

Saffron Walden Community Football Club

GUIDANCE NOTE

EJA Strategy



Aspirations for football excellence – a strategy for competing in the Eastern Junior Alliance from U13 to U18.

Saffron Walden Community Football Club (SWCFC) is one of the largest youth football clubs in Essex. From U6 to U18 over 600 footballers enjoy their football in a supportive and safe environment with a focus on developing each and every player to their full potential. As a Charter Standard Community club, we welcome players of all ability and accommodate and structure them via our Matching policy. This allows us to provide football for players who range from performance to social players and all points in between. Many players towards the performance end of the scale play at local professional club Regional Development Centres, Player Development Programmes and in shadow and elite academies. Our teams predominantly compete in the Cambridgeshire Mini and Colts leagues and the Royston Crow League with our performance teams featuring in the highest divisions. We currently have two teams competing in the Eastern Junior Alliance at U14 and U16. We also have an U18 team in the Eastern Counties Youth League.

Aspiration

SWCFC should have an EJA team at every age group from U13 to U18.

The Eastern Junior Alliance provides the youth of Eastern Home Counties the best standard of football outside of the professional club academy programmes. Teams are associated with senior clubs – Step 5 or above - from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, London, Middlesex and Suffolk. Many EJA players have subsequently had successful careers playing with their local clubs and even professional clubs. As a feeder club for Saffron Walden Town FC we aspire to provide football at the highest level currently available to children living in and around the Saffron Walden area to form a natural conduit into our senior club partner.

Meeting this aspiration

From season 2020/21 we intend to enter an U13 team into the EJA each season so that by season 2025/26 SWCFC will have a team in every age group. In order to make this possible each team will need to be able to fulfil the entry requirements of the EJA including the following;



Saffron Walden Community Football Club

GUIDANCE NOTE



- A quality venue to play matches
 - Appropriate changing facilities for players
 - Appropriate changing facilities for match officials
 - A club house for the provision of food and hot drinks for players and match officials
 - A suitable pitch that shall have barriers on all sides
- A quality venue for training
- Full home and away kits. Tracksuits to be worn to all games
- An appropriately qualified coach (ideally L2 and above) and appropriately qualified support coach(es)
- An appropriately qualified manager
- Off-the-field support will be required to organise food for the players. Often parents provide food on a rota
- Enough players of a suitable calibre to be competitive within the league. The coach will consult with the club representatives to ascertain this
- Support for trials including involvement of coaches to assess players

Club support

An EJA secretary will sit on the club committee to coordinate teams and liaise with EJA. The secretary will ensure that the team will be able to meet the requirements as laid-out above.

EJA fees and costs are higher than other colts football and this will be reflected in higher subs for players. These fees will be regularly reviewed.

Entry into the EJA is dependent on fulfilling the entry requirements and the availability of space within the EJA leagues. The club will take all reasonable and practicable steps required in order to support a team.

With the success of the matching policy and the size of the club it is expected that there will be enough players of a suitable calibre to form a team at each age group. However, the club will also support advertisements for more players where this is deemed necessary. The particulars of the advertisement (medium, target area, cost etc.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The club will direct the extent of the advertising as players should be sought from the Saffron Walden and surrounding area only.

SWCFC Board

