

Goalden Football Academy

Health & Safety Policy 2026



Part 1: Statement of Intent

Our policy is to provide and maintain safe and healthy training environments, equipment, and coaching practices for all players, staff, and visitors. We specialise in football delivery for individuals with **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**. We commit to adapting our environment to meet individual physical, sensory, cognitive and emotional requirements, ensuring safety never compromises inclusion.

Signed: *TBrown* (Academy Director)

Date: 20/09/2026

Review: 20/09/2027

Part 2: Structure of Responsibilities

Academy Director: Holds ultimate accountability for compliance, keeping insurance up to date, and reviewing annual risk assessments.

Designated Safeguarding & Safety Officer (DSSO): Responsible for individual health profiles, managing incident logs, and ensuring staff-to-player ratios are strictly enforced.

Head Coaches & Coaching Staff: Responsible for dynamic site checks, verifying player medication on-site, managing sensory environments, and keeping first-aid packs stocked.

Parents, Carers & Guardians: Responsible for providing detailed, updated information regarding medical needs, triggers, behavioural support plans and emergency contacts.

Part 3: Specific SEND Arrangements & Procedures

Player Profiles & Medical Information

- **Individual Profiles:** Every player must have an active Enrolment Form & Player Passport detailed diagnoses, physical limitations, verbal/non-verbal communication methods, triggers, and calming strategies.
- **Medication Storage:** Lifesaving medications (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers, seizure rescue medication) must be labelled, accessible on pitch-side, and given to the allocated coach, never locked away.

Staffing Ratios & Training

- **Enhanced Ratios:** Staff-to-player ratios are actively adjusted based on individual needs (typically ranging from 1:1 to 1:6), vastly exceeding standard grassroots recommendations to ensure behavioural and physical safety.
- **Mandatory Training:** All staff must be certified in **FA Introduction to Coaching Disabled Footballers**, **FA Safeguarding Children**, **FA First Aid Course** & **FA Introduction to Coaching Youth Football**. The Academy Director will also complete courses in **FA Safeguarding for Committee Members** and **FA Welfare Officer Training** and receive specific training in SEND behaviour management (e.g., de-escalation, autism awareness, epilepsy response).

Environmental & Sensory Management

- **Sensory De-escalation Zone:** A designated, quiet “Chill Out” space with low sensory input must be mapped out at every venue for players experiencing sensory overload or emotional distress.
- **Equipment Adaptations:** The Academy will regularly inspect, and use adapted coaching aids (e.g., sound-emitting footballs, soft-touch/ low-inflation balls, visual boundary markers, brightly coloured target spots) to minimise physical impact and assist cognitive processing.
- **Weather & Attire:** Extreme temperatures can drastically alter sensory thresholds. Clear parameters are maintained for water breaks, clothing sensory issues, and weather-related cancellations.

Pitch Safety & Facility Audits

- **Dynamic Pre-Session Checks:** Coaches must visually audit facilities prior to every session for slip/trip hazards, debris, or broken infrastructure.
- **Goalpost Safety:** All portable goals must be structurally anchored according to strict FA standards to avoid tipping.
- **Abscending Precautions:** Venues must feature secure perimeters to protect players who have a propensity to bolt or wander when overwhelmed.

Incident & Accident Protocols

- **Behavioural Incidents:** Meltdowns or physical distress are documented as incidents. They are reviewed to update the player’s profile and adjust triggers.
- **Accident Logbook:** All physical injuries are registered in an official incident log. Major occurrences are reported according to regional legal frameworks (e.g., RIDDOR in the UK).

Part 4: Emergency Action Plan (ECP)

Minor Distress or Injury

- Staff administer basic First Aid or guide player to sensory zone. Parent is informed.

Severe Medical / Behavioural Emergency

- Stop all surrounding activity immediately.
- Direct an assistant coach to safely supervise remaining players.
- Administer immediate First Aid / Emergency Medication.
- Contact Emergency Services (999/112) and state venue access details.
- Notify parent / carer / guardian and complete comprehensive Incident Documentation.

Signed: *TBrown* (Academy Director)

Date: 20/09/2026

Review: 20/09/2027