



Ministry of Football

Children's Rules of Play & Code of Conduct

Ministry of Football Mini-League playing rules and Code of Conduct for children

Goalkeepers

- Goalkeepers cannot kick from hands, and they cannot score a goal directly from their own half of the pitch.
- Teams must change goalkeeper so everyone gets a turn in goal, unless you have someone on your team who wants to play in goal all the time. The referee will ask teams every few minutes if they want to change goalkeepers.
- A back pass can be picked up by the goalkeeper.
- Goalkeepers can come out and play anywhere on the pitch, but are only allowed to handle the ball near the goal.
- The goalkeeper's area is not marked out, but common sense applies, and the referee will give a free-kick to the opposing team if the goalkeeper handles far from their goal.

Re-starts

- If ball goes out of play, you can place ball on the floor and pass or dribble it back into play. You cannot score directly from this. You can dribble onto the pitch and shoot and score.
- Players can also dribble on from a corner, and dribble from a free-kick. Players can score directly from a corner or free-kick – but not directly from a "throw-in".
- There is a 3-second rule for taking re-starts: The player must not take more than 3 seconds to get the ball back into play.
- If a goal is scored play will resume from the goalkeeper, rather than the centre.
- If the ball (or players) from a different game comes into the field and affects the play, the referee may choose to halt play and restart with a dropped ball.

The Retreat rule for the Premiership division

- This requires all players on the defending team to retreat to their own half of the field when the opposition goalkeeper has the ball. The opposition does not have to wait until this retreat happens before playing the ball from the goalkeeper.

Tackling and Sin-bins

- No sliding tackles, no tackles from behind, no pushing or shoulder barging.
- Repeated/serious breaches of the rules or Codes of Conduct may result in sin-bins (usually 2 minutes in the first instance), or even a sending off. Sin-bins may also be used for players arguing with the referee, or not respecting an opponent or teammate.

Goals and scorelines

- The referee will signal the goal with a raised hand to let all the players and spectators know that the goal has been given.
- If a team is winning a game by 5 goals or more: Each player on that team must now touch the ball in the build-up to a goal in order for that goal to count. If the winning margin becomes lower than 5 goals again, then normal rules resume.

League positions and points

- Games will be scored at 3 points for a win, 1 for a draw. In the event of a tie on points, goal difference, then goals scored will be used to identify who finishes highest. If teams still cannot be separated, then the match result between those two teams will be used to decide who finishes highest, and if they are still equal then they shall finish the league in joint position.

Children's Code of Conduct**I will:**

- Not touch goalposts or sandbags, or other equipment.
- Play fairly and respect my opponents and team-mates.
- Keep trying, even if the other team is stronger.
- Understand that the referee's decisions are final, and not argue with the referee.