



Port Vale Football Club

Ball Crew Policy

Version control

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Document Owner:	Port Vale Football Club – Jon Bloore
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Document review

Last reviewed	Position
Mar 2021	Review and update of Club/Academy and Foundation policy to one umbrella policy.

Version history

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.0	Sept 2018	Unknown	Board	Ball crew policy
1.1	Apr 2021	Jon Bloore	Board	Ball crew policy
1.2	August 2021	Tim Bailey		Revised version

1. The purpose and Scope of this Policy statement

Port Vale Football Club is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all staff, players, parents, carers and anyone participating in activities run or associated with the club. This is so everyone can work, learn and participate in a relaxed and secure environment.

This Policy is for use across the club and is to be observed by all staff, supporters and anyone participating in activities run or associated by the club. The Policy exists to ensure that best practice is promoted and adhered to.

Activities undertaken at the following locations/departments are under the remit of this policy which include:

- Port Vale Football club and the Vale Park Stadium
- Port Vale Foundation Trust
- Port Vale First Team
- Port Vale Academy and youth development
- Port Vale Women
- Port Vale Retail Store

1. Introduction

Port Vale Foundation is delighted to welcome you to the 2021-22 season Ball Crew here at Port Vale FC. You will play a pivotal role in the match day operations for the smooth running of the games and this document will outline everything you need to know about your role in the crew.

2. What is the Ball Crew?

Port Vale Football Club has run a successful scheme for many years. They are:

- A volunteer group of young individuals who are pitch side every home match day.
- Aged 12-16 years old (retire at the end of the season following their 16th Birthday)
- Male and female
- Physically capable of retrieving a ball over the duration of a match.
- Comfortable to attend in all weathers.
- Available to attend evening or weekend games.

Their Aim: To get the ball safely and quickly back on the playing area for the game to resume.

3. Who looks after the Ball Crew?

The Ball Crew programme falls under the management of the Port Vale Foundation.

There are 2 Coordinators appointed to supervise the Ball Crew on a match day and they will be over seen by the match day co-ordinator who is also responsible for the Administration and Welfare of the programme. All will report to Operations Manager

at the Foundation (Kevin Sanders). These members of the club workforce will coordinate the team across the season ensuring that:

- There is a centrally held database of volunteers
- Recruitment, selection & training occurs as and when required
- The correct numbers are met for each game
- Ball Crew members understand and undertake their role in accordance with the Code of Conduct and other rules required by the EFL, Football Association and UEFA
- These children are kept safe and enjoy themselves during the time they attend the stadium on Club duty

The Match day Coordinator will lead the team whilst on the pitch.

4. Key Contacts

For anything relating to the administration of the Ball Crew (Availability, Match information, roles etc)

Tony Green, Matchday Coordinator, Port Vale FC

Tel: 07789811838

Email: t0nygreen@btinternet.com

For any management issues, complaints

Tana Owen, Operation Manager, Port Vale Foundation

Tel: 01782 757066

Email: tana.owen@port.vale.co.uk

5. Vetting & Safeguarding Children

Providing a safe and positive environment for everyone involved in sport is a vital aspect of any club's operations. Port Vale Foundation takes its responsibilities very seriously and particularly where children are present.

All members of the workforce, whether paid or voluntary, have a duty to keep children and vulnerable adults safe and to protect them from emotional, physical and sexual harm. All children on site have a right to be safe, feel safe and to be treated with respect and dignity.

All members of the workforce who come into regular contact with Ball Crew members will be subject to an Enhanced DBS check conducted through the club and will be required to conduct themselves in accordance with the Club's Safeguarding Policy (available from a member of the Safeguarding team).

Port Vale Football Club Ball Crew 2021/2022 season (review Mar 2022)

6. Communication

Effective and timely communication with the Ball Crew is crucial. Pre-match, the Club staff responsible for making arrangements should contact the individuals in the most appropriate way and should always co-ordinate activities through the adult(s) with Parental Responsibility for the child. Match Day Staff should ideally avoid direct individual communication with the children until they arrive at the match.

7. Consent

No children will be deployed as Ball Assistants until consent has been obtained from an adult with Parental Responsibility for the individual child. Separate consent is required for both their deployment as well as photographic consent – this includes digital images captured through photographic equipment and TV & web images for live broadcasting.

8. Capability & Training

All Ball Crew members are required to attend training specific to the role. This will take place at on pre-determined days prior to the start of the season. Other training sessions may be arranged if required.

The training and capability session will establish whether the individuals are able to carry out the basic tasks and establish if there are pitch positions more suited to them – e.g. for those who have to reach over or jump over the advertising boards.

9. Kit

What the Ball Crew members wear is very important. There are two elements to this: a) its suitability to help them do their job and, b) branding. **Appropriate clothing will be provided by the club.**

10. Match Day

Minimum Numbers

The club will ensure that there is the appropriate number of Ball Crew Members allocated to each match ensuring that the chaperone to child ratio remains within club Safeguarding Policy standards. (I.e. one for the first 8, then one for every

additional 10). There should always be more than one adult for any group and at least one should be female).

Arrival/Pick up

All Ball Crew members will be required to have arrived and signed in at the club shop area one hour before kick-off. Pick up will be from club shop at the end of the game.

Non-Attendance

Parents will be required to call or text the Coordinator in the event of their child having to pull out of attending a match. This notification will ensure that the team can progress promptly to the stadium after arrival and commence their duties at the allotted time.

Sign In

Each Ball Crew member will be signed in and issued with ID Card. Late arrivals, if notified, will be collected by the Match Day Coordinator. A register of emergency contact numbers is maintained by the Foundation so they can be contacted during the game if required. The form is presented as Appendix 3.

Registers will be kept and transferred onto a database. A central copy will be held by the Coordinator.

Supervision

The Match Day Coordinator is responsible for the children from arrival to departure.

Refreshments

Water bottles will be available for the Ball Crew members, which can be taken on pitch side.

Facilities

The team will use the toilets situated in the concourse area during half time.

The Warm Up

Ball Crew members are required for the warm up period before the match. They should take up their normal positions and only retrieve the balls when they come over these boards. As there are multiple balls in play at this time they should take extra care to watch what is going on around them and be ready to evade a stray shot.

Ball Crew members should not approach or talk to the players during this period unless specifically talked to by a player first.

11. Emergency Action Plan

The safety of children in the stadium is paramount. In the event of an emergency in the stadium, Ball Assistants must follow the instructions of Stewards. They will be included with all pitch-side users and evacuated via the player's tunnel and escorted via the safest possible route to the gathering point. If it is not possible to evacuate via the tunnel the Ball Crew members must follow the Steward's instructions.

The Match Day Coordinator will gather and roll-call the team at the players car park where they will be remain until they are collected as per usual arrangements.

The evacuation protocol will be rehearsed during the training sessions and the volunteers reminded at the start of each match day/evening.

12. Issues & Concerns

Being a Ball Crew Member is a responsible role carried out in a pressured environment where the smallest mistake can be magnified by the circumstances. They should enjoy their experience and should carry out their role free from abuse or fear of abuse.

The Ball Crew Members should know who to go to in order to raise concerns about anything that is making them uncomfortable. Their first action should always be to go to the Match Day Coordinator (unless their concern is about that individual) who may be able to resolve the issue immediately. If this is not resolved the issue will be escalated to the Operation Manager at the Foundation.

13. Insurance

Ball Crew members are covered by the clubs insurance policies as Insured Persons. The clubs liability insurance policy is automatically extended to cover all appointed volunteers working for the club so that should they be injured, or cause injury to others then the Club is covered.



Consent Form Ball Assistants - Season 2021-2022

In order for your child to volunteer at Port Vale Football Club as a ball assistant, it is essential that you complete and return this form to the Administration and Welfare Coordinator (address is shown at the bottom of the page), supplying relevant information and your consent as parent / guardian.

- By completing this form you are confirming that you have legal parental responsibility for this child.
- By consenting you are stating that your child is in good health and that he / she is not participating contrary to medical advice.
- In the unlikely event of an accident occurring, you are providing permission for a designated representative of the club to authorise emergency medical treatment, including the use of anaesthetic if deemed necessary. The club will take all reasonable steps to contact you in such circumstances.

Name: _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ School: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

Ethnicity: _____

Gender (please tick) Male Female

Do you consider the participant to have a disability? Yes No

If yes, what is the nature of the disability? _____

Does the participant have any medical conditions?

Does the participant have any food allergies? Yes No

If yes, please specify _____

PLEASE READ BELOW

As part of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) we now need your consent to hold this information and to allow us to contact you.

In line with the new GDPR legislation on data collection we have updated our policy, if you would like more information visit: www.port-vale.co.uk/news/port-vale-foundation/

I consent for Port Vale FC Foundation Trust holding & processing personal data of which I and the person named above are data subjects. Please note that you have the right to withdraw consent at any time.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

I understand that should medical treatment be necessary, every effort will be made to contact me using the information given above. However, in an emergency, I authorise the coaches to consent to any medical treatment on my behalf which a qualified doctor feels is necessary. Yes No (please tick)

I consent for photographs of the child named above to be taken and to be used for media and promotional purposes.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

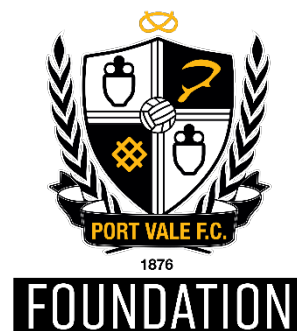
Do you give permission for your child to make their own way home? Yes No

If yes please specify

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please return to: Matchday Coordinator on your next home game

Ball Crew Members Roles and Responsibilities



14. Things you will have to do:

- **Turn Up!**
This position is a voluntary role at the club. We hope you can come to every match we need you for but we understand if you can't.
- **Get the ball back!**
Ball Assistants have to return the footballs to the players or pitch during professional football matches.
- **Behave!**
As a Ball Assistant you will be representing Port Vale Football Club. We are a great club and pride ourselves on our behaviour. You will be in front of lots of spectators as well as being on television. How you behave reflects on how people feel about the Club.
- **Listen!**
We will tell you everything you need to know about what to do before, during and after a game.
- **Wear the right stuff!**
Because you will be on TV, we have strict rules on what you can and can't wear and will give you stuff to wear. It is important that you wear the right stuff otherwise the club can get into trouble.

What can I expect in return?

- To have fun
- Proper training
- Someone to look after you whilst you are at a match
- Some kit to wear
- Refreshments
- Something to tell your friends about and put in your record of achievement.



FOUNDATION

Things you and your Parent or carer need to know

Who tells me what I should do?

The Match Day Coordinator is in charge but there may be other club staff that may be involved. You will get to know who they are.

Do I tell anyone else what to do?

You will only be responsible for yourself; ensuring you attend any training required; turn up at the appointed time; have the right kit; and act as a responsible member of the team.

You are working as a member of a team though so you need to think about the other Ball Crew Member and help them if they ask for help.

Being a Ball Assistant?

- The main purpose of this job is to act quickly and fairly in returning the ball into play during any game you are invited to come to. You must hand it or throw it gently back to the player who wants it.
- You may need to listen to the Referee or Linesman or a Steward if they are trying to help you to do your job
- You need to listen to instructions given to you by the Match Day Co-ordinator and do what they ask as long as you feel comfortable doing it.
- You must not talk to any of the players before, during, or after the match.
- You need to know what to do in an emergency – we will tell you this

What else can you tell me that I might need to know?

- You will need to be aged 12 to 16 years old.
- You will need to be reasonably fit and able to move quickly; you need to keep your eyes open, concentrate on the game and able to respond to any risks like avoiding fast / hard footballs heading your way.
- Your parent or someone who looks after you will be required to give their permission, in writing, for you to be a Ball Crew Member. There is a form for them to sign from the club, which must be completed and returned to the Administration and Welfare Coordinator at least one week before your first match or at the start of the season.
- This form also lets us know that it's ok for your picture to be taken and for you to appear on television.
(Note for Parent/Carer: we need you to provide consent for the use of any images or video footage taken at the match which may be used for media purposes or for club league or sponsor partners publications or promotion materials)

- You and you Parent/Carer will need to tell us on the consent form of any health or specific medical (like asthma) or food requirements (like allergies) that you have, this is in order that the club can help you if required.
- Your Parent or Carer will need to have an email address and check it regularly to know when the matches are on, what time to arrive, where to meet us and they must reply to say you are going to be there or not.
- You will be supervised by the Match Day Coordinator throughout the match.
- You will be required to sit quietly, ready to fetch the ball all the way through the match, and don't forget; in some games there may be extra time.
- You will be required to wear the appropriate clothing or equipment as issued or as directed by the Match Day Coordinator. This may include warm kit or waterproofs when necessary; appropriate footwear; warm clothing; hats as required; sunscreen if appropriate. Also identification badges.
- You will need to carry with you any medication that you might need: e.g. inhalers; throughout the game. **Once you are out on the pitch you have to stay there unless it's an absolute emergency or half time or full time.**
- You may need to attend training sessions either before the event or arrive early on the day of the match for briefings.

How much time will I need to give to being a ball crew member?

- We would like you to be a Ball Crew Member for at least half the home games.
- You must arrive and sign in one hour before the game and can go at the end of the game; you will be there about three hours.
- There are usually a maximum of two games per week.
- We may ask you to come to a training session at the start of the season so you know what to do and can actually do it.

Is there anything that might worry me?

If you are worried at any time you can talk to the Administration and Welfare Coordinator, Match Day Co-ordinator, or a member of staff like a Steward or Safeguarding Officer
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- Being a Ball Crew Member is a big responsibility if you make a mistake people in the crowd or on the pitch might laugh or shout at you. We hope they won't as we hope they understand it's not always easy.
- There will be lots of people at the match and it will be noisy.
- It could be raining heavily, snowing, freezing, windy or hot. You need to be prepared!
- You may hear words that you do not like that the supporters shout from the stands; we sometimes cannot do a lot about that but if it is really worrying you then asked to be moved to a different part of the pitch.
- You might get home late after a night match during the week and be tired the next morning.

Board Authority and Acceptance of this Policy

Signed by:

Name Board member..... Date:.....

SSM..... Date:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following learning outcomes as a result of a significant incident or when legislation / statutory guidance changes by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.