

## Small Schools Year 5/6 Mixed Football League – 2025/26

### Competition Structure

- **Teams:** Selected from Year 5 and 6 (mixed gender).
- The league consists of groups
- Each team plays **home and away** fixtures within their group.
- The **top two teams from each group** will progress to the final stages in **Spring Term 2026**.
- **Cut-off date for all group matches: Friday 30th January 2026**

### Plate Tournament

- Teams that do not qualify for the main finals will enter a **Plate Tournament**

### Match Rules

- **Format: 7-a-side (squads of 12)**
- **Match Length:** 20 minutes each half
- **Substitutions:** Roll-on/roll-off permitted
- **Ball Size:** Size 4 (home team to supply)
- **Referee:** Provided by the home team
- **Offside Rule:** Not applied
- **Free Kicks:** All are direct
- **Shin Pads:** Must be worn
- **Points System:**
  - Win = 2 points
  - Draw = 1 point
  - Loss = 0 points

### No Heading Rule

To ensure player welfare and align with local youth league standards, **deliberate heading is prohibited**.

### *What is a Deliberate Header?*

A deliberate header usually involves a player moving their head and/or body:

- **Towards the ball**, and/or
- **Into the path of the ball**

When judging if a header is deliberate, consider:

- The **speed of the ball**
- The **distance** between the ball and the player
- Whether the player had the **opportunity to avoid contact**

## Law Changes:

- A **deliberate header** results in an **indirect free-kick** from the point of contact.
- If this occurs **inside the defending team's penalty area**, the free-kick is taken from the **penalty mark**.
- Not normally a cautionable offence unless:
  - It **stops a promising attack** (yellow card)
  - **Denies a goal or clear opportunity** (red card)
  - Is **repeated** (persistent misconduct – yellow card)