



Policy Document: Coaching Mandates, Roles & Compliance

1. Coaching Mandates & Supervision Standards

Lead Coach Mandate

A **Lead Coach** is defined as any individual who takes direct responsibility for planning, managing, or delivering training sessions or matchday fixtures independently.

- **Eligibility & Minimum Qualifications:**
 - Must be **at least 18 years of age**.
 - Must hold the **FA Introduction to Coaching Football** qualification (or former FA Level 1 or higher).
 - Must hold a valid, active **FA Safeguarding Children** certification.
 - Must hold a valid **FA Introduction to First Aid in Football (IFAF)** qualification (or accepted equivalent).
 - Must have an active, clear **FA Enhanced DBS Check** recorded on the club portal/FA Whole Game System.
- **Operational Mandate:**
 - Only a fully certified Lead Coach may run a training session or squad independently.
 - Must be physically present on site for the full duration of any training session or matchday fixture.

Assistant Coach Mandate

An **Assistant Coach** is defined as any volunteer, parent helper, or trainee coach who assists with coaching drills, matchday logistics, or squad support.

- **Eligibility & Minimum Qualifications:**
 - Must have an active, clear **FA Enhanced DBS Check** verified by the club before taking part in any session.
 - Must complete the **FA Safeguarding Children** qualification.
 - Encouraged to complete the entry-level **FA Playmaker** course.
- **Operational Mandate:**
 - **Strictly Supervised Role:** Assistant coaches **cannot** lead a training session or take charge of a matchday squad independently if they do not hold full Lead Coach credentials.
 - Assistant coaches must always operate under the direct physical supervision of a qualified Lead Coach (18+).

- **Two-Adult Rule:** Regardless of individual qualifications, Send United mandates a **minimum of two DBS-checked adults** present at every training session and match fixture for safeguarding and emergency cover.

2. Key Roles & Responsibilities Framework

Head of Junior Development

- **Governance & Audit:** Oversee the club's coaching register to ensure all team coaches meet FA DBS and training compliance standards prior to delivery.
- **Development Philosophy:** Establish clear player progression frameworks across Foundation (U5–U11) and Youth (U12–U16) phases, maintaining a strong focus on equal game time (minimum 50% per player on matchdays).
- **Squad & Streaming Policies:** Oversee balanced team selection approaches (such as Send United's U8 ability-based development model), ensuring selections consider attendance, effort, and current skill levels to build player confidence.
- **Touchline Culture:** Enforce the **FA Respect Code of Conduct** and promote player-centred initiatives such as **Silent Support Days**.

Team Coaches (Lead & Assistant)

- **Duty of Care & Safety:** Conduct pre-session pitch checks and ensure mandatory equipment standards are met (e.g. shin pads covered completely by socks, appropriate footwear, goal-anchor checks).
- **Format & Rule Adherence:** Enforce age-appropriate FA playing laws (e.g. **5v5 format for U7–U8, pass-in/dribble-in options, and deliberate heading bans for U7–U10**).
- **Positive Coaching Mindset:** Prioritise individual long-term technical growth, positional exploration, and player effort over scorelines or league standings.

Legal & Regulatory Consequences of Non-Compliance

If the FA, County FA, Local Authority, or legal bodies discover that club training or match sessions are being run by unqualified, unverified, or non-DBS-checked coaches, the consequences are severe across regulatory, civil, and criminal frameworks:

1. FA Regulatory Sanctions

- **Immediate Suspension:** The County FA will issue an immediate suspension against non-compliant coaches and team officials, barring them from all football-related activities.
- **Loss of England Football Accreditation:** Non-compliance with safeguarding or minimum coaching standards results in the immediate revocation of the club's England Football (Charter Standard) Accreditation.
- **Financial Fines & League Disqualification:** Leagues and County FAs can impose substantial financial penalties on the club, forfeit fixtures, deduct points, or remove non-compliant squads from competition altogether.

- **Revocation of Affiliation:** Severe or persistent breaches will result in the County FA cancelling the club's affiliation, effectively preventing Send United from competing in any organised league.

2. Legal Liability & Breach of Duty of Care

- **Civil Negligence Claims:** Under British Civil Law (*Law of Negligence*), grassroots football clubs owe a strict duty of care to children. Allowing an uncertified or non-DBS-checked individual to run sessions independently represents a direct breach of this duty of care.
- **Personal Officer Liability:** Unincorporated grassroots sports clubs pass financial and legal liabilities onto their management committee (e.g. Club Chair, Secretary, Welfare Officer, Head of Junior Development). If a child suffers a serious injury or harm during a session led by an unqualified coach, committee officers can be **sued personally** for damages and legal fees.

3. Criminal Offences Under Safeguarding Legislation

- **Regulated Activity Violations:** Under the *Protection of Freedoms Act 2012* and the *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006*, coaching minors is classed as a "Regulated Activity".
- **Prosecution:** Knowingly permitting an un-DBS-checked individual—or an individual barred from working with children—to deliver regulated activity is a **criminal offence**, punishable by severe fines and imprisonment for responsible club officers.

4. Invalidation of Insurance Policies

- **Public Liability & Personal Accident Cover:** Grassroots football insurance policies explicitly mandate that all sessions must be led by appropriately qualified, DBS-checked personnel who meet FA minimum standards.
- **Uninsured Liabilities:** If an incident or serious injury occurs under an unqualified or non-DBS-checked coach, the insurer will **void the claim**. The club and its officers would be left personally responsible for all medical compensation and legal costs, which can easily reach hundreds of thousands of pounds.

