



Returning To Football Training and Playing Policy

NEWPORT COUNTY AFC

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| Document type | Returning To Football Training and Playing Policy |
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| Signed off by | Gavin Foxall |
| Board review and agreement | October 2022 |
| Next review date | October 2023 |
| Version I.D. | 1 |

Newport County AFC is committed to the mental and physical wellbeing of all our players across the Club.

We understand that on occasions players will get injured or suffer from illness, that will mean that they will be unable to train or play, and this policy will clearly outline the steps that players, staff, and parents/carers will need to do to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all our players.

It is vital that everyone understands that encouraging or forcing someone to play whilst injured or ill can be classed as an abusive practice.

Therefore, it is vital that the players use their voice to be honest in sharing with us if they are experiencing any pain or discomfort. We do not expect players to play on or train through injury or illness and will respect their wishes if they wish to not continue throughout the fixture/training and we will ensure that they receive relevant medical care and attention.

During league fixtures, it is mandatory for a Physiotherapist to provide medical cover. This will ensure that emergency first aid can be given, as well as a defibrillator used where necessary. Academy coaches also have their FA Emergency First Aid in Football certificate which is renewed every three years.

During training sessions or in house fixtures, it is adequate for Academy coaches to provide Emergency First Aid if required to do so. They will also call for paramedics if required.

Players

Should a player feel uncomfortable or poorly during training or a fixture due to taking a knock, a pull, or illness, then they need to flag this to the immediate attention of the coach who should provide a first aid medical assessment.

The child should be able to clearly state where they are hurting, how much it is hurting, and give an honest opinion of the injury/illness that they are experiencing.

The child will then be provided with relevant first aid, and where relevant, be asked if they feel that they can play on. If the child decides that they are in too much pain or discomfort, then their wishes will be respected, and they will then be sat out or substituted with relevant medical care given.

Staff

Staff should not leave injured/ill players unattended and should support them with relevant medical care.

If the players parents/carers are on site, then they can be notified to give them the option of taking the child home or gaining further medical advice where required. For example, a potential break would need to be looked at at the local hospital. If a child has a sickness bug, then they would be better off being taken home where they can relax and recover.

No matter the level of injury/illness, staff should advise parents/carers that the child took a knock/got injured in training or was feeling poorly and their view of the medical assessment. All staff should advise Academy parents/players that should any continuing issues arise to please let us know and to book in with the Academy physiotherapist for further advice and guidance where necessary.

The coach should then check in with the player at the next training session, and request if ok to continue. They should ask relevant questions such as if they are still experiencing any pain or effects,

if the child says that they are, then the child needs to be sat out of training or the fixture, and parents/carers notified.

The Phase Lead should be aware of the injury and follow up in advance with the Academy physiotherapist to ensure that contact is made. An email checking in with the parent/carer would also be recommended.

If the child had returned to training/play earlier than recovery, then the parents/carers will need to be advised that until they have been checked with the Academy physiotherapist, they will not be able to train or play, until fully recovered.

Once sign off from the Academy physiotherapist has been received and a training plan implemented, then the player will be able to return to training and/or play as advised by the Academy Physiotherapist.

If there are further issues beyond a physiotherapist remit, then the Club Doctor must always be consulted by the Academy Physiotherapist for further advice.

Parents/Carers

We know and understand that you want your child back doing the thing that they love as quickly as possible, but this must not be to the detriment of their health and wellbeing.

It is important to be patient and allow your child to recover properly from their injury or illness, so that they do not encounter longer term issues later down the line. It is frustrating for them as children when all they want to do is play, but please do contact our Player Care team in this instance who can help them to manage those frustrations.

It is also your responsibility to ensure that you do check in with the Academy physiotherapist to ensure that your child is fully fit to return to training and play and that any exercise programme is followed to ensure that your child returns to full health and fitness.

Breaks/Fractures

We understand that these injuries can mean that children are out for a long period of time, and in that period if they feel well enough then they are still welcome to attend training and fixtures to observe. The coaches and Phase Leads will also see if there are any other ways that they can remain involved without causing further detriment to their illness or injury.

The Player Care team will also be on hand throughout this time to provide wellbeing support.

Depending on the recovery of the young person and depending on if surgery was required, we may need to liaise with the Consultant to confirm that your child is fit and well enough to return to training.

Illness and hospitalisation

If your child has experienced an illness which has required support from a GP or consultation from a hospital, then you will need to advise the Phase Lead and Head of Medical at your earliest opportunity.

In the best interests of your child, we may need further information from the hospital or medical practitioner who has seen your child, to ensure that they are fit and well to continue to return to training.

This may include a letter from them to confirm that they can return to training/play.

Return to training.

This would mean that your child is able to return to training only. This may include:

- Passing only and light drills
- No head contact (this should not be the case anyway under FA regulations)
- No contact at all
- Walking/jogging – no running
- Physiotherapist overseeing return to training with a detailed plan, also taking into consideration necessary additional medical advice

Return to play.

This would mean that your child is able to fully participate in all aspects of the footballing game and is physically fit to do so.

Notes of all injuries and illnesses are to be recorded within the medical notes, with all relevant staff members made aware of the medical condition/injury that the child has, so that they can continue with relevant care.

Please note that whilst your child is injured/ill, we may need to risk assess if it is suitable for your child to attend training and fixtures to observe, depending on the nature of the medical condition/injury.

Concerns

If you should have any concerns at all about your child returning to training/play too soon, then you are within your rights to withhold them from attending training and fixtures if you feel that they need more time.

To raise a concern, please contact Luke Hussey – Academy Manager at the earliest opportunity on the contact information below.

Useful Contacts

Aniket Govekar

Academy Head of Medical/Physiotherapist

Email: Aniket.govekar@newport-county.co.uk

Luke Hussey

Academy Manager

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Ben Gast

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