

# Heading The Ball

FA Guidance 2016



Heading the ball has recently been banned in the United States for children aged 10 and under over concussion fears. The rule comes after nearly 50,000 concussions were recorded among high school football players in 2010 – more than those recorded in baseball, basketball, softball and wrestling combined.

The FA has not released any official guidelines but are working on “concussion guidelines”.

Chesham Athletic FC take the welfare of our players very seriously and therefore would like to bring this to your attention. I think a common sense approach should be adopted. It’s worth noting that obviously not all headers are the same. A hard-driven regulation-sized ball could cause damage. A smaller, underinflated ball gently tossed by a coach does not. Plus there is obviously a proper way to head a ball.

Our guidance is:

**U6 & U7** no heading practises.

**U8 & U9** teach the technique with short range heading games (ball travelling up to 10m), no more than 15 minutes per week. At this age group range, the ball is likely to be served either out of hands or be header 'volleys' avoiding any driven shots at players heads.

**U10 & U11** develop the technique, allow headers from crosses etc (ball travelling up to 20m), no more than 30 minutes per week. At this age group range, the ball may also be headed from crosses and goal kicks, but attention should be paid to avoid individuals doing excessive heading in relation to the group - for example, do not concentrate on only the centre backs heading the ball, spread the exercise across all players.