 4G Football Turf Pitches (FTPs): In accordance with FA rules, it is important to understand that competition fixtures are not permitted to be played on a 3G or 4G pitch unless it has been tested and appears on the FA register which can be found at <http://3g.thefa.me.uk/>. It is the responsibility of both teams to ensure the playing surface is registered and therefore safe to use.

Temporary Dismissals for Players (Sin Bins): Sin Bins (Temporary Dismissals) have been introduced to improve the match experience for everyone involved with the game. To understand more about the process you can undertake a quick course by visiting <https://www.englandfootball.com/explore/inclusive-football/Respect/sin-bins> - this resource looks at why the scheme was introduced, and how referees will apply it on the field of play for players and team officials.

Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of all participants in schools' football is very important to us. If you have any safeguarding concerns regarding your participation in ESFA Cup competitions, then you can report such matters to the English Schools' FA National Welfare Officers, Martin Duffield – martin.duffield@schoolsfa.com or phone 07852 276416 or Sarah DaCosta – sarah.dacosta@schoolsfa.com or phone 07855 942337.

Get social - to keep up to date with competitions, information and to share your football season with us, you can follow @SchoolsFootball on X (formerly twitter) and instagram. If you would like to submit videos of match highlights, you can email them to competitions@schoolsfa.com which we will upload to our ESFA TV channel on You Tube.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your students the very best of luck for the forthcoming season!

THE ESFA NATIONAL COMEPTITIONS TEAM

Competition Title	Deadline Date	02 September	09 September	16 September	23 September	30 September	07 October	14 October	21 October	28 October	Half Term										Christmas Holidays										Half Term										03 February	10 February	17 February	24 February	02 March	09 March	16 March	23 March																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																									

GENERAL COMPETITION RULES**INTRODUCTION**

The rules detailed below apply to all ESFA competitions except where stated under the heading of any specific competition.

1. THE TROPHY

- (a) The Cup is the property of the English Schools' Football Association.
- (b) The Cup shall be presented to the captain of the winning team immediately after the match, or at the match function should that be held after the match.
- (c) The winning School, College, or Association shall be responsible for suitable engraving and for the maintenance of the Cup in good order. Arrangements for display of the Cup must be agreed by Council.
- (d) It shall be the responsibility of the Council Member concerned to ensure the return of the Cup in time for presentation at the Final.

2. CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES

Council will determine closing dates for National Competitions and indicate this on the competition entry forms.

3. MEMENTOES**(a) 11-a-side & 9-a-side Competitions**

Eighteen mementoes (16 players and 2 team officials) in 11-a-side Cups and sixteen mementoes (14 players and 2 team staff) in the 9-a-side Cups shall be awarded to each School or Association taking part in a final tie. Additional identical mementoes may be purchased by the finalists subject to the approval of the ESFA. Four mementoes shall be awarded to the match officials (referee, two assistant referees and reserve official), officiating at a final tie.

(b) Small-Sided Competitions

- (i) Each County Champion School / Association (Under 11 7-a-side) will receive a suitable memento. There will be Championship Shields for each team winning an Area Competition (Under 12 5-a-side).
- (ii) Certificates or other suitable mementoes will be presented to each player participating in the Regional Competitions (Under 11).
- (iii) Mementoes will be awarded to all participants (players, team officials – two per team, and match officials) in the National Finals.

4. CONTROL

- (a) The entire control and management of the competitions shall be vested in Council, or such committees that shall be appointed by Council.
- (b) The rules of the game shall be those of the International Football Association Board, except as otherwise stated.
- (c) All Local and County representative teams must be under the ultimate control of either:
 - (i) A practicing teacher, recognised as such by the Department for Education, OR a recognised teacher who is retired
 - (ii) an AOTT who has received direct approval in writing from the appropriate Local or County Schools' Football Association to undertake such responsibilities.
- (d) Approval may be withdrawn, by the ESFA, the Local and/or County Schools' Football Association, at any time.
- (e) Everyone regularly assisting with or coaching a team must:
 - (i) Have an accepted FA Enhanced DBS check, issued within the previous 3 years

- (ii) Complete the FA Safeguarding Children Course in line with FA policy and renew every 2 years, unless they are a practicing schoolteacher who receives annual safeguarding training through their employment in a recognised educational establishment.
- (f) Any cost associated with this shall be the responsibility of the Local/County Schools' Football Association.
- (g) Everyone regularly assisting with or coaching a representative team must be named and accepted on the ESFA affiliation portal by ESFA National Welfare Officers before they can be involved in any activity.
- (h) Practicing schoolteachers must be identified as such on the ESFA affiliation portal.
- (i) AOTT (Adults Other Than Teachers) must be identified as such on the ESFA affiliation portal.
- (j) Retired teachers must be identified as such on the ESFA affiliation portal.
- (k) Anybody who has an expired FA DBS and/or expired safeguarding training under (e) above must not be involved in any activity.
- (l) All coaches and helpers/assistants must operate in the presence of a person who is qualified under (c) above.
- (m) Associations must comply with The FA's/ESFA's Safeguarding Criteria. Compliance must be in place at the time of affiliation and throughout the season.
- (n) An individual cannot be the named manager/coach for more than two teams within the same Association, although they can be named as assistant manager/assistant coach for more than two teams.
- (o) All District and County Associations who run representative teams must register all team personnel with the ESFA as a requirement of the affiliation. This information must be registered with the ESFA as part of the affiliation process, prior to affiliation being approved.
- (p) All ESFA affiliated Associations running representative football teams must have an FA qualified and ESFA approved Welfare Officer
- (q) Association Welfare Officers must comply with the current training requirements of The Football Association
- (r) Any official or player representing a School or Association in membership with the Welsh Schools' FA participating in any of the ESFA national competitions who is reported for misconduct, on or off the field of play, shall be referred to the Council of the Welsh Schools' FA for appropriate action.
- (s) Where the Association benefits from voluntary service by those who are employed as commercial coaches, commercial coaches shall not use their contact with school players to recruit to their commercial operation without the express consent of the County Committee, who will wish to ensure that parents are clear about the capacity in which any such approaches are made. Approval (or otherwise) is at the sole discretion of the County Committee.

5. THE FIELD OF PLAY

The following recommended pitch and goal sizes apply for 7v7, 9v9 and 11v11 youth football:

Age	Format	Minimum pitch Size (Yards)	Maximum pitch Size (Yards)	Recommended goal sizes in feet	Ball size
Year 5	7v7	50 x 30	60 x 40	12 x 6	3
Year 6	9v9	70 x 40	80 x 50	16 x 7	4
Year 7	9v9	70 x 40	80 x 50	16 x 7	4
Year 8	11v11	90 x 50	100 x 60	21 x 7	4
Year 9	11v11	90 x 50	100 x 60	21 x 7	4
Year 10	11v11	90 x 50	110 x 70	24 x 8	5
Year 11	11v11	90 x 50	110 x 70	24 x 8	5
Year 12	11v11	100 x 50	130 x 100	24 x 8	5
Year 13	11v11	100 x 50	130 x 100	24 x 8	5

If a pitch is provided for U13 / U14 it is recommended that 7 x 21 goalposts are provided. However, it should be noted that 8 x 24 would also be acceptable as not all sites will be able to provide specifically for this age group.

Artificial Turf Pitches (3G Artificial Pitches) are allowed in this Competition providing they meet the required performance standards and are listed on the register and must be tested (by an accredited test institute) every three years and the results passed to The FA. The home team is also responsible for advising participants of footwear requirements when confirming the match arrangements.

6. THE BALL

The ball shall be size 5 except where stated under a specific competition rule.

7. SUBSTITUTES

'Repeated' substitutions are allowed in all competitions up to and including the Under 18 age group. In these age groups, a player who has been substituted during a match becomes a substitute and may, in turn, replace another player at any time subject to the substitution being carried out in accordance with Law 3 of the Laws of the Game.

9v9 and 11v11 matches: Teams are permitted to use 5 substitutes from five named players.

Small-Sided matches: Indoor 5-a-side - 3 named substitutes
7-a-side - 3 named substitutes

8. PROTESTS

- (a) Protests against decisions made in ESFA National Competitions shall be considered under paragraphs (f) and (g) below.
- (b) Protests arising from competitions organised for schools by a District Schools' Football Association shall be submitted to that District in line with the ESFA policy for protests, which shall apply as follows:
 - (i) All protests shall be in writing and shall be received at the DSFA nominated address within 2 working days of the match concerned.

- (ii) No protest relative to the ground, goalposts, or other appurtenances of the game shall be considered unless a protest in writing was made to the referee before the start of the match.
- (iii) Any protest shall be signed by the Headteacher/Principal as acknowledgment of their approval of its submission.
- (iv) The (insert responsible person/committee) will gather any evidence they wish to have before making their decision.
- (v) A copy of this decision must be relayed to both teams in writing.
- (c) Should the complainant not be satisfied with the decision of the District Association, an appeal shall be submitted to the CSFA in line with the ESFA policy for appeals, which shall apply as follows:
 - (i) Any appeal against the decision of a District Schools' FA within the CSFA boundaries must be made within 2 working days of the receipt of the ruling that the DSFA has made.
 - (ii) The appeal must arrive at the CSFA headquarters by letter, countersigned by the Headteacher/Principal/Association Secretary and accompanied by a School/College/Association cheque for £50. This will be returned if the appeal is upheld.
 - (iii) The appeal will be considered by (insert responsible person/committee) and shall be final and binding on all participants.
- (d) Protests arising from competitions organised for schools by a County Schools' Football Association shall be submitted to that County in line with the ESFA policy for protests, which shall apply as follows:
 - (i) All protests shall be in writing and shall be received at the CSFA nominated address within 2 working days of the match concerned.
 - (ii) No protest relative to the ground, goalposts, or other appurtenances of the game shall be considered unless a protest in writing was made to the referee before the start of the match.
 - (iii) Any protest shall be signed by the Headteacher/Principal as acknowledgment of their approval of its submission.
 - (iv) The (insert responsible person/committee) will gather any evidence they wish to have before making their decision.
 - (v) A copy of this decision must be relayed to both teams in writing.
- (e) Should the complainant not be satisfied with the decision of the County Association, an appeal shall be submitted to the ESFA in line with the ESFA policy for appeals, which shall apply as follows:
 - (i) Any appeal against the decision of a County Schools' FA must be made within 2 working days of the receipt of the ruling that the CSFA has made.
 - (ii) The appeal must arrive at the ESFA headquarters by letter, countersigned by the Headteacher/Principal/Association Secretary and accompanied by a School/College/Association cheque for £50. This will be returned if the appeal is upheld.
 - (iii) The appeal will be considered by the ESFA's Governance Committee and shall be final and binding on all participants.
- (f) Protests arising from competitions organised for schools, districts or counties by The English Schools' Football Association shall be submitted to the ESFA in line with the ESFA policy for protests, stated below:
 - (i) All protests regarding ESFA national competitions shall be in writing and shall be received at the ESFA headquarters within 2 working days of the match concerned.
 - (ii) No protest relative to the ground, goalposts, or other appurtenances of the game shall be considered unless a protest in writing was made to the referee before the start of the match.

- (iii) Any protest shall be signed by the Headteacher / Principal or the relevant Association Secretary as acknowledgment of their approval of its submission.
- (iv) The National Competitions Department (NCD) will gather any evidence they wish to have before making their decision.
- (v) A copy of this decision must be relayed to both teams in writing.
- (g) Should the complainant not be satisfied with the decision of the ESFA, an appeal shall be submitted to the ESFA in line with the ESFA policy for appeals, as stated below:
 - (i) Any appeal against the National Competitions Department (NCD) decision must be made within 2 working days of the receipt of the ruling that the NCD has made.
 - (ii) The appeal must arrive at the ESFA headquarters by letter, countersigned by the Headteacher / Principal / Association Secretary and accompanied by a School / College / Association cheque for £50. This will be returned if the appeal is upheld.
 - (iii) The appeal will be considered by members of a panel appointed by the ESFA Competitions Committee Chairman. The Competitions Committee shall have the power of Council to make all decisions in relation to the organisation, control, and management of any ESFA competition which shall be deemed to be the decision(s) of Council and shall be final and binding on all participants.

9. TARGET DATES

Council shall fix target dates by which all matches shall be played. Failure to keep to those dates may lead to disqualification. In the event that the team secretaries are unable to agree a mutually convenient date to play the fixture, the default date for playing the match becomes the published deadline date.

The Competitions Committee, access to which is via the ESFA office, shall have the power to

- (a) Order a match to be played on, or by, the given date
- (b) Grant a reasonable extension to the target deadline
- (c) Expel any team from the competition.

10. PLAYERS' ATTIRE

- (a) Where Schools or Associations have similar colours, the home team shall be entitled to retain their colours and the visiting team shall change to colours that provide a satisfactory contrast.
- (b) Teams must not wear shirt advertising of a conflicting interest to that of the competition's sponsor.
- (c) Players' shirts shall be numbered.
- (d) Attire worn by players and staff must only reflect their School, College or Association and not make any reference to other football organisations.

11. PLAYERS

- (a) If Council 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.
- (b) Mixed-gender matches shall be played in line with current FA regulations. However, in all ESFA 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.

- (c) 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.
- (d) A pupil shall not play for more than one School / Association / County in the same competition during any season, except by permission of Council.
- (e) Pupils under the statutory school leaving age who are not on the roll of a school may apply to the ESFA to participate in representative football for the Local or County Association in which they reside.
- (f) In individual school/college competitions, a maximum of three players who are registered with any FA Licensed Academy can participate in a match. Participation of the three players relates to their inclusion in the named squad. This rule does not apply to the Elite Schools' Cup competitions. ***Note: this rule does not apply to girls' that are registered with Regional Talent Centres (RTCs)*
- (g) A pupil on a managed move referral is not eligible to participate in a national competition fixture without the permission of the English Schools' FA.

12. MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

- (a) In the National Rounds of all 11-a-side and 9-a-side competitions, extra time of 10 minutes each way (7 minutes at under 12 and 13) shall be played if the match ends in a draw. Should the scores remain equal after the conclusion of extra time, then the result shall be determined by the taking of kicks from the penalty mark (taken in accordance with the recommendations of FIFA and published in the Laws of the Game).
- (b) If, in the opinion of the referee, for circumstances beyond the control of the organisers, scheduled extra time in a match cannot be started or completed, a match shall be deemed to have been completed at the end of normal playing time. Penalties, if scheduled, shall then follow.
- (c) Postponed or abandoned matches in the Individual Schools' competitions shall be played by the Saturday following the target date. Where schools are not mutually agreed on a date, then the matter will be referred to the Competitions Committee (via the ESFA Office).
- (d) Postponed or abandoned matches in Inter Association or Inter County Competitions shall be played as Council directs.
- (e) In the event of any match being abandoned for any reason stated under Law 5 of The Laws of the Game, Council shall have the power to allow the score at the time of the abandonment to stand and to remove from any competition any team found guilty of causing such abandonment.
- (f) There shall be a half time interval of ten minutes in all 11-a-side matches which can only be altered with the consent of the referee.
- (g) All arrangements for Finals shall be subject to the approval of Council.

13. MATCH OFFICIALS

- (a) The Match Officials shall be appointed as Council shall direct. Their duties shall be accordance with the Laws of the Game as sanctioned and enforced by the International Football Association Board.
- (b) In the event of a referee failing to appear, the teams involved must agree in writing upon one on the ground so that the game shall be conducted in accordance with the rules. The official so acting shall have the powers of a duly appointed referee.
- (c) Match Officials for National Competitions shall be arranged by Council Members in accordance with the rules of the competition.

14. MATCH DAYS

Matches will be played on Saturdays, but a match may be played midweek where teams are mutually agreed, or, where on the application of the home team, the Council considers it desirable. In the case of emergency, matches must be played on any date ordered by Council.

15. FINANCE

Financial assistance to the Competitions is at all times subject to confirmation by the Trustees in accordance with bye law 4. Details of financial assistance will be circulated to the participating teams at the start of each season.

16. OVERNIGHT STAY

In exceptional circumstances where a Primary Association needs to organise an overnight stay for the official party, and such an arrangement is approved by Trustees, assistance towards the cost shall be up to £60 per head for up to three staff members per team. There will be no overnight financial assistance for team players.

17. ALTERATION OF RULES

These rules may be altered only at a General Meeting of the Association in accordance with the principles laid down in clause 29.

ESFA Pokémon Primary Schools' Cup

INTRODUCTION

The rules stated below shall be in addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA Pokémon Primary Schools' Cup
(U11 7-a-side Schools' Cup for School Teams)
(U11 7-a-side Schools' Cup for Girls)
(U11 7-a-side Small Schools' Cup)

2. ENTRIES

- (a) The Trophies shall be offered for annual competition for schools in affiliated membership with the English Schools' Football Association.
- (b) To be eligible to enter the Small Schools' Soccer Sevens, the affiliated school must have fewer than 65 pupils in total in Years 5 and 6 according to the numbers on roll as confirmed by the preceding year's summer census. Schools that qualify for the Small Schools' Soccer Sevens may enter that competition OR the Schools' Cup for School Teams – not both.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- (a) Only boys/girls receiving full-time education in accordance with the Education Acts, on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and to their Local Association and who are under the age of 11 and who are over the age of 9 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in these competitions. (Year 5 and 6 only)
- (b) Each School will select a squad of 10 players.
- (c) These competitions are available to mixed teams except for the 7-a-side Girls' Cup. *Note: this competition is specifically designed to aid the development of girls' football.*

4. THE COMPETITION

- (a) All games throughout this competition will be played outdoors.
- (b) *Local Associations:* For Individual Schools' Competitions, each Local Association shall stage its own competition, providing its own Champion School to the County Competition.
- (c) *County Associations:* Each County Association shall stage its own County Competitions to find its own County Champion School to represent the County in the appropriate Regional Competition. All County Championships must be played by a date decided annually by Council. Full details of these County Championships must be sent to the ESFA Chief Executive, giving a minimum of 28 (twenty-eight) days' notice before the event takes place.
- (d) *Regional Competitions:* The County Champion School will play in one of four regional competitions. Schools representing counties shall travel to play at a suitable venue in each region. Details of the territory to be covered by each of the four regions will be decided by Council. The Regional Competitions shall each provide at least one entrant to the National Finals.

5. MATCH OFFICIALS

- (a) *Local and County Associations:* The Secretary of the Association shall appoint the match officials.
- (b) *Regional Competitions:* The Council Member in whose area the Regional Competition is being staged shall appoint the match officials.
- (c) *National Finals:* The match officials shall be appointed by Council.

6. DURATION OF MATCHES

- (a) Matches will consist of two periods of seven minutes with the teams changing straight round at half time.
- (b) Teams should play in "league format", followed by a "knock-out" section to determine the Champion School. This two section competition will ensure that every team will play more than one game. In the League Section, a win will gain 3 points, and a draw will gain 1 point. Should teams share a qualifying position in the league the position shall be decided on goal difference. Should points and goal difference be equal the winners shall be the team scoring the most goals. If this fails to determine the winning team, the position shall be decided by a play-off in accordance with 6(c).
- (c) If the scores are level at the end of normal time in a "knock-out" section of the Competition, play will continue for a period of six minutes, three minutes each way. If this fails to determine the winning team, the position will be decided by penalty kicks, taken in accordance with the regulation of FIFA, as published in the Laws of the Game. Where the National Final ends in a draw, extra-time shall be played. If the game remains a draw, the Cup shall be shared.
- (d) Council may amend the structure and playing rules for the National Finals should circumstances demand.

7. OTHER MATCH REGULATIONS

- (a) A size 4 football shall be used.
- (b) ESFA recommends that (i) the pitch sizes should follow the FA regulations for mini soccer for children age ten years or over and (ii) goalposts should be 12 ft wide and 6 ft high. It is recognised that local conditions may require of compromise in dimensions.
- (c) *Offside*: The law relating to Offside does not apply in these competitions.

ESFA UNDER 11 9-A-SIDE INTER ASSOCIATION CUP

The rules stated below shall be in addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA Under 11 9-a-side Inter Association Cup

2. ENTRIES

The Cup shall be offered for annual competition amongst affiliated local Associations in England.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts, who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the local Association, over the age of 9 years and under the age of 11 years at midnight between 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to play in this Competition. (Years 5 & 6 only)

4. THE COMPETITION

- (a) The draw will be published on the ESFA website (www.esfa.co.uk/competitions) and will be arranged so that the travelling by the away team is kept to a minimum.
- (b) The ball shall be size 4.

5. DURATION OF MATCHES

The duration of each match shall be 30 minutes each way. If it is deemed inadvisable to play for 60 minutes the Secretaries of the competing teams and the referee may decide that the duration of play shall be 50 minutes (25 minutes each way).

Goalpost and pitch size guide

The correct size goal posts for this format of football is 16 ft x 7 ft, although 21 ft x 7 ft can be used. Pitch size should be no greater than 80 x 50 yards.

ESFA PLAYSTATION UNDER 12 9-A-SIDE SCHOOLS' CUPS

The rules stated below shall be in addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA PlayStation Under 12 9-a-side Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 12 9-a-side Schools' Cup for Girls (this competition is specifically designed to aid the development of girls' football)
ESFA PlayStation Under 12 9-a-side Small Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 12 9-a-side Elite Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 12 9-a-side Schools' Cup for B Teams

2. ENTRIES

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' and Girls' Cups: The Cup shall be offered for annual competition to schools in affiliated membership with the English Schools' Football Association. Council has the right to fill any vacancy that may occur in the first national round. To be eligible to enter the Small Schools' Cup, the affiliated school must have fewer than 65 boys on roll in Year 7.
- (b) 'B' Team Cup: The cup shall be offered for annual competition to B teams of Schools in affiliated membership with the ESFA, and which have entered an 'A' team entered and fulfilled a fixture in the in the ESFA PlayStation Under 12 Schools' Cup (includes Elite and Small Schools' Cups).
- (c) Save for ESFA Elite Schools' Cups and ESFA Girls' Cups, establishments operating a 'football academy' during school curriculum time, shall not be eligible to participate in ESFA Schools' Cups (ESFA Schools' Cups, ESFA Small Schools' Cups or ESFA B Team Schools' Cups). Such schools shall be permitted to enter up to two teams in each age group of the Elite Schools' Cup. 'Football Academy' status shall be applied at the discretion of the ESFA Council.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' Cup and B Team Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 11 years and under the age of 12 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Year 7 only)
- (b) Girls' Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 10 years and under the age of 12 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Years 6 & 7 girls only)
- (c) B Team Cup: Only players who have not represented their school in the ESFA PlayStation Under 12 Schools', Elite or Small Schools' Cup are eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup. Schools that enter this competition must, on request from the ESFA, provide evidence that they have adhered to this rule. Schools that infringe this rule will be removed from both competitions. Players registered with an FA licensed academy are not eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup.

4. THE COMPETITION

- (a) The matches shall be played on a cup tie principle and shall take precedence over all other school games.
- (b) The draw will be published on the ESFA website (www.esfa.co.uk/competitions) and will be arranged so that the travelling by the away team is kept to a minimum.
- (c) The ball shall be size 4.

5. DURATION OF MATCHES

The duration of each match shall be 30 minutes each way. If it is deemed inadvisable to play for 60 minutes, the Team Managers of the competing teams and the referee may decide that the duration of play shall be 50 minutes (25 minutes each way).

Goalpost and pitch size guide

The correct size goal posts for this format of football is 16 ft x 7 ft, although 21 ft x 7 ft can be used. Pitch size should be no greater than 80 x 50 yards.

ESFA PLAYSTATION UNDER 13 SCHOOLS' CUPS

The rules stated below shall be in addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA PlayStation Under 13 Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 13 9-a-side Schools' Cup for Girls (*this competition is specifically designed to aid the development of girls' football*)
ESFA PlayStation Under 13 Small Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 13 Schools' Cup for B Teams
ESFA PlayStation Under 13 Elite Schools' Cup

2. ENTRIES

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' and Girls' Cups: The Cup shall be offered for annual competition to schools in affiliated membership with the English Schools' Football Association. Council has the right to fill any vacancy that may occur in the first national round. To be eligible to enter the Small Schools' Cup, the affiliated school must have fewer than 65 boys on roll in Year 8.
- (b) 'B' Team Cup: The cup shall be offered for annual competition to B teams of Schools in affiliated membership with the ESFA, and which have entered an 'A' team entered and fulfilled a fixture in the in the ESFA PlayStation Under 13 Schools' Cup (includes Elite Schools' and Small Schools' Cups).
- (c) Save for ESFA Elite Schools' Cups and ESFA Girls' Cups, establishments operating a 'football academy' during school curriculum time, shall not be eligible to participate in ESFA Schools' Cups (ESFA Schools' Cups, ESFA Small Schools' Cups or ESFA B Team Schools' Cups). Such schools shall be permitted to enter up to two teams in each age group of the Elite Schools' Cup. 'Football Academy' status shall be applied at the discretion of the ESFA Council.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' Cup and B Team Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 12 years and under the age of 13 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Year 8 only)
- (b) Girls' Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 11 years and under the age of 13 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Years 7 & 8 girls only)
- (c) B Team Cup: Only players who have not represented their school in the ESFA PlayStation Under 13 Schools', Elite or Small Schools' Cup are eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup. Schools that enter this competition must, on request from the ESFA, provide evidence that they have adhered to this rule. Schools that infringe this rule will be removed from both competitions. Players registered with an FA licensed academy are not eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup.

4. THE COMPETITIONS

- (a) The matches shall be played on a cup tie principle and shall take precedence over all school games.
- (b) The draw will be published on the ESFA website (www.esfa.co.uk/competitions) and will be arranged so that the travelling by the away team is kept to a minimum.
- (c) The ball shall be size 4.

5. DURATION OF MATCHES

The duration of each match shall be 35 minutes each way. If it is deemed inadvisable to play for 70 minutes, the team managers of the competing teams and the referee may decide that the duration of play shall be 60 minutes (30 minutes each way).

ESFA PLAYSTATION UNDER 14 SCHOOLS' CUPS

The rules stated below shall be in addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA PlayStation Under 14 Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 14 Schools' Cup for Girls (*this competition is specifically designed to aid the development of girls' football*)
ESFA PlayStation Under 14 Small Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 14 Elite Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 14 Schools' Cup for B Teams

2. ENTRIES

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' and Girls' Cups: The Cup shall be offered for annual competition to schools in affiliated membership with the English Schools' Football Association. Council has the right to fill any vacancy that may occur in the first national round. To be eligible to enter the Small Schools' Cup, the affiliated school must have fewer than 65 boys on roll in Year 9.
- (b) 'B' Team Cup: The cup shall be offered for annual competition to B teams of Schools in affiliated membership with the ESFA, and which have entered an 'A' team entered and fulfilled a fixture in the in the ESFA PlayStation Under 14 Schools' Cup (includes Elite and Small Schools' Cups).
- (c) Save for ESFA Elite Schools' Cups and ESFA Girls' Cups, establishments operating a 'football academy' during school curriculum time, shall not be eligible to participate in ESFA Schools' Cups (ESFA Schools' Cups, ESFA Small Schools' Cups or ESFA B Team Schools' Cups). Such schools shall be permitted to enter up to two teams in each age group of the Elite Schools' Cup. 'Football Academy' status shall be applied at the discretion of the ESFA Council.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' Cup and B Team Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 13 years and under the age of 14 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Year 9 only)
- (b) Girls' Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 12 years and under the age of 14 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Years 8 & 9 girls only)
- (c) B Team Cup: Only players who have not represented their school in the ESFA PlayStation Under 14 Schools', Elite or Small Schools' Cup are eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup. Schools that enter this competition must, on request from the ESFA, provide evidence that they have adhered to this rule. Schools that infringe this rule will be removed from both competitions. Players registered with an FA licensed academy are not eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup.

4. THE COMPETITION

- (a) The matches shall be played on the cup tie principle and shall take place over all other school games.
- (b) The draw will be published on the ESFA website (www.esfa.co.uk/competitions) and will be arranged so that the travelling by the away team is kept to a minimum.
- (c) The ball shall be a size 4 unless mutually agreed to be a size 5.

5. DURATION OF MATCHES

The duration of each match shall be 35 minutes each way. If it is deemed inadvisable to play for 70 minutes, the Secretaries of the competing teams and the Referee may decide that the duration of play shall be 60 minutes (30 minutes each way).

ESFA PLAYSTATION UNDER 15 SCHOOLS' CUPS

The rules stated below shall be addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA PlayStation Under 15 Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 15 Schools' Cup for Girls (*this competition is specifically designed to aid the development of girls' football*)
ESFA PlayStation Under 15 Small Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 15 Elite Schools' Cup
ESFA PlayStation Under 15 Schools' Cup for B Teams

2. ENTRIES

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' and Girls' Cups: The Cup shall be offered for annual competition to schools in affiliated membership with the English Schools' Football Association. Council has the right to fill any vacancy that may occur in the first national round. To be eligible to enter the Small Schools' Cup, the affiliated school must have fewer than 65 boys on roll in Year 10.
- (b) 'B' Team Cup: The cup shall be offered for annual competition to B teams of Schools in affiliated membership with the ESFA, and which have entered an 'A' team entered and fulfilled a fixture in the in the ESFA PlayStation Under 15 Schools' Cup (includes Elite Schools' and Small Schools' Cups).
- (c) Save for ESFA Elite Schools' Cups and ESFA Girls' Cups, establishments operating a 'football academy' during school curriculum time, shall not be eligible to participate in ESFA Schools' Cups (ESFA Schools' Cups, ESFA Small Schools' Cups or ESFA B Team Schools' Cups). Such schools shall be permitted to enter up to two teams in each age group of the Elite Schools' Cup. 'Football Academy' status shall be applied at the discretion of the ESFA Council.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- (a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' Cup and B Team Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 14 years and under the age of 15 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Year 10 only)
- (b) Girls' Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 13 years and under the age of 15 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Years 9 & 10 girls only)
- (c) B Team Cup: Only players who have not represented their school in the ESFA PlayStation Under 15 Schools', Elite or Small Schools' Cup are eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup. Schools that enter this competition must, on request from the ESFA, provide evidence that they have adhered to this rule. Schools that infringe this rule will be removed from both competitions. Players registered with an FA licensed academy are not eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup.

4. THE COMPETITIONS

- (a) The matches shall be played on a cup tie principal and shall take precedence over all other school games.
- (b) The draw will be published on the ESFA website (www.esfa.co.uk/competitions) and will be arranged so that the travelling by the away team is kept to a minimum.

5. DURATION OF MATCHES

The duration of each match shall be 40 minutes each way. If it is deemed inadvisable to play for 80 minutes, the Secretaries of the competing teams and the Referee may decide that the duration of play shall be 70 minutes (35 minutes each way).

ESFA UNDER 16 SCHOOLS' CUPS

The rules stated below shall be addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA Under 16 Schools' Cup for Boys

ESFA Under 16 Schools' Cup for Girls (*this competition is specifically designed to aid the development of girls' football*)

ESFA Under 16 Small Schools' Cup

ESFA Under 16 Elite Schools' Cup

ESFA Under 16 Schools' Cup for B Teams

2. ENTRIES

(a) Schools' Cup, Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' and Girls' Cups: The Cup shall be offered for annual competition to schools in affiliated membership with the English Schools' Football Association. Council has the right to fill any vacancy that may occur in the first national round. To be eligible to enter the Small Schools' Cup, the affiliated school must have fewer than 65 boys on roll in Year 11.

(b) 'B' Team Cup: The cup shall be offered for annual competition to B teams of Schools in affiliated membership with the ESFA, and which have entered an 'A' team entered and fulfilled a fixture in the in the ESFA Under 16 Schools' Cup (includes Elite Schools' and Small Schools' Cups).

(c) Save for ESFA Elite Schools' Cups and ESFA Girls' Cups, establishments operating a 'football academy' during school curriculum time, shall not be eligible to participate in ESFA Schools' Cups (ESFA Schools' Cups, ESFA Small Schools' Cups or ESFA B Team Schools' Cups). Such schools shall be permitted to enter up to two teams in each age group of the Elite Schools' Cup. 'Football Academy' status shall be applied at the discretion of the ESFA Council.

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

(a) Schools' Cup Elite Schools' Cup, Small Schools' Cup and B Team Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 15 years and under the age of 16 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Year 11 only)

(b) Girls' Cup: Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 14 years and under the age of 16 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition. (Years 10 & 11 girls only)

(C) B Team Cup: Only players who have not represented their school in the ESFA Under 16 Schools', Elite Schools' or Small Schools' Cup are eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup. Schools that enter this competition must, on request from the ESFA, provide evidence that they have adhered to this rule. Schools that infringe this rule will be removed from both competitions. Players registered with an FA licensed academy are not eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup.

4. THE COMPETITIONS

(a) The matches shall be played on a cup tie principal and shall take precedence over all other school games.

(b) The draw will be published on the ESFA website (www.esfa.co.uk/competitions) and will be arranged so that the travelling by the away team is kept to a minimum.

5. DURATION OF MATCHES

The duration of each match shall be 40 minutes each way. If it is deemed inadvisable to play for 80 minutes, the Secretaries of the competing teams and the Referee may decide that the duration of play shall be 70 minutes (35 minutes each way).

ESFA UNDER 18 SCHOOLS' TROPHIES (BOYS & GIRLS)**INTRODUCTION**

The rules stated below shall be in addition to those entitled "General Competition Rules".

1. NAME

ESFA Under 18 Schools' Cup for Boys
ESFA Under 18 Schools' Cup for Girls
ESFA Under 18 Schools' Cup for B Teams

2. ENTRIES

- (a) The Trophies shall be offered for annual competition to schools in affiliated membership with the English Schools' Football Association.
- (b) Schools must have at least one hundred students / scholars under statutory school age on roll.
- (c) 'B' Team Cup: The cup shall be offered for annual competition to B teams of Schools in affiliated membership with the ESFA, and which have entered an 'A' team and fulfilled a fixture in the ESFA Under 18 Schools' Cup.
- (d) Save for ESFA Elite Schools' Cups and ESFA Girls' Cups, establishments operating a 'football academy' during school curriculum time, shall not be eligible to participate in ESFA Schools' Cups (ESFA Schools' Cups, ESFA Small Schools' Cups or ESFA B Team Schools' Cups). Such schools shall be permitted to enter up to two teams in each age group of the Elite Schools' Cup. 'Football Academy' status shall be applied at the discretion of the ESFA Council. **Note – for the purposes of the under 18 age group, the 'Elite' competition shall be the ESFA Under 18 Super League.*

3. ELIGIBLE PLAYERS

- (a) Only bona-fide scholars receiving full time education in accordance with the Education Acts who are on the roll of a school affiliated to the ESFA and who are over the age of 15 years and under the age of 18 years at midnight between the previous 31st August and 1st September shall be allowed to take part in this competition (Year 11 to 13). Students on courses based upon day-release are ineligible to take part in this competition.
- (b) To be eligible to play in the U18 Schools' Cup or the U18 B Team Schools' Cup, players should have been on roll at the school for the formal Level 2 examinations in Year 11.
- (c) A team may be permitted to play up to 4 players that joined the school post 16. (note: only 4 players that joined the school post 16 are able to be named in the matchday squad of 16 players, per game. Different players can be named in each game)
- (d) B Team Cup: Only players who have not represented their school in the ESFA Under 18 Schools' Cup are eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup. Schools that enter this competition must, on request from the ESFA, provide evidence that they have adhered to this rule. Schools that infringe this rule will be removed from both competitions. Players registered with an FA Licensed Academy Club are not eligible to take part in the 'B' Team Cup.

4. THE COMPETITIONS

- (a) The matches shall be played on a cup tie principle and shall take precedence over all other school games.
- (b) The draws will be published on the ESFA website (www.esfa.co.uk/competitions) and will be arranged so that the travelling by the away team is kept to a minimum.

5. DURATION OF MATCHES

The duration of each match shall be 45 minutes each way. If it is deemed inadvisable to play for 90 minutes, the Secretaries of the competing teams and the Referee may decide that the duration of play shall be no less than 80 minutes (40 minutes each way).

ORDER OF PRECEDENCE RELATING TO SCHOOLS' FOOTBALL FIXTURES

The order of precedence regarding schools' football fixtures, as agreed by the ESFA Council, is as follows:

1. ESFA International matches and International selection weekends
2. ESFA Inter-County matches
3. ESFA Inter-District matches
4. ESFA Inter-School matches
5. Non-ESFA Inter-County competition matches
6. Non-ESFA Inter-District competition matches
7. Non-ESFA Inter-School competition matches
8. Inter-County non-competition matches
9. Inter-District non-competition matches
10. Inter-School non-competition matches

The most likely clashes are between counties and districts, particularly when a district has a game in the ESFA Inter-District Cup, and a county has a non-ESFA competition match. In such an instance, the ESFA Inter-District game would take precedence.

Updated: November 2016

POLICY RELATING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF MATCH OFFICIALS

Competition Rule 13 – Match Officials:

- (a) The Match Officials shall be appointed as Council shall direct. Their duties shall be accordance with the Laws of the Game as sanctioned and enforced by the International Football Association Board.
- (b) In the event of a referee failing to appear, the teams involved must agree in writing upon one on the ground so that the game shall be conducted in accordance with the rules. The official so acting shall have the powers of a duly appointed referee.
- (c) Match Officials for National Competitions shall be arranged by Council Members in accordance with the rules of the competition

Policy for all Rounds up to and including National Quarter Finals:

The ESFA Council directs that the appointment of Match Officials is the responsibility of the 'home' team in all rounds of ESFA National Cup competitions, up to and including the Quarter Finals. The local Referees' Association Secretary or County Schools' FA / FA Referees' Officer may be available to assist with the appointment of Match Officials. All appointed referees must hold and valid and current DBS Criminal Record Check and be registered with the County FA. If the home team is unable to appoint a neutral and qualified referee, then the away team must be informed before they travel as a matter of courtesy and to agree upon who will referee the match.

In the National Semi-Final and Final, the appointment of Match Officials shall be the responsibility of the ESFA National Competitions Manager. The Director of Operations may, at his / her discretion, delegate the responsibility of the appointment to a local County or District Schools' FA. The following will be taken into consideration when appointing match officials:

1. The Match Officials will not reside in the county of the home or away team and shall have no direct link with the school, District or County Association.
2. The location of the match and journey times involved to save on travel and cost. Teams of Referees, sharing transport will be equally considered (safeguarding regulations must be complied with).
3. All Match Officials MUST hold a valid and current FA DBS Criminal Record Check
4. All Match Officials will be registered with their County FA and must have declared that they are available to officiate in Youth and School matches and have actively officiated in Schools' Football during the current season.

5. For National Cup final fixtures, a suitably qualified referee will be appointed to the match. Young referees, with appropriate experience, can be considered for Under 11 – Under 13 Cup finals.
6. Match Officials are role models for the young children involved, so must be of a good level of fitness and of a suitable profile to officiate.
7. The ESFA encourages young officials to be involved, but also suitably skilled & experienced enough to officiate the fixture.
8. Referees will be required to wear the ESFA Badge that will be sent to them in the post before the event.

National Finals are formal occasions so Match Officials will be expected to arrive & depart from the venue, suitably attired. If Officials require an ESFA Referees Tie than we can arrange for this to be sent in advance of the event, subject to cost and availability.

The English Schools' FA will pay travel expenses at £0.25 pence per mile for national Semi-Final and Final fixtures. Match officials are encouraged to travel together where possible. This policy will be reviewed from time to time and subject to financial decisions made as deemed necessary by the ESFA Trustees. The ESFA recommends that a match fee of £30 is offered to the referee and £20 for each assistant referee, save for those that have been invited to officiate at a National Finals, where officials will be presented with a suitable memento and a post-match meal.

Updated; January 2021

ESFA POLICY RELATING TO THE POSTPONEMENT OF MATCHES

Consideration should always be given to securing a certified 3G or 4G pitch, at least as a backup, to increase the chances of the fixture being played. Communication between both teams is imperative particularly when a long journey is involved. If the weather forecast or conditions give reason for suspecting a pitch might be unplayable then these guidelines should be followed to minimise wasted journeys and to allow the away team to potentially avoid incurring unnecessary travel costs. In such cases, the home team must use best endeavors to make an early morning pitch inspection to decide whether the pitch is "Unplayable", "Playable" or "In Doubt". This inspection could be done by a referee, by a team official or venue official. Where the weather forecast is inclement during the days leading up to the fixture and it is extremely unlikely that the game will go ahead, then an earlier decision may be required if a particularly long journey and in some cases where an overnight stay is involved.

- With "Unplayable" pitches that are not going to be playable by the KO time, a home team representative should telephone the away team manager / official to cancel immediately so unnecessary journeys are not made. This call should be made before contacting home team players
- With "Playable" pitches (including pitches that will obviously thaw in time), the Home Team need not do anything. The away team manager will presume the match is on unless he/she is called
- With pitches "In Doubt" (and unlikely to thaw in time) then a home team representative should telephone and advise the away team manager of the possibility of abandonment. It is then up to the away team manager to decide whether his team makes the journey or not, taking into account how far the journey is

The Inspection

- Take some time to consider all that you have seen and heard (if relevant)
- If you are in doubt about whether to play the game or not – postpone the game

It is better to postpone the game and be wrong, than play the game and be wrong!

- Make a decision in your mind and stick to it (unless something really drastic occurs that would need you to change it i.e.: the weather completely changes in a very short space of time)
- Discuss the situation as you see it with the team(s) and explain your decision as to whether the game can go ahead or not. Refer to the evidence you have i.e.: weather forecasts/actual things you have seen whilst inspecting the pitch
- Be positive in your approach to people who are seeking your opinion and show a degree of empathy if the game cannot go ahead, especially if others disagree
- If the game can go ahead, ensure you remind all those concerned that if for some reason things do change that cause you a real concern for the safety of players and yourself... you do reserve the right to reverse your decision to preserve the safety of the players and yourself

This is just a caveat in case of need; if you are in doubt about whether to play the game or not – postpone the game.

- The reference point for your decision is always the safety of the players and yourself

If this cannot be guaranteed for the whole of the game re: the playing surface/pitch conditions then postpone the game

- If you don't think you will finish the game... don't start the game
- Make a brief note of your discussions and with whom... so that you can accurately report the circumstances around your decision. This will be required by the organiser of the competition the game was due to take place in if the game is postponed

If the home team fails to communicate that a match has been postponed and the visiting team has travelled a significant distance or undertaken a good proportion of the journey, then the ESFA may switch the re-arranged fixture in order to share the cost of travel for the game. Note: In relation to Inter-District and Inter-County fixtures, the ESFA will only pay out travel and staging grants for matches that have taken place and not those that have been postponed or cancelled.

Updated: January 2018

90% OF PLAYERS PERFORM
BETTER WHEN YOU'RE

**POSITIVE
POSITIVE
POSITIVE**



RESPECT
ENGLAND FOOTBALL Nationwide

**POSITIVITY
ALWAYS
WINS**