

MATCHDAY ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT PACK



Creating a united #EssexFootball environment that tackles inequalities, delivers inspirational football opportunities and improves health For All

Supported by



MATCHDAY ENVIRONMENT CLUB SUPPORT PACK



#PlayYourPart

Creating a united #EssexFootball environment that tackles inequalities, delivers inspirational football opportunities and improves health For All

The grassroots game in Essex is thriving, with over 1,000 clubs and 5,500+ teams affiliating and playing football across the county in the 2023/24 season, continuing Essex's role as one of the largest counties in the country for football participation.

This is hugely positive, and credit to the grassroots football workforce. As we move into our new #MovingForward 2028 Strategy, we continue to build on, and sustain, this brilliant foundation we have developed, which sees over 2,500 games take place every weekend across the season.

In The FA's, and the Essex County FA's, 2028 strategies, one of our most important areas of work is to ensure the game is able to continue to thrive, and that we support football to collectively address some of the negative and disruptive matchday behaviours we are, unfortunately, seeing.

This resource pack has been updated to provide clubs in Essex with useful information to utilise and help ensure the best and most inclusive environment continues to be created. Football brings people together. It provides an outlet and an escape to our busy lives. Whatever our involvement in grassroots football, we all have a role to play in allowing everyone to enjoy the game.

Hopefully, these resources are useful in supporting club committees to promote processes and messages within their respective club, to set standards on and off the pitch and create a safe, inclusive and positive environment.

We hope these resources are of use, and we look forward to working with you to allow communities across Essex to enjoy the grassroots game. Our Football Development Team are on-hand to discuss any of the resources, and advise on how to implement them: www.essexfa.com/about/contact-us.

Brendan Walshe

Essex County FA
Chief Executive

Hafiza Patel

Essex County FA
Inclusion Advisory Group

CONTENTS



Top Tip:

Share the **#PlayYourPart Clubs/Referees/Spectators/Coaches/Players** documents within your club membership, in your clubhouse, via WhatsApp groups, on your club's website, via social media or even hyperlink them as a banner on existing club communication documents!



Respect The Standard

The grassroots game has a new Grassroots Code. Formerly known as the code of conduct, the Grassroots Code is designed to unite everyone across grassroots football by driving positive standards of behaviour we can all get behind.

To be shared with membership (e.g. via WhatsApp groups or club noticeboards)



#PlayYourPart Clubs

This infographic will guide you and make suggestions for how you, as a club, can #PlayYourPart in ensuring your matchday environment is the best it can be.

Internal committee use only



#PlayYourPart Referees

A reference point and reminder to referees of their role in having positive impact on the overall matchday environment.

To be shared with membership (e.g. via WhatsApp groups or clubs noticeboards)



#PlayYourPart Spectators

This can be used with spectators as a reference point and reminder of their role in having a positive impact on the matchday environment when representing their club.

To be shared with membership (e.g. via WhatsApp groups or clubs noticeboards)



#PlayYourPart Coaches

This infographic can be used as a reference for coaches and a reminder of their role in having a positive impact on the matchday environment when representing their club.

To be shared with membership (e.g. via WhatsApp groups or club noticeboards)



#PlayYourPart Players

This can be used as a reference point and a reminder to players of their role in having a positive impact on the matchday environment when representing their club.

To be shared with membership (e.g. via WhatsApp groups or club noticeboards)



Guide to Coaches Workshop

This infographic provides hints and tips for when, how and why it is important to hold an annual coaches workshop for those representing a club.

Internal committee use only



Guide to Parents and Spectators Workshop

This highlights the importance of annual parent and spectator workshops, and how to deliver them internally within a club.

Internal committee use only



Reporting Discrimination

This infographic outlines the importance of reporting discrimination, and the process which will then be taken.

To be shared with membership



Dealing with Breaches of Codes of Conduct

This two-page infographic provides process guidance on dealing with breaches of codes of conduct.

Internal committee use only



SHARING THE GRASSROOTS CODE AND STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Show you Respect The Standard

The grassroots game has a new **Grassroots Code**. Formerly known as the Code of Conduct, The Grassroots Code is designed to unite everyone across grassroots football by driving positive standards of behaviour we can all get behind.

Created with contributions gathered from grassroots clubs, The Grassroots Code includes **Standards of Behaviour** which ensure a positive football environment for all. They're very clear, so everyone can understand and remember them:

- **Enjoy The Game** *We're here to enjoy ourselves...win, lose or draw.*
- **Give Respect** *We always treat others as we'd like to be treated.*
- **Be Inclusive** *We embrace our differences...football is a game for everyone.*
- **Work Together** *We're a team, on and off the pitch.*
- **Play Safe** *We all have a role in safeguarding children.*

Together, these Standards of Behaviour promote a positive, inclusive and respectful football experience for everyone. The aim is to communicate fun, positivity, respect, inclusivity, teamwork and safe spaces. All of this is wrapped in a national **Respect the Standard** campaign promoting the Code's new Standards of Behaviour.

THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF MATCHDAY BEHAVIOUR FOR

CLUBS



...towards COACHES

Provide the coaches within your club with clear responsibilities, and the **LEARNING** they require to create a positive environment

Ensure coaches are suitably resourced and qualified to fulfil their roles, and create a **SAFE** environment For All



Do not allow poor and **DISRESPECTFUL** behaviours from your own clubs coaches to go unchallenged. They are representing your organisation

...towards CLUBS

Provide a supportive, **ENGAGING** and welcoming environment to visiting club members

Do not challenge and **DISRESPECT** the ethos and values of other clubs. Their context may be different to yours

...towards PLAYERS

Recognise and showcase positive behaviours

Provide opportunities for senior players to act as role models to younger players

Do not allow poor and **DISRESPECTFUL** behaviours from your own players to go unchallenged. They are representing your organisation

...towards SPECTATORS

Provide guidance to spectators on the club's expectations in relation to their responsibilities and behaviours

Do not allow poor and **DISRESPECTFUL** behaviours from your own spectators to go unchallenged. They are representing your organisation

...towards REFEREES

Provide a supportive, **ENGAGING** and welcoming environment to visiting match officials

Do not allow spectators and club officials to create an **UNSAFE** and **DISRESPECTFUL** environment through allowing poor behaviour from the sidelines

Creating a united **#EssexFootball** environment that tackles inequalities, delivers inspirational football opportunities and improves health **For All**

Be part of the reason why people love the game, not leave the game.
Be a positive role model.

#PLAYYOURPART



THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF MATCHDAY BEHAVIOUR FOR

REFEREES



...towards COACHES

Ensure **ENGAGEMENT** by consistently and fairly applying the laws of the game and competition rules

Encourage professional behaviours which benefit the environment

Do not criticize or question the decision-making of a coach

Do not **DISENGAGE** coaches by being dismissive towards any questions asked in a **RESPECTFUL** manner



...towards CLUBS

ENGAGE with everyone in a positive, calm and confident manner

Meet, greet and **ENGAGE** with the coaches and players

Ensure the **SAFETY** of all through pitch and equipment inspections, and the use of **RESPECT** barriers and technical areas

Do not **DISRESPECT** the other team's coaches, players or spectators - report any concerns through the official channels

Do not lose **RESPECT, ENGAGEMENT** and **SAFETY** by accepting offensive, insulting or abusive language or behaviour from players or team officials

...towards PLAYERS

Support players with **LEARNING** the laws of the game

Ensure the **SAFETY** of all by dealing professionally with all instances of violence, aggression, unsporting behaviour, foul play and other misconduct

RESPECT players by being clear, consistent and caring with your behaviours

Do not **DISENGAGE** players by being dismissive towards any questions asked in a **RESPECTFUL** manner

Avoid creating an **UNSAFE** and unpredictable environment by displaying inconsistent behaviours

...towards SPECTATORS

Work collectively with spectators to ensure the environment created is positive and **ENGAGING**

Avoid **ENGAGING** in confrontations or disputes with spectators about decisions which have been made - always maintain a calm and professional demeanour

...towards REFEREES

Demonstrate **RESPECT** for your profession by arriving dressed in the suitable attire and equipped with the necessary tools to effectively perform your role

Be clear and concise with the instructions and directions towards those assisting you within your role

Do not criticise the decisions of fellow colleagues - show **RESPECT** and support them at all times

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THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF MATCHDAY BEHAVIOUR FOR SPECTATORS



...towards COACHES



RESPECT the coach and the decisions made by supporting the players through the tasks they have been given

Do not **DISRESPECT** the coach and negatively impact the **LEARNING** of players through confusing and contradictory instruction

...towards CLUBS

Remember that the players, coaches and referee may be **LEARNING** the game

Encourage your child and/or players to **RESPECT** the opposition and match officials

RESPECT the opposition, and the badge and values of your own club

Do not affect the **SAFETY** of others by entering the field of play without reasonable permission

...towards PLAYERS

Remember that most players **ENGAGE** in football because it's fun

RESPECT and appreciate good play, whichever team it comes from

Do not **DISRESPECT** players by using negative, hostile or intimidating language

...towards SPECTATORS

Take ownership of your pivotal role in the **ENGAGEMENT, SAFETY, LEARNING** and creation of a **RESPECTFUL** matchday environment

Avoid **ENGAGING** in confrontations or disputes with other spectators - always maintain a calm and **RESPECTFUL** demeanour as a role model for positive behaviours

...towards REFEREES

Be **RESPECTFUL** by using appropriate language

Role model the positive and **RESPECTFUL** behaviours we want the players to replicate

Do not **DISRESPECT** referees by using negative, hostile or intimidating language

Do not question the integrity of the match officials

Do not create an **UNSAFE** environment for referees by allowing poor behaviours from yourself or your own team members to go unchecked

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THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF MATCHDAY BEHAVIOUR FOR

COACHES



...towards COACHES



ENGAGE and greet opposition coaches as you would wish to be treated, before, during and after a match

Role model positive touchline behaviours in a calm, **RESPECTFUL** and professional manner

Do not **ENGAGE** in **DISRESPECTFUL** and unprofessional touchline behaviour with opposition coaches

...towards CLUBS

RESPECT the opposition, and the badge and values of your own club

Ensure the **SAFETY** of all through pitch and equipment inspections, and the use of **RESPECT** barriers and technical areas

Do not **DISRESPECT** the other teams coaches, players and spectators - report any concerns through the official channels

Do not affect the **SAFETY** of others by entering the field of play without reasonable judgement or permission

...towards PLAYERS

ENGAGE players through meeting their needs first

Allow players equal opportunities to **LEARN**

RESPECT players by being clear, consistent and caring with your behaviours

Use simple, relevant and appropriate language to help players **LEARN**

Do not **DISENGAGE** players using negative, hostile or intimidating language

Do not create an **UNSAFE** and uncertain psychological environment through the use of inconsistent behaviours

...towards SPECTATORS

ENGAGE parents in the **LEARNING** outcomes before the match

Remind spectators of their obligations to be **RESPECTFUL** before, during and after the match

Do not **DISRESPECT** referees through negative, hostile or intimidating behaviours

Do not create an **UNSAFE** environment for referees by allowing poor behaviours from your own members to go unchecked

...towards REFEREES

ENGAGE referees through meeting, greeting and thanking

Inform the referee if your players need more support with **LEARNING** the laws of the game

Do not allow spectators to create an **UNSAFE** and **DISRESPECTFUL** environment by allowing poor behaviour from the sidelines

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THE DO'S AND DONT'S OF MATCHDAY BEHAVIOUR FOR

PLAYERS



...towards COACHES



RESPECT the coaches' decisions - should you have an issue to raise, do this at an appropriate time and in a **RESPECTFUL** manner

Do not challenge or disrupt the **LEARNING** environment established by the coach, even if you have personal disagreements

...towards CLUBS

Win or lose with dignity - be **RESPECTFUL** and shake hands with the opposing team at the end of every game

Do not **DISRESPECT** the other team's coaches, players or spectators

RESPECT the badge and values of your own club

Never **ENGAGE** in public criticism of the match officials, players or coaches

...towards PLAYERS

ENGAGE in fair play

Do not engage in **UNSAFE** play

Ensure your own **SAFETY** by wearing the correct footwear, shinpads and appropriate clothing

Do not **DISRESPECT** others by using negative, hostile or intimidating language

...towards SPECTATORS

POSITIVELY show acts of appreciation towards spectators at games wherever possible

Never **ENGAGE** in confrontational conversations with spectators

...towards REFEREES

ENGAGE with referees by meeting, greeting and thanking

Do not affect the **SAFETY** of others by entering the field of play without reasonable permission

Be **RESPECTFUL** by using appropriate language

Do not create an **UNSAFE** environment for referees by allowing poor behaviours from yourself, or your own teammates, to go unchecked

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GUIDE TO A COACHES WORKSHOP



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WHY HOLD A COACHES WORKSHOP?

- Align coaches with the club's mission, vision and values
- Introducing key club committee members to meet other coaches
- To prepare for the season ahead

WHAT COULD BE INCLUDED?

- Highlighting positive coaching behaviours
- Signposting to learning and support opportunities
- Promoting good practice and sharing coaching ideas
- We have created a template presentation which you can personalise for your club, downloadable from our website: www.essexfa.com/leagues-and-clubs/matchday-environment.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO HOLD A WORKSHOP?

- Ideally, before the season starts
- You could also arrange a mid-season and end-of-season 'get together'
- Consult with your coaches, in order to maximise attendance

WHERE COULD YOU HOLD THE WORKSHOP?

- Club venue
- Local school hall
- Community centre

HOW COULD THE WORKSHOP BE DELIVERED?

- It could be led by your club's Chairperson, Secretary and/or Welfare Officer
- Keep it brief (i.e. no more than one hour)
- Try to engage coaches with a mixture of information, engaging in discussion

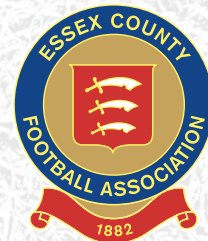
Many clubs have fed back that this is a great way to kick-off the season, and coaches feel more confident and supported in their roles.

We'd love to hear from clubs who host a Coaches Workshop. Please let us know about yours via social media (don't forget to tag us and include the #PlayYourPart hashtag)!

For more information or support, please contact your local Coach Development Team in the first instance: www.essexfa.com/about/contact-us.



GUIDE TO PARENTS AND SPECTATORS WORKSHOP



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WHY HOLD A PARENTS AND SPECTATORS WORKSHOP?

- This is an opportunity to welcome everyone to your club, and to the new season ahead
- Share the clubs vision, mission and values
- An opportunity to set expectations for the season. What can they expect from you? What do you expect from them?
- Parents and spectators to sign a code of conduct

WHAT COULD BE INCLUDED?

We have created a template presentation which you can personalise for your club, downloadable from our website: www.essexfa.com/leagues-and-clubs/matchday-environment.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO HOLD A WORKSHOP?

- Ideally, before the season starts
- You could combine it with player registration day or a club social
- Consider a time which would suit the majority of your members

WHERE COULD YOU HOLD THE WORKSHOP?

- Club venue
- Local school hall
- Community centre

HOW COULD THE WORKSHOP BE DELIVERED?

- It should be delivered by the club committee, so key messages are shared by those running the club
- Keep it brief (i.e. no more than one hour)
- Some clubs have made it compulsory for one parent/guardian per child to attend before player registration is signed-off
- Having refreshments available on the day can be helpful

Many clubs have fed back that this is a great way to kick-off the season. Spectators leave with more clarity regarding the part they play, and the expectations of them.

We'd love to hear from clubs who host a Parents and Spectators Workshop. Please let us know about yours via social media (don't forget to tag us and include the #PlayYourPart hashtag)!

For more information or support, please contact your local Football Development Officer in the first instance: www.essexfa.com/about/contact-us.



REPORTING DISCRIMINATION



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The Essex County FA are determined to provide a safe, inclusive and positive football environment for all participants. Discrimination has no place in football. It can be upsetting and hurtful. So, when you tell us about it, we listen, and we act.

If you've witnessed discrimination in football, there are a number of ways of reporting it to us (see below). We investigate every report of discrimination we receive, and treat each one seriously.

Once you've reported an incident involving discriminatory language or behaviour, this is shared with The FA, who oversee the process. A County FA investigation takes place, where the evidence provided is reviewed and potential charge(s) will be determined. Charges raised by the County FA are considered by a disciplinary commission appointed by The FA from their National Serious Case Panel.

The alleged offender will be asked for a response to the allegation, and all identified witnesses will be asked to provide a statement as well. This may take place in-person (hearings are currently taking place online) or by correspondence. Once the disciplinary commission have completed the hearing, the offence is either proven or not proven. Any outcome would be subject to appeal.



Report directly to the Essex County FA
E-Mail: discipline@essexfa.com



Report directly to The FA
**[www.thefa.com/inclusion-and-anti-discrimination/
reporting-discrimination/grassroots-game](http://www.thefa.com/inclusion-and-anti-discrimination/reporting-discrimination/grassroots-game)**



Report via Kick it Out
(including the Kick it Out App)
www.kickitout.org/report
E-Mail: report@kickitout.org

Support available:

Kick It Out offer tailored support to players and clubs who may have faced discrimination in football:
www.kickitout.org/get-support/support-players

Sporting Chance provide FA-funded support services:
www.sportingchanceclinic.com

Kooth is an anonymous mental health toolkit for children aged 11-18:
www.kooth.com

Young Minds have a range of mental health resources and guidance for dealing with racism:
www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/coping-with-life/racism-and-mental-health/#theimpactofracismonmentalhealth

Essex County FA Equality & Inclusion Officer:
www.essexfa.com/about/contact-us

DEALING WITH BREACHES OF CODES OF CONDUCT



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Dealing with Breaches of Codes of Conduct

No matter how well a club is run, there is always the possibility of having to handle complaints and discipline issues. Dealing with incidents of poor practice or misconduct from club officials, spectators or players can seem somewhat daunting at first. However, by following a clear process, matters can be dealt with both efficiently and appropriately.

Codes of Conduct

We recommend, at the start of any new season, that each member of the club should sign-up to the relevant Code of Conduct. The club should maintain a hard copy or electronic register, which can evidence that everyone has read it and committed to adhering to it. Please explore The Grassroots Code to find editable codes of conduct for participants in youth and adult football:

www.EnglandFootball.com/participate/behaviour/the-grassroots-code.

Sanctions

If a complaint or report of misconduct is raised to the club, the committee should review it and gather relevant statements to support a fair investigation within your capacity as a volunteer-run club. If the committee find that the report is upheld/proven, there are a number of sanctions your club may deem as appropriate action to take.

We advise clubs to keep good records of complaints made, and committee actions. Sanctions are incorporated into the above codes of conduct, which all members at the club should have signed-up to at the beginning of every season. Sanctions could include:

- a verbal warning
- meet with the club committee
- meet with the league or County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer
- complete an FA education course
- request not to attend future games
- suspend or remove club membership

Liaising with the Essex County FA

Before starting a process, we encourage you to contact us to see if any investigation is underway concerning the complaint, as an Essex County FA disciplinary investigation may need to be concluded first. Our Football Services and Safeguarding Departments are also on hand to reassure and guide clubs through the process.

If any club would like specific support around a process to follow, please don't hesitate to get in touch:

www.essexfa.com/about/contact-us.

Essex County Football Association

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www.essexfa.com



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