

CONSTITUTION OF THE MIDDLESEX SCHOOLS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

1. NAME

This Association shall be called the Middlesex Schools' Football Association (MSFA). The Association shall affiliate to the English Schools' Football Association (ESFA) and the South-East England Schools' Football Association (SEESFA).

2. AIMS AND OBJECTS

a. The Association shall exist to administer, develop and promote the sport of Association Football within schools in the London Boroughs of Barnet, Brent, Ealing, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow, Hillingdon and Hounslow (hereinafter referred to as "the County").

b. As part of this work, the Association commits to managing competitions for children in full-time education in these boroughs, which shall be divided into the following categories:

- **Inter-School Competitions:** These shall be open to all schools within the County, provided they are affiliated members of MSFA, have entered in such manner as determined by the Management Committee and paid the appropriate entry fee, as may be set by the Management Committee.

Schools from outside the County may also apply to participate in these competitions, provided their parent County Schools' FA gives permission for them to participate.

- **Inter-District Competitions:** These shall be open to Representative Teams which are fully affiliated to the ESFA via their District Schools' FA (DSFA) or Local Football Organiser (LFO), provided they have entered in such manner as determined by the Management Committee and paid the appropriate entry fee, as may be set by the Management Committee.

District Representative Teams from outside the County may also apply to participate in these competitions, provided their parent County Schools' FA gives permission for them to participate.

c. The Management Committee shall have the right to amend the format of any competition as it sees fit and may choose to suspend a competition for one season in the event of there being insufficient entries to make it viable. However, it shall not withdraw a competition permanently, nor introduce new competitions, without endorsement from a General Meeting of Members.

d. The Association shall support competitions in each of its Districts, by overseeing the work of DSFAs and LFOs and sanctioning the competitions they manage locally.

e. The Association will work with partner organisations, such as ESFA and the Middlesex Football Association, to develop new opportunities for children to play football where possible and will promote those new opportunities where possible.

f. The Association will have the right to select Representative Teams to compete in SEESFA and ESFA competitions. To be eligible for selection for one of these teams, a student must be in full-time education at a school within the County and meet the relevant age requirements as may be determined by ESFA. Students whose schools are not members of the Association can be considered for selection.

The decision as to whether to field Representative Teams and which competitions those teams shall enter will be made annually by the Management Committee.

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3. MEMBERSHIP

a. The Membership of the Association shall be made up of the following:

- **Schools:** All schools within the County shall be eligible for full membership of the Association. Membership shall be renewed annually, upon receipt of such information as required by the Management Committee and the accompanying Affiliation Fee.
- **District Schools' FAs:** All District Schools' FAs (DSFAs) recognised as such by ESFA and situated within the County shall automatically hold full membership of the Association for as long as they remain recognised by ESFA. No fees shall be payable for membership but may be payable for entry to competitions and / or for other services.
- **Local Football Organisers:** Where there is a borough within the County where a DSFA is not in place, the Association will recognise a Steering Group or similar informal vehicle for organising Schools' Football in that borough. The group and/or organisation recognised in this way shall be deemed to be the Local Football Organiser (LFO) for that borough and shall hold full membership of the Association for as long as they remain recognised as the LFO. No fees shall be payable for membership but may be payable for entry to competitions and / or for other services.
- **Associate Member:** A School, DSFA or LFO not based in the County, but having been given permission by their parent County Schools' FA to participate in MSFA competitions shall be deemed an Associate Member of the Association. Schools, DSFAs and LFOs seeking Associate Membership shall be liable for the same fees and charges as Full Members within the same category.
- **Individual:** A person elected to serve on the Management Committee, either as an Officer of the Association, or as a Competition Organiser shall be considered a Full Member of the Association for as long as they remain in the role to which they were elected.
- **Honorary:** At each Annual General Meeting, the Management Committee may bestow Honorary Membership upon individuals they consider having served the Association with distinction. Honorary Memberships will generally fall into two categories:
 - **Vice-Presidency:** The Association may nominate individuals to hold a Vice-Presidency; Vice-Presidents shall not hold voting powers and once elected, shall hold their office until such time as they resign it or, in the event that a General Meeting votes to remove the office holder from their position. Such a vote should not be held without good cause.
 - **Life Member:** The Association may nominate Life Members in recognition of long and / or meritorious service. Life Members shall hold the same voting rights as an Individual Member and retain them until they die unless they resign their membership or bring the Association into disrepute. If the Management Committee feels there is evidence that a Life Member has brought the Association into disrepute, they shall have the right to suspend the membership of the person until such time as a General Meeting (either called to discuss the matter or scheduled to deal with normal business) can be held. At said General Meeting, the Management Committee shall outline why they consider the Life Membership to be in question and a vote taken as to whether the individual concerned should retain it.

b. At General Meetings, members shall be entitled to vote on the business of the meeting as appropriate. Each member shall hold a specific number of votes based on their membership category:

- **District Schools' FAs:** 3 votes each
- **Schools / Local Football Organisers:** 2 votes each
- **Individual and Life Members:** 1 vote each
- **Associate Members, Honorary Members and Vice-Presidents** shall not be entitled to vote at General Meetings but shall be entitled to attend General Meeting as observers.

An individual member may also represent both a school and a DSFA or LFO, but this must be declared in writing to the General Secretary not less than 24 hours prior to a General Meeting. Email shall be an acceptable means of making such a declaration, but text messaging or instant messaging

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(such as WhatsApp) shall not. In the event that a person in attendance at a General Meeting has been voting rights in more than one capacity, they shall be entitled to vote in each capacity separately.

c. The Management Committee shall set the level of subscription fees which may be charged to prospective members of the Association

4. MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION

a. At each Annual General Meeting, those present shall elect the following Officers of the Association

- President
- Chair
- Vice-Chair(s)
- General Secretary
- Assistant General Secretary
- Treasurer
- Representative Football Co-Ordinator
- Communications & Marketing Officer
- Child Welfare Officer
- Results Co-Ordinator

The Management Committee shall also have the power to create additional roles where a clear need has been identified and / or to leave roles vacant where appropriate (for instance, a Representative Football Co-Ordinator would not be required if there were no Representative Teams operating). An individual may hold more than one role if they are so elected.

b. At each Annual General Meeting, a Competition Organiser shall be elected for each competition being organised by the Association for the coming season.

c. Each DSFA and LSO shall nominate one representative to represent their borough on the Management Committee and provide the name and contact details of their nominee in writing to the General Secretary by 30th June each year.

d. Incumbent Officers and Competition Organisers shall automatically be put forward for re-election at the Annual General Meeting unless they have notified either the General Secretary or Chair in writing that they do not wish to continue in their role. Such written notice should be submitted no later than 31st May each season.

e. Those either elected or appointed in accordance with sections (a), (b) and (c) shall form the Management Committee of the Association. The General Secretary shall convene meetings as appropriate; ideally, these should be at least once a term but can be held more or less frequently if required. Meetings may be either 'face to face' or 'virtual' but, in all cases, the General Secretary shall give at least 14 days' notice of the date, format and, if appropriate, location of a Management Committee meeting and circulate the agenda and supporting documents not less than 7 days in advance.

f. A Management Committee meeting shall require a minimum of three attendees, at least one of which must be the Chair, Vice Chair, General Secretary or Treasurer to proceed. If such a quorum is not reached, the meeting shall be adjourned and reconvened.

g. Minutes shall be kept of all Management Committee meetings, either by the General Secretary, Assistant General Secretary or a nominated member of the Management Committee. These minutes shall be circulated to the members of the Management Committee and stored securely electronically in such format as determined by the Management Committee.

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5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- a. The Association's Financial Year shall run from 1st June to 31st May.
- b. Following the conclusion of the Financial Year, financial statements shall be prepared by the Treasurer and included in the Document Pack sent out to the Membership prior to the Annual General Meeting.
- c. The Association shall seek the assistance of the Middlesex Football Association (MFA) in respect of day-to-day financial management, banking, etc.
- d. In the event of a surplus being held in Association funds at the end of a Financial Year, this surplus shall be carried forward for use in the conduct of Association business in future years.

6. GENERAL MEETINGS

- a. The Association shall hold an Annual General Meeting not later than 30th June each year.
- b. All members in good standing shall be entitled to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote on the business conducted therein, in accordance with the provisions outlined in Clause 2b.
- c. A minimum of 28 days' notice shall be given of the Annual General Meeting and nominations invited for Management Committee roles within that notice.
- d. The Agenda, Financial Statements and Officers' Reports will be distributed not less than 14 days prior to the meeting. They will be accompanied by any nominations for the Management Committee roles listed in Clause 3a in addition to the incumbent Officers and Competition Organisers.
- e. In addition to Annual General Meetings, the Association may call an Extraordinary General Meeting to discuss urgent business if one or more of the following conditions are met:
 - The Chair, Vice Chair(s) and General Secretary are unanimously agreed that such a meeting is required.
 - A two-thirds majority of the Management Committee votes in favour of calling an Extraordinary General Meeting at a properly constituted meeting (*for the avoidance of doubt, the two thirds majority should be of those present at the meeting; therefore, if nine members were present, six would need to vote in favour, and so on*).
 - A minimum of ten schools write to the General Secretary setting out their reasons for calling an Extraordinary General Meeting, using at least one official school email address listed in the current season's Handbook, or that of the Headteacher. If email cannot be used, a hard copy letter on the school's headed notepaper will be sufficient.
- f. All General Meetings shall require a minimum attendance to form a quorum. For a meeting to be quorate, *both* of the following shall be fulfilled
 - A minimum of **two** Officers of the Association, as defined by Clause 3a, must be present.
 - In addition to the Officers present, at least **five** Full Members of the Association as defined by Clause 2a of this document (that is, a school in good standing, a District Schools' FA or an LFO) must be represented.
- g. If a General Meeting is not quorate, it shall be adjourned and reconvened. A minimum of 14 days' notice shall be given between the adjournment and a reconvened General Meeting. If the reconvened meeting is not quorate, decisions shall be taken as if the meeting had achieved that quoracy?
- h. At all General Meetings, a simple majority of votes cast shall be sufficient to determine the outcome of each item of business. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall hold the casting vote.

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7. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND COMPETITION RULES

a. Amendments to the Constitution of the Association shall only be made at a General Meeting. A simple majority vote, in accordance with clause 5h, in favour of the proposed changes shall be sufficient for their adoption.

b. Amendments to the rules of Competitions organised by the Association under the provisions of Clause 2b shall only be made at a General Meeting. Such amendments shall have been approved by ESFA prior to the meeting at which they are proposed for adoption. A simple majority vote, in accordance with clause 5h, in favour of the proposed changes shall be sufficient for their adoption.

8. DISCIPLINE, DISPUTES AND BREACHES OF COMPETITION RULES

a. All matters relating to on-field incidents (that is, cautions, dismissals and player and/or staff misconduct during individual matches) shall be managed by the English Schools' Football Association (ESFA). Referees should submit standard disciplinary reports to ESFA using the procedures identified by that body. Allegations of misconduct or extraordinary incidents should be made in writing to the Governance Department of ESFA.

b. All matters relating to breaches of Competition Rules shall be referred in the first instance to the General Secretary. A referral of this kind should be made in writing – preferably via email – within 72 hours of the alleged breach of rules.

- The General Secretary and / or the relevant Competition Organiser shall have the authority to investigate the alleged breach(es) of rules and in the event one or more breaches of rules is proven, to apply such sanctions as defined within the Competition Rules.
- If the school(s) and / or DSFA(s) found in breach of the Competition Rules wishes to appeal the decision of the Association in this matter, they should indicate this in writing to the General Secretary within 14 days of receipt of the decision. The General Secretary will then immediately refer this communication to the Governance Department of ESFA for their consideration.

c. All concerns, allegations or reports of poor practice/abuse relating to the welfare of children and young people will be recorded and responded to swiftly and appropriately in accordance with the Association's child protection policy and procedures, which are compliant with the National Governing Body guidance. The Association Welfare Officer is the lead contact for all members in the event of any child protection concerns.

9. SAFEGUARDING

All members of the Association shall be required to comply with safeguarding regulations laid down by the ESFA and The FA.

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

All members of the Association shall be required to comply with the equality policy/ies laid down by the ESFA and The FA.

11. COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTES POLICY

a. All members of the Association shall be required to adhere to the provisions of this policy in the event of a complaint being made against individual(s) or a dispute arising between schools and / or District teams which cannot be addressed via the Standard Code of Rules and/or by applying the provisions laid out in Clause 7 of this document.

b. All complaints against individuals and/or teams shall be made in writing to the General Secretary, clearly stating the specific nature of the complaint. The General Secretary will write to the subject(s) of the complaint and request their observations on the matter, which should be returned within 14 days' of the General Secretary making contact with the subject.

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c. The General Secretary shall have discretion to carry out additional investigations as they see fit and circulate their findings to the Chair and Vice-Chair(s). The Chair, Vice-Chair(s) and General Secretary shall consider the matter in committee and their collective decision, reached by simple majority vote, shall be communicated to both the complainant and respondent not later than 28 days following receipt of the initial complaint.

d. If either the complainant or respondent wishes to appeal the decision of the Association in this matter, they should indicate this in writing to the General Secretary within 14 days of receipt of the decision. The General Secretary will then immediately refer this communication to the Governance Department of ESFA for their consideration.

12. VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION

a. A resolution to dissolve the Association can only be passed at an AGM or EGM through a majority vote of the membership.

b. In the event of dissolution, all debts should be cleared with any Association funds. Any assets of the Association that remain following this will become the property of the Middlesex County Football Association Benevolent Fund.

13. DECLARATION

This version of the constitution was adopted at the Association's Annual General Meeting of 30 June 2022 and shall remain in force until amended by a future Annual or Extraordinary General Meeting.