

Rules for the 2026 francophone Football Competition

The Consulate of France in Hong Kong and Macao, the Alliance française and the French-speaking representations in Hong Kong are joining forces to offer an amateur football competition. The aim of this competition is to bring together the various French-speaking learners in the city and to showcase the French language programmes. Although it is a competition, the tournament is aimed at amateurs in a festive and friendly atmosphere. Players are expected to show fair play and good humour.

The competition will take place **on 15 March 2026 at the Christian Alliance International School**: 33 King Lam St, Lai Chi Kok, Hong Kong.

The organisers reserve the right to amend the rules if necessary or unforeseen circumstances should arise.

1. Organisation of the tournament

The teams will be divided into 3 categories according to the age of the players:

- Junior category: 9 to 12 years old
- Teenager category: 13 to 15 years old
- Adult category: 18 years old and above

The competitions will take place independently of each other throughout the day, starting with the junior category and finishing with the adult category.

For each category, a prize-giving ceremony will close the competition. The following prizes will be awarded:

- First place
- Second place
- Third place
- Top scorer
- Best goalkeeper
- Most fair play team

2. Players' equipment

Players must be dressed in sports clothing. If possible, each team will wear its institution's sports uniform. If the institution does not have uniforms, chasubles will be provided by the organisers. These must be returned at the end of each match.

All jewellery must be removed. Players must wear sports shoes. Metal studs are not permitted (artificial turf).

3. Duration

Tournament matches run continuously. For Junior, Teen and Adult categories, the duration of the matches is set at 14 minutes.

The organisers reserve the right to adjust the duration of the matches according to the number of teams present or any unforeseen circumstances on the day of the competition.

Each team must be on the pitch 5 minutes before kick-off. Teams may warm up freely on the edge of the pitch while waiting for their turn.

4. Tournament rules : particularities

Each match is played by 2 teams **of 5 players**, including 1 goalkeeper. **Up to 5 substitutes** are authorised for each team. **Substitutes may be used as often as necessary**, subject to prior request to the referee. Players may only play for one team during the tournament.

All the basic rules of football apply, with **the following special features**:

- Mixed teams are encouraged in all matches;
- In the event of a match between a mixed team and an all-boys team, **the mixed team will play with one more player**;
- If at any time a team is leading by more than 3 goals, **the team trailing by the score may bring an extra player onto the pitch for 5 minutes**. The player must leave the pitch once this time has elapsed;
- The goalkeeper may not take the ball by hand from a deliberate back-pass by one of his team-mates, failing which he will be awarded an indirect free kick.
- A player may not stand less than 2 metres from the ball when defending a free kick.
- **There is no offside, and any player can score from anywhere on the pitch.**
- At the end of each match, teams must show fair play: players must shake hands.

Each match will be officiated by a professional referee. The referee is the sole judge and his authority begins when he enters the pitch.

5. How to enter the tournament

Any school or institution offering French language courses may take part. The number of teams in each category is strictly limited to 8. Unless special permission is granted by the organisers, an institution may enter only one team. The 'first come, first served' principle will be applied to determine which teams are entitled to compete.

6. Ranking

The following will apply for each category:

- Depending on the number of teams, two or three pools will be formed.

- During the pool phase, the referee awards 3 points for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a loss.
- Following the pool phase, the teams qualified in each pool will go forward to the final phase. Matches will be knockout.
- During the final phase, the teams tied at the end of normal time will be decided by a penalty shoot-out, which will include 3 shots for each team. If the teams are still tied after 3 kicks, the shoot-out will continue until one of the two teams has scored more goals than its opponent after an equal number of attempts.
- Whenever possible a third-place play-off will be played to determine third place.

7. Sanctions and unsporting behaviour

Tackles, whether defensive or offensive, are strictly forbidden. Defenders must defend standing up or a free kick will be awarded.

It is formally forbidden to check an opponent by pushing him against the balustrades. It is also forbidden to make contact that is too rough, in which case the referee is the sole decision-maker.

Any foul inside the penalty area will be penalised by a penalty kick for the opposing team.

Sanctions will be as follow:

- Yellow card: temporary exclusion
- Red card following 2 yellow cards: expulsion from the match and suspension from the next match,
- Immediate red card: exclusion and automatic suspension for the next match.