

Accommodation Policy

Will Cowell

Head of Safeguarding, Welfare & Equality

Blackpool Football Club & Academy

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Blackpool Football Club & Academy are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Since the 2012 – 2013 season, Blackpool Football Club & Academy apprentices who live outside of the local area have been offered accommodation in private homes. Blackpool FC believe placing U18 players in private homes in the surrounding area to the primary training venue/Bloomfield Road enables development in a secure and pleasant environment which we hope would not be too dissimilar to their own homes. We feel placement in an approved family home is an appropriate step following moving out of their own family home. Therefore the Academy has the responsibility to ensure that this local accommodation is safe and in keeping with the standards required by an aspiring professional footballer.

Role of Academy Safeguarding Officer

Although the Academy Administrator is mainly responsible for the implementation of accommodation arrangements, the Academy Safeguarding Officer (ASO) is constantly involved. The Academy Administrator will notify the ASO if any accommodation issues arise immediately and the ASO leads the creation of policies and any amendments made to Academy procedures in relation to accommodation.

Finding suitable accommodation

Blackpool Football Club recognises the importance of finding the correct and appropriate housing for their apprentices. Stringent checks and records are made for each applicant. The process is stated below:

1. An advert is placed on the official site, match day programme, local paper and local radio. By advertising on the official site, we hope to target families or individuals who are interested in football and therefore are more likely to offer a suitable home to a young football apprentice.
2. Initial contact is made with Academy Administrator/Head of Education and Welfare by prospective accommodation providers. An application form and further information is sent to those individuals/families who live in the catchment area (a suitable area within 5 miles of Bloomfield Road/training venue).
3. Completed application forms are received and assessed by the Head of Education and Welfare. When assessing the suitability of accommodation, the following factors (not an exhaustive list) are taken into account:
 - Location of the house – appropriate area for a young person, easy to get to training venue, good transport links?
 - Is the provider able to offer accommodation to more than one apprentice?
 - House layout – enough room for all members of the household?
 - Number of people in the house – take into account age and gender.
 - Accommodation for apprentice – own room required, large enough?
 - Facilities available at the property – internet access, Sky Sports etc

4. Appointments are made with prospective accommodation providers who appear suitable in the first instance for the Head of Education to visit their house to assess suitability for hosting a young player(s).
5. Following the visit, the Head of Education will decide if the individual/family and their home is suitable to provide accommodation for the apprentice(s). If a provider is able to offer lodgings to more than one apprentice this will be a strong factor in considering if they are suitable. We always try to place more than once apprentice in a home but recognise that this is always not possible.
6. The prospective accommodation provider is informed the outcome of the visit by Head of Education and Welfare within 3 working days.

****Attached are supporting documents used during the application process.****

Successful Applications

Upon the Head of Education and Welfare visiting the property and finding both the accommodation and the providers to be suitable to provide accommodation to one or more young apprentices, two references are requested and CRC/DBS checks are carried out.

If all checks return satisfactorily, the accommodation provider is informed in writing of their application's success and all required documentation is completed. The accommodation provider completes and returns signed copies of the Role Specification, Payment Information, Code of Conduct, Accommodation Provider Agreement and Form YD2.

Another visit is then scheduled for the Academy Health and Safety Advisor to complete a risk assessment and health and safety check. The annual Accommodation Provider checklist is also completed. Copies of these documents are held in each accommodation provider's file. The Academy Administrator updates the Accommodation Provider database with all the relevant information regarding the providers and the property.

Player Placement and Introductions

We hope each player will spend both years of their apprenticeship in the same private home, if both parties mutually agree, to ensure continuity and a suitable base to fully concentrate on their apprenticeship. Therefore it is important that apprentices are placed with a suitable accommodation provider. Before moving an apprentice into club provided accommodation, we introduce (face to face where possible) the apprentice, his parents and the provider. We aim for this meeting to be at the house in order for the apprentice's parents to view the accommodation and meet the family. We acknowledge the process of moving away to start an apprenticeship can be stressful for all parties and we strive to ensure this process is made as stress-free as possible.

We aim to place two apprentices together (preferably a first and second year) but unfortunately this is not always possible. In situations where we are not able to place more than one apprentice in accommodation, we look to support the apprentice in integration into other activities, arrange events and assist in other ways including travel to ensure the apprentice does not feel isolated.

Relationship between Accommodation Provider and Club

Blackpool FC Academy provide detailed information about the placement (fixture information, code of conduct and a copy of the Player/Player Handbook) to maintain the high standard of accommodation we expect. We offer support to our accommodation providers when required and provide host families with nutritional information and support at the start of each season. Each accommodation provider is invited to the Apprentice Induction Day held at Bloomfield Road to receive information about the new season, ask any questions they may have and meet Academy staff.

From Season 2014 – 2015 we aim to be more pro-active in offering support to the host families through holding meetings to discuss issues relevant to providing accommodation to a young aspiring footballer. We feel it extremely important for the apprentice to feel 'at home' in their accommodation and only place apprentices with families who hold the same view.

Therefore we are prepared to offer support to providers to ensure each apprentice has wireless access to the internet, Sky TV in particular Sky Sports and has access to transport. This is especially relevant if an apprentice has to be placed alone.

Contact with Accommodation Providers

Blackpool FC Academy is committed to developing and maintaining an open and honest relationship with each provider. We strongly believe a good communication link between the Club and the provider is the key to a successful placement for each apprentice and provider.

The Academy Office is always open to providers if they wish to meet and discuss any issues which have arisen or simply update Academy staff of any developments. The main point of contact for the accommodation providers is the Head of Education and Welfare although we encourage contact with the Academy Manager and Academy Administrator as appropriate.

The Accommodation Management Team consists of the Head of Education and Welfare, Academy Manager and Academy Administrator. This team will visit each accommodation provider once every two months at their home to discuss the placement and any issues which may have arisen. This meeting will be documented using the standard meeting minute form. The Head of Education and Welfare will contact each provider at least once each month, via email or phone, to ensure the placement is going smoothly. Notes of this telephone or email conversation will be made and a copy kept on the accommodation providers file. Any information ascertained from these meetings/contact dates will be given to parents where appropriate.

At the end of the season an Accommodation Provision Review is sent out to all accommodation providers. This gives each provider the opportunity to raise any issues which may have occurred over the season and also allows them to suggest ideas which may improve the accommodation provision for both themselves and the Academy. This review also allows the provider to indicate if they wish to continue providing accommodation next season.

Following the reviews being returned, the Head of Education and Welfare/Academy Administrator collates the information and presents this to the Academy Management Team at the next meeting. The issues raised and ideas put forward can then be discussed by the AMT with a view to amending the accommodation provision policy and implementing changes if necessary.

Contingency Plan

Unfortunately, on some occasions, accommodation placements do not work out. This may be for a number of reasons (family circumstances change, character of the apprentice, integration into the home has failed etc) and even though we take every step to avoid disruption throughout the season, it may happen.

If an apprentice placement encounters problems, for whatever reason, the Club will follow this procedure:

1. Concerns are raised by member of coaching staff/Head of Education and Welfare/apprentice himself/apprentice family member/accommodation provider as to the suitability of the placement.
 - Serious concern – the apprentice is removed immediately and placed in the club run BFC Hotel until alternative, suitable accommodation is found. Or, depending on the locality of his family home, the apprentice will temporarily move home until suitable accommodation is found. The apprentice, his parents and the provider are all involved in any decision prior to it being made.
 - Minor concern – Head of Education and Welfare and Academy Manager visit the house and sit down with the apprentice and provider to attempt to resolve the issue. If the matter cannot be resolved, alternative accommodations may be arranged (see Serious concern). If the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties, in particular the Head of Education and Welfare, the situation is monitored with weekly meetings for a period of time seen fit by the Head of Education and Welfare Officer.

Blackpool FC are committed to complying with all current legislation and guidelines in relation to providing accommodation for apprentices. Any best practise recommendations from the Football League/Safeguarding meetings will be discussed by the Accommodation Management Team and procedures and policies will be amended where appropriate.

Termination of an Agreement

In normal circumstances, an accommodation provider's agreement will come to a natural end in the May of a second year's apprenticeship. If the Club feel the placement has been successful, accommodation providers will then be asked whether they wish to continue with the role and provide accommodation for another Apprentice the following season.

Should an accommodation provider not wish to continue with the role then this is the most appropriate time to inform the Club. However, it is rarely necessary for an accommodation provider to cease their role during the season. If an accommodation provider wishes to terminate an agreement during the middle of the season, for whatever reason, a minimum of 28 days' notice must be given to the Club in writing. In certain situations which remain at the Club's discretion, this period, or part of it, may be waived. This will mainly depend on if suitable alternative accommodation for the apprentices can be found. Accommodation providers will be paid up to the last date they have the apprentice.

The Club may also wish to terminate an accommodation provider's agreement during the middle of the season, for example if an apprentice leaves the programme or decides to travel from home. In these situations, a minimum of 28 days' notice must be given to the accommodation provider in

writing and they will be paid for looking after the apprentice even if he does not stay there for this 28 day period. The Club will seek to offer the accommodation provider temporary accommodation for trial players or when other providers are on holiday. The Club may also re-engage the accommodation provider at the start of the following season if both parties mutually agree.

Should the Club terminate an accommodation provider's agreement due to a fundamental breach of the conditions outlined in the Accommodation Provider Code of Conduct and agreement, the notice period will not be adhered to and payment will cease immediately.

The Club reserves the right to request, in special circumstances, to move apprentices around to different accommodation providers if it is felt that this decision is necessary and beneficial to the apprentices in its care. However this decision will not be taken lightly and will only be made following consultations with the apprentice, his parents and the accommodation provides.

Trialist Accommodation

Blackpool FC Academy only provides accommodation to trialists who have the potential to be signed as a scholar (Under 16 age group). Depending on where the trialist lives and the length of his trial with the Academy, it may be appropriate for the Academy to provide accommodation.

Trialists will only ever be placed with current accommodation providers who have a spare bedroom and are already providing accommodation for a scholar.

The Academy Administrator will lead the trialist accommodation procedure which is as follows:

- Lead Youth Development Phase Coach/Head of Coaching/Academy Manager/Head of Recruitment agree to offer a trial to a player who requires accommodation.
- Dates of trial, travel arrangements and player details are provided to the Academy Administrator.
- Academy Administrator contacts the host family with the information and check if they are happy to host a trialist.
- If they are happy, the Academy Manager confirms all details with the trialist and arranges to meet the trialist at the host family's house. If not, another host family is contacted and asked to provide accommodation.
- The scholar who is also living in this house will assist the trialist make the journey to training or if for some reason this is not possible, the Academy Administrator arranges a taxi for the required journeys.

Trip/Tour Accommodation

The Academy Manager, Academy Administrator and Lead Phase Coach, with the continued input and guidance from the Head of Education and Welfare/Academy Safeguarding Officer, will be responsible for the planning of all Academy tours, tournaments and festivals.

If an overnight stay is required, the best practise guidelines and Football League Safeguarding Trips, Tours and Residential Toolkit will be utilised at all stages of the planning.

Player Review

The welfare of our players at Blackpool Football Club is of the utmost importance. With this in mind, it is our aim that we review all player's living accommodation and conduct an informal interview with each player. Any queries or concerns will be logged and dealt with immediately.