

Open Access Policy

Introduction: Open access play provision, whether permanent or short-term, offers opportunities for children and young people to engage in play and sports activities where attendance is voluntary, and they can come and go as they wish. This provision is not classified as childcare, and there is no requirement for children to be dropped off or collected by an adult. Open access play is defined by its flexibility and responsiveness to the needs and interests of the participants.

Overview of Open Access Play: Sporting Communities CIC delivers open access play and sports sessions across multiple locations. These sessions are designed to be inclusive, free of charge, and responsive to the needs of children and young people. Our sessions are particularly popular as "out-of-school provisions" due to the autonomy they provide participants.

- **Autonomy of Participants:** Children are free to attend or leave sessions at any time. While our staff are fully DBS-checked and trained to facilitate these sessions, it is not their responsibility to ensure that participants remain on site for the duration of the session.
- **Staffing:** All Sporting Communities CIC staff involved in these sessions are DBS-checked and trained to ensure a safe and supportive environment.

Parental/Carer Responsibility: All parents and carers are informed of the open access nature of our sessions through the Registration and Consent Form. The Open Access Policy is available on our website, and it is important that parents/carers acknowledge their understanding of this policy by signing the form. The open access nature means that children can come and go freely, and staff are not responsible for supervising their arrival or departure.

- **Children Under 8:** Children under the age of 8 attending open access sessions must be accompanied by a responsible adult. For targeted or childcare provision, no child will be admitted without a completed, signed consent form. Parents/carers of children under 8 attending these sessions are required to be contactable and available for collection if needed.

Consent and Participation: Once a child or young person has been issued with a Registration and Consent Form, failure to sign and return the form will be considered implied consent to the terms of this policy.

- **Targeted Provision and Childcare:** In sessions designated as targeted or childcare provision, a signed consent form is mandatory. For children under 8 in indoor sessions, parents will be contacted if the



child requests to leave early. During outdoor park sessions, parents are required to remain present until they collect their child(ren).

Agency Referrals: Any child or young person referred to Sporting Communities CIC by an external agency must complete both a Referral Form and the Registration and Consent Form before participating in any open access, targeted, or childcare sessions.

Benefits of Open Access Play Provision: Open access play offers unique opportunities for children and young people to engage in self-directed play, fostering independence and creativity. The benefits of open access play include:

- Freedom for children and young people to exercise choice and control over their activities.
- Opportunities to test boundaries, explore risk, and engage in a broad range of physical, social, and intellectual experiences.
- Flexible participation times, allowing children to attend and leave as it suits them.
- Socialisation with peers of different ages, abilities, and backgrounds.
- Contribution to the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity.
- Development of confidence, independence, and skills in personal, social, and emotional domains, as well as cognitive and physical development.

Session Termination: In cases where weather, facility issues, health and safety concerns, or safeguarding risks arise, staff reserve the right to terminate the session. They will promptly vacate the site if necessary to ensure the safety of participants and staff.

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner, if necessary, to ensure it remains up-to-date and in line with best practices.