



PERFORMANCE
SCHOOLS

St John's High School

✓ Better Person. ✓ Better Player. ✓ Better Grades.



www.scottishfa.co.uk

WELCOME



Hello and thank you for taking the time to find out more about the Scottish FA Performance Schools.

After extensive research on best practice throughout the world and completion of our pilot projects in Falkirk and Edinburgh, we are delighted to extend this exciting programme to a network of schools throughout Scotland. The Performance Schools programme is designed to give talented boys and girls, with the best potential to develop their abilities, the opportunity to practice football everyday within a school environment. In my home country, Holland, this type of programme is well known and I know it has been successful in producing **well educated, well rounded young people** who have also become **excellent football players**.

The Performance Schools programme will provide football practice to the selected pupils for the first four years of their high school life. Although it is designed as an elite player development programme, we know it will have a positive impact on the pupils' physical, social, emotional and academic development too. Our full-time Elite Youth Coaches will work closely with clubs and other partners to ensure that the programme complements and supplements that of the clubs.

I look forward to working with you in this programme to develop all-round, exciting, clever and creative football players.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Wotte', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Mark Wotte
Scottish FA Performance Director



St John's RC High School

St John's High School is delighted to be a part of the SFA Performance School programme. It gives me enormous pleasure to welcome the players, their parents and their coaches as we embark upon this exciting partnership initiative to develop the next generation of Scotland's footballing talent.

The aims of St. John's High School reflect our strong Marist traditions of family, love and building community. We are a Catholic community committed to providing the highest quality of education for our young people.

In welcoming your youngsters, know that they will be valued, cared for and nurtured in all areas of their education. They will be given every opportunity to develop and grow in an environment that encourages every young person to achieve the highest of standards.

We look forward, with great enthusiasm, to a long and successful partnership and a full and fruitful blossoming of the talent being entrusted to us.

Fiona McLagan, Head teacher

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT VISION

Developing young players for the future is an extremely difficult task. There are so many possible developmental stages that can be affected by external factors, for example puberty, peer groups, club demands, schooling, parental and family influence, that it is impossible to predict which young people will ultimately make the grade. However, we know that through our selection process and coaching programme we are giving these young people the best opportunity to reach their potential. Another factor is that we are preparing these young people for a future game that will be different from the game that they play now. Although we cannot predict the exact nature of those potential changes, we can trace the trends in the game, which gives us good information on what requirements will be needed in the future. This in turn will inform the programme we deliver to our young players based upon an individual player development programme.

Modern Trends	Future Player
Less space	Better technique
Less time	Quicker decision making
More possession	Excellent passing and receiving
More pressure	Excellent technique, mental strength
More speed	Improved speed and speed of thought
More tactical flexibility	Better game awareness
Need for creative players	Improved imagination and creativity
More positional interchanging	Mentally focussed

In short, we are looking to produce players who can **pass with precision, control with comfort, run with purpose and play with joy.**

WHAT ARE THE SCOTTISH FA PERFORMANCE SCHOOLS?

In partnership with the Scottish FA, the seven Performance Schools will deliver an extensive, challenging programme for our most talented young footballers.

The aim is to develop excellent football players whilst also improving their academic and social skills. These goals are closely linked and it has been found that many of the skills involved in the football programme, such as communication, following instructions, being creative and problem solving can be applied to other situations in the classroom, in the playground, or at home.

The programme is for boys and girls and will run from S1 to S4. The Scottish FA has employed seven full-time Elite Youth Coaches, who will have responsibility for the delivery of the programmes in each school. They will be assisted when required by National Youth Team Coaches, club coaches, sports scientists and other specialist experts. The programme will also complement and supplement their club football, thus ensuring a player-centred approach that will give them the best chance to fulfil their potential.

- **St John's High School – Dundee**
- **Broughton High School – Edinburgh**
- **Hazlehead Academy – Aberdeen**
- **Graeme High School – Falkirk**
- **Braidhurst High School – Motherwell**
- **Holyrood Secondary School – Glasgow**
- **Grange Academy – Kilmarnock**



HOW DOES IT WORK?

Coaching takes place during school hours within an appropriate timetable developed by the school. On some occasions the sessions may start before the school day and may also encroach on lunch time or break time intervals. In most cases one or two subjects are dropped to make space for football activity to be delivered within the school day. The sessions will be delivered by fully qualified and experienced Scottish FA Elite Youth Coaches. These coaches will also be assisted by coaches from our partner clubs in your area. Other staff with specialist expertise will also be used during the programme, including sports scientists, performance analysts, video technicians and staff from the National Stadium Sport Medicine Centre.

Pupils will find out about the Performance School Initiative at Primary School or through their clubs. When interest is confirmed by completing an application form, they are then invited to take part in a selection process that comprises the following:

- Technical selection days (technique, game awareness, physical abilities, etc)
- Interviews with parents, pupils, teachers and guidance staff

Although the primary focus is on developing elite young players it is important to understand that the programme is also about the young person and player.

Football is more than just an elite or recreational sport, it is an activity that can hold the attention and inspire people to achieve more in their life.

The sessions delivered by the coach will assist with the development of Curriculum for Excellence outcomes, including developing pupils' ability to communicate effectively, be responsible for their actions, contribute to their own and others' learning experiences and become more confident people. Football can deliver these outcomes, and every school day for four years this will be reinforced by everything that is delivered to them.



"I was nervous moving school at first but it turned out to be no problem – I have new friends and a good school" **Player**



'What a great opportunity for our best boys and girls to play and train together. I can see a future when all our international players come through the Performance School programme.'

Anna Signeul – Scotland Women's National Coach



CONTENT

Daily coaching will consist of four main components, which are delivered in an integrated way and focus on the development of:

- Technical skills (passing, dribbling, moving with the ball)
- Tactical skills (defending, attacking, decision making, game awareness)
- Physical skills (co-ordination, balance, speed, agility)
- Mental skills (mindset, perseverance, focus, discipline)

The coach delivers these components in a clear and enjoyable way over the course of the project. The focus is on the development of the players' skills and individual qualities. The Scottish FA Performance School will not be organised as a team as this will be the responsibility of their clubs although some of them may also play for the school team.

The timetable will also be delivered with the level of intensity taken into account. For example, a Monday will normally be a recovery session after a Sunday game and the players' normal club training will also be part of the planning process.



Darren Fletcher with St Johns High School Performance School pupils.

Here is an example of how the timetable may look:

	Registration		Interval		Lunch				
	8.30- 8.40	8.40-9.40	9.40-10.40	10.40-10.55	10.55-11.55	11.55-12.50	12.50-13.35	13.35-14.30	14.30-15.25
Monday		Football							
Tuesday			Football →						
Wednesday			Football →						
Thursday			Football →						
Friday			Football →						

This is only an example; the creation of an appropriate timetable is developed by the schools involved in the project. See below for a typical day.

How a Thursday may look:

Based on an example timetable the pupils would arrive and go to registration and period one as normal. For period two, instead of going to a standard class like other students, they would make their way to the PE department to take part in a Scottish FA Performance School class, which will also utilise interval time. This class will be taken by either a Scottish FA Elite Youth Coach and/or a coach from a partner club or another specialist. Most sessions will last between 75-90 minutes.

The pupils would change into the training clothes provided and work either on the pitch or games halls (weather dependent) until 10.55, when they would change back into their school clothes and go on to their next timetabled class.



You have been offered a brilliant opportunity, but this is just the beginning. You have to keep working hard and make the most of it.

"The specially-selected performance school coaches and support staff believe in you, as do your teachers and family members, so listen and learn from them. The more you put in the more you will get out of this experience. Even now, I always work hard and take in as much as I can, because I know that I can keep improving. Remember, practice makes perfect."

Darren Fletcher

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In order to monitor the effectiveness of the programme on the players we use the following:

- Skills tests
- Parents Evenings
- Academic report cards
- Guidance reports
- Attendance figures (both at performance classes and at school)

The results are monitored regularly to provide support to the pupils' development from both a playing and academic point of view.

We will ask the players to record information that will help their performance, for example, activity diary, nutrition and sleep patterns. This information, along with input from coaches, will be recorded to produce detailed information on each of the players' performance. The information will be used to inform their individual programme, provide personal feedback and produce reports throughout their time at the Performance School.



FEEDBACK

PILOT PROGRAMME

'He has made incredible progress with his fitness and skills and he really enjoys school'

*'I was nervous moving school at first but it turned out to be no problem
– I have new friends and a good school'*

'We worried about the impact on his education but it has really worked well and he is doing well at school'

'He loves the Programme and we have noticed he has been working a lot harder with class work and homework'

'We knew that travel would be a difficulty but it has proved to be very worthwhile – his school work is really coming on and his football just now is excellent'

✓ **Player Feedback - Craig Sibbald**

The Academy is a brilliant initiative and I think the boys all learned a lot from it. Playing for Scotland for the first time was a great experience and now I want to go on and do more for my club and country.

✓ **Player Feedback - Paul McMullan**

It's been an incredible experience. I loved every second of it. To get up every day and know you were going to be playing football was brilliant. It has made me a better player without a doubt.

✓ **Teacher Feedback**

'The Academy is a real success. The pupils show real enthusiasm for the project which has a positive impact on all of their school work. The group have become role models within the school and we are proud of their achievements'.

✓ **Neil Mackintosh – Performance Development Manager (Scottish FA)**

'The development of talented young players within the curricular time has now been shown to work both from the academic and football perspective. We are delighted to be working with our partners, who bring expertise and commitment to the programme to really benefit the children.'

✓ **Anna Signeul – Scotland Women's National Coach**

'What a great opportunity for our best boys and girls to play and train together. I can see a future when all our international players come through the Performance School programme.'

FAQS

How long does the project last for?

Four years, from S1–S4

Is this a school team?

No. It is not a 'squad' project; it is an individual development programme. The pupils would trial for any school team just as others would.

Do they have to be signed by a senior club?

No. We would expect a high number of pupils in the programme to be signed by a senior club but this will not prevent players from the other clubs getting in. It is about recruiting the best players, no matter what club they play for.

Do they all go into the same classes?

No. Many schools split the pupils up into different classes to encourage their interaction with other students at the school.

What subjects do they drop?

That depends upon how the school chooses to structure the timetable. It may be one whole subject, it may be part of five subjects (one period of each subject per week). More details on this would be given at an information evening

Do the players get kit and equipment?

Yes. They get clothing provided free of charge by the Scottish FA. The equipment such as balls, bibs, markers etc are provided by the coach. The only thing they need is appropriate footwear.

Will it affect their school work?

That is up to the individual. It is their responsibility to catch up on the work they miss. They will be fully supported by the coach, teachers, head teacher and most importantly the people at home. The normal guidance system at the school will operate to support every young person in the programme. However, research has shown that regular physical activity can actually assist and aid academic work and we certainly have evidence of this from the pilot programme.

Will I be kept informed on their progress?

Yes. A half-term report is compiled to show progress in the Scottish FA Performance School. All other information such as parents' evenings and report cards would be conducted as normal by the school with the coach feeding in as normal.

Will they be tired if they train every day and play and train with their club too?

If they are fatigued it will not be because of the Scottish FA Performance School. The physical demands placed on the pupils are minimal. The emphasis is on technique development and although physical development is worked on there are no intense conditioning programmes. If a player does become fatigued then parents and players would be consulted to come to some resolution.

How good are the coaches?

The seven Elite Youth Coaches are Scottish FA licensed, with years of experience working with players at this age and stage of development. They are employed by the Scottish FA on a full-time basis and one will be based at each school.

Can I contact the coach?

Of course. We want to have a fully transparent programme with approachable coaches. If there is an issue at any time they are available.

Does it cost money?

No. The project is supported by partners in the programme. However it will be the parent's responsibility to get their children to the school and therefore there may be some travel costs. The Scottish FA would look to make a contribution to these costs on an individual basis. Full details would be given at an information evening.

CONTACT DETAILS

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SCOTTISH FA PERFORMANCE SCHOOL – APPLICATION FORM 1

Surname:		
First Name:		
Date of Birth:		
Name of Parent or Guardian (to whom correspondence should be sent)		
Home Address:		
Postcode:		
Tel No (Day):		
Tel No (Eve):		
Mobile No:		
E-mail:		
School Attended:		
Club & Position:		
Club Contact Details:		
Performance School Applying for:		
Please list other sports you participate in:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Signed (Parent or Guardian):		
Date:		

Please email the application form or send to the appropriate Elite Youth Coach at the Performance School of your choice.



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