



## Ballinteer St Johns

### Club Policy on Playing in Appropriate Age Groups

#### Nursery

It is the Club's policy that all players should play in their applicable age group from the outset. In general all players leaving the nursery should play in their correct age group with the following exceptions.

1. Where the team leaving the nursery is in need of additional players in order to field a team, they may utilise players from the age group below. i.e. a player from the age group U8 may 'Substitute-Up' to U9
2. Where, in the opinion of both sets of Mentors, it is in the best interests of the player, a U8 player may be allowed to play with U9 until his own age leaves the nursery the following year

Both instances above are subject to;

- (i) a letter confirming the Club's policy being provided to the player's parents
- (ii) receipt of permission from; the player's parents, the Mentors in the lower age group and the Club.

However, when the next age group leaves the nursery, the players who 'Substituted-Up' must return back to play for their correct age group. i.e. when the U8 group leaves the nursery any players who 'Substituted-Up' to U9 must return to play for the U8 group.

In the Nursery, if, for whatever reason, players are playing in groups other than their own age group then the Mentor must explain the Club's policy, as detailed above, to the parents of the player.

#### **CC1/Juvenile Players (U8-U12) - in all codes**

For CC1 the emphasis should be on the participation and development of all players. All players should be included on a team and should enjoy substantial game time at all of their team's games.

It is the Club's policy that all players should play in their applicable age group. However there is an onus on Mentors to support other teams in the Club wherever possible e.g. if the team in an older age group has a shortage of players for a particular match then Mentors in younger age groups should, if requested, try to facilitate by providing players wherever possible.

Players may 'Substitute-Up' in the following instances;

1. Players may be asked to 'substitute up' if a team in an older age group is short of players. However the player being asked to 'Sub-Up' must give priority to his own age group first.
2. If there is no team at the player's applicable age group, then the player may play with the team in the next oldest age group.
3. If a player is invited up to play with the older age group he should have the same expectation of playing time and participation as a player playing in his own age group.

### **CC2 Players (U13-U16) in all codes**

At CC2 level the club needs to endeavor to provide all players the opportunity to develop and enjoy their games at the appropriate levels. To deliver this effectively the club needs to target having at least two teams at each group within CC2. An A team focused on developing the players and the team to the maximum of their ability, and a B team whilst also focused on the development of the players, will also have an overriding objective of ensuring an opportunity for players to participate who cannot or wish not to play at the A team level.

As with CC1 above, it is the Club's policy that all players should play in their applicable age group, and that the related team(s) are regarded as their primary team.

Note:

1. For the 2 team strategy to be successful, the Nursery needs to target producing 45+ players per year.
2. Before agreeing on the team structure for the season ahead, the respective mentors should be guided by the twin objectives of the club being as competitive as possible and ensuring that all players get the opportunity to participate in games.
3. The mentor of the players' primary team is the players' primary contact within the club, and that mentor is responsible for ensuring the players well being is not compromised by participating with too many teams within the club.

Where the 2 teams are available per year:

1. At the start of every season both A & B mentors, with the applicable coordinator, should complete a review of all of the players and agree on respective squads for the season. Grading should not be based on the prior year's squads.
2. A & B mentors should ensure that the available playing resources are appropriately balanced between both squads
3. A & B team mentors should liaise throughout the year on whether it is in players' interests to change squads, even for a short period.
4. If short of players for applicable games, mentors have the option of inviting players from the other squad, or from the squads below. Note: B mentors should be cognisant of not playing A players who will be too strong for the B grade and A

mentors should try to avoid asking B players who are not strong enough to play at the A grade.

5. Any player who is invited into the respective squads should be treated the same as the long term members of the squad.
6. All invitations should be channeled through and agreed with the mentor of the players' primary team.
7. For championship games, respective mentors should select the strongest side available to them including players from the younger age and subject to GAA Official Rules,
8. Where mentors are in dispute or disagreement on any issues, they should seek direction from their respective coordinators.

Where there is insufficient numbers for two teams:

1. Where there are too many players for 1 team but not enough for 2.
  - Mentors should liaise with other teams, including the coordinators, to try to identify alternative teams or structures so that all players get the opportunity to participate in games. This may result in players joining a squad the year older or merging ages to deliver synergy benefits.
  - Note: Where a squad has too many players for two teams, the policy above should also apply
2. Where there are only enough players for one squad.
  - All of the policies above apply, except the mentors need to endeavor to address the different requirement of players within the one squad.

### *Minor Players playing up to adult*

It is the Club's policy that all players should play in their applicable age group.

In some codes there are fixed rules as to the minimum age players need to reach prior to them being allowed play on an adult team and the club will follow these rules where applicable. In the event that it falls within the rules and there is an occasion where a minor player is asked to 'play up' with an Adult team, the following will apply:

1. Priority should be given to the Minor age group first.
2. The Management of the Minor team must be consulted and must consent to the minor player 'playing up'.
3. If a Minor player has 'played up' under 1 and 2 above and a clash arises between an Adult match and a Minor match then the Minor match should take priority unless otherwise agreed between the management of both teams and the executive/games committee.
4. If agreement is not reached then the issue will be escalated as soon as the issue arises, initially to the coordinators and if not resolved there then to the Games committee to decide.
5. Priority of competition should be taken into account (Championship ahead of League and League ahead of Cup and Challenge)