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**2023-24 Football League Guidelines**

**Key Information**

* Best Team matches are 9 a side. Girls matches are 7a side.
* All matches must be played on the same day either during school or after school.
* We will try and provide a referee if requested depending on the date/time but this cannot be guaranteed.
* **Please could the host school email me once a date and time has been confirmed.**
* The deadline for all group stages to be played is **Friday 26th April 2024.**
* The winner of the group stage will progress to finals day at Tooting and Mitcham FC on **Wednesday 22nd May 2024.**

**General Rules**

* A size 4 football is to be used.
* All matches are to be no longer than 20 minutes in duration. Schools can agree whether they would like a short half time break or not.
* The distance between the posts is either 16ft or 21ft and the distance between the lower edge of the crossbar and the ground is 7ft.
* Players must wear shin pads and goalkeepers must wear a distinguishing playing top. Shin pads must be covered entirely by the socks.
* Referees shall be agreed upon by participating schools.
* It is the responsibility of the schools to discuss team colours when they are organising their fixtures. In the event of a kit clash, the home team would be required to provide a different colour set of bibs.
* All schools must attend the fixtures with their own qualified first aider.
* Group placing shall be decided using the following criteria:

1st **- Points**, if level then,

2nd **- Goal difference (goals scored minus goals conceded),** if level then,

3rd **- Goals scored**, if level then,

4th **- Result between the teams**, if level then,

5th **- Rock paper, scissors.**

**Match Rules**

* A goal cannot be scored direct from a kick off.
* After a goal is scored there will be a restart from centre by the team who did not score the goal.
* Goalkeepers can only handle the ball in the penalty area.
* The goalkeeper may leave the goal area however a penalty kick will be awarded against the keeper if they handle the ball outside this area.
* When the goalkeeper takes a goal kick all players must be outside the goal area.
* The goalkeeper cannot kick the ball from hand or drop the ball from hand to kick.
* Overhead or underarm throws can be made for any re-introduction to play EXCEPT corners, where the ball is placed and kicked in. Such action would result in the award of a direct free kick one metre outside the penalty area in line with the position of the infringement.
* Opposition players must be five yards away from where corners and throw-ins are taken.
* Pass backs are not allowed to picked up by the goalkeeper. Such action would result in the award of a direct free kick on the edge of the penalty area in line with the position of the infringement.
* Outfield players are permitted in the goal area.
* All free kicks are direct.
* Ball is allowed overhead height.
* The taking of ANY penalties will be subject to the ‘one step’ rule.
* The ‘roll-on-roll-off’ rule applies to substitutions. Substitutions can only be made during stoppages in play and with the approval of the referee.
* Children must not slide tackle.
* No off-sides and all general FA rules apply.
* **Shin pads are compulsory.**