



Academy Loans Policy

NEWPORT COUNTY AFC

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This policy aims to provide clear and comprehensive guidelines for the process of loaning academy players to non-league clubs, ensuring the welfare and development of the player while maintaining the standards expected at Newport County AFC Academy. The following sections detail the steps to be taken before, during, and after the loan period.

1. Initial Planning and Agreement

- **Loan Objectives:**

The primary purpose of each loan should be clearly defined at the outset, including:

- **Match Experience:** The loan should provide opportunities for the player to gain valuable first-team football experience, which may not be available in the academy setup.
- **Physical Development:** The loan arrangement should focus on the physical conditioning and development of the player, especially if the player requires exposure to the physical demands of senior football.
- **Exposure to Senior Football:** The player should be exposed to a higher level of football, in terms of competition, training environment, and pressure situations that will challenge their ability to adapt and develop.

- **Agreement Details:**

A comprehensive loan agreement should be drafted and signed by the Club, the non-league club, and the player. This agreement should include but not limited to:

- **Playing Expectations:** The opportunities that will be afforded to the player, including the frequency of first-team appearances, if applicable.
- **Training Schedule:** A clear outline of training sessions that the player will be involved in at both the academy and the non-league club to ensure consistency in their development.
- **Reporting Requirements:** Defined protocols for providing regular reports on the player's progress, including match performance and training feedback. The player must also be required to provide self-reflection on their development.
- **Player's Role:** Clearly defined expectations regarding the player's role within the non-league club (e.g., starting XI, substitute, developmental squad).

- **Compliance:**

The loan arrangement must comply with relevant football regulations, including:

- **The FA Rules:** Ensure the loan complies with FA regulations for player loans.
- **FIFA Loan Policies:** Verify that the loan complies with FIFA's regulations on player loans, ensuring both the club and player are legally protected.

2. Welfare and Safeguarding

- **Safeguarding Checks:**
It is essential that the non-league club has robust safeguarding policies to protect the player's welfare. This includes:
 - **DBS Checks:** Ensuring that staff at the non-league club who work with the player are fully vetted with up-to-date DBS checks (UK-specific).
 - **Club Safeguarding Policies:** Reviewing the non-league club's safeguarding policies to ensure they meet the required standards.
- **Player Induction:**
The academy will facilitate an induction for the player at the non-league club to ensure:
 - The player is introduced to key staff, including coaches, medical staff, and player care officers.
 - The player understands the structure and culture of the new environment, including expectations around conduct, professional behavior, and club values.
 - The player is briefed on logistical aspects such as accommodation (if applicable), travel arrangements, and daily routines at the non-league club.
- **Parental/Guardian Involvement:**
If the player is under the age of 18, it is crucial to involve their parents or guardians throughout the loan process:
 - Ensure that written consent is obtained from parents/guardians before the loan is completed.
 - Maintain open lines of communication with parents/guardians to keep them informed of the player's welfare, development, and progress during the loan.

3. Communication and Monitoring

- **Regular Updates:**
Establish a regular feedback loop between all parties involved:
 - **Weekly or Bi-weekly Meetings:** Schedule regular updates between the academy, the player, and the non-league club to monitor the player's progress. These updates should include performance evaluations, match reports, and any other relevant information.
 - **Direct Communication Channels:** Maintain open and direct communication between the academy staff, player, and non-league club to address any concerns promptly.

- **Assigned Liaison:**
A designated staff member, such as a player care officer or academy coach, will maintain regular contact with the player and non-league club. This liaison will:
 - Monitor the player's wellbeing and development.
 - Ensure the non-league club is adhering to the terms of the loan agreement.
 - Offer support or intervention if any issues arise during the loan period.
- **Training/Match Reports:**
Request regular performance reports from the non-league club, including:
 - **Training Feedback:** Regular updates on the player's training progress, attitude, and improvement.
 - **Match Minutes:** A detailed record of the player's playing time in competitive matches.
 - **Performance Evaluations:** Post-match assessments from coaches and staff at the non-league club to gauge the player's development and areas for improvement.

4. Training and Development

- **Training Balance:**
- **Development Plan Alignment:**
The non-league club's style of play, coaching philosophy, and tactical system should align with the player's Individual Development Plan (IDP). This ensures:
 - The loan experience contributes positively to the player's development objectives.
 - The player is exposed to relevant tactical, technical, and psychological challenges that support their growth.

5. Medical and Fitness

- **Injury Protocol:**
Clear procedures must be in place for managing injuries that occur during the loan period:
 - Define who will be responsible for medical treatment, rehabilitation, and return-to-play decisions, with consultation from both the non-league club's medical staff and Newport County AFC's medical team.
 - Ensure that the player's injury history is shared between both clubs and that relevant treatment plans are followed.

- Provide a clear process for monitoring recovery and fitness, including regular medical check-ups during the loan period.
- **Fitness Monitoring:**
Regular fitness assessments should be conducted to track the player's physical development:
 - The player should undergo standard fitness tests (e.g., VO2 max, strength, endurance) before, during, and after the loan period.
 - Fitness data should be shared with both clubs to ensure the player's physical conditioning is monitored consistently.

6. Legal and Financial Considerations

- **Insurance:**
Ensure that appropriate insurance coverage is in place for the player during the loan:
 - Verify that the player's insurance covers any injuries or accidents sustained while at the non-league club.
 - Confirm that the non-league club holds adequate liability insurance to cover the player during their loan period.
- **Expenses:**
Clearly outline how the player's expenses will be managed:
 - **Travel Expenses:** Determine who will cover travel costs, including transportation for away games or training sessions.
 - **Kit and Equipment:** Decide how kit, boots, and other training equipment will be provided for the player while at the non-league club.
 - **Accommodation:** If necessary, agree on the provision of accommodation (particularly for players under 18 or those from distant areas).

7. End-of-Loan Process

- **Debriefing:**
At the conclusion of the loan, a thorough review of the player's time at the non-league club should take place:
 - **Feedback from the Player:** A reflective conversation with the player about their experiences, progress, and any challenges they encountered during the loan.
 - **Feedback from Non-League Club:** A discussion with coaches and staff from the non-league club to assess the player's performance and integration into the team.

- **Coaches 'Assessment:** The academy's coaching staff should evaluate how the loan period has supported or hindered the player's development based on feedback from the non-league club and internal performance reviews.
- **Reintegration:**
After the loan ends, reintegrate the player back into the academy setup:
 - **IDP Adjustments:** Review and, if necessary, adjust the player's Individual Development Plan (IDP) based on their experiences and progress during the loan.
 - **Reintegration into Training:** Ensure the player is smoothly reintegrated into the academy's training environment, providing any additional support or mentoring as needed to help them transition back.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the evolving needs of the academy and its players.

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