



# **WALTERSTOWN GFC**

# **JUVENILE POLICIES**

Handbook



# MISSION STATEMENT

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Walterstown GFC are committed to ensuring that all juvenile players are constantly learning and will be in a better place when progressing to the next age level each year. Our intention is to ensure that each player can reach their full potential throughout their time playing football.

By developing our own Pathway to Retention, Development & Success we are creating an environment to ensure that all our young players play and stay with Walterstown GFC, not only for their playing careers but throughout their lives.



# **JUVENILE PLAYING POLICY (MINOR AND BELOW)**

## **AIM OF THE POLICY:**

- 1. (i) Players play in their Natural age group, primarily***
- 2. (ii) The circumstances in which players are allowed to play with an older age group on a temporary basis is documented and consistent with the ethos of the Club and the GAA***
- 3. (iii) This policy is applied consistently and fairly across the Juvenile section with each player's welfare, well-being and development placed at the centre of any decision to play a player in an older age group***



# **JUVENILE PLAYING POLICY (MINOR AND BELOW)**

**THE KEY PRINCIPLES OF THIS POLICY ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1. A player must play and train on the team of their Natural age group, where such a team is available.**
- 2. Where the Club does not field a team for the Player's Natural age group, then that Player shall be entitled to Play up in the age group directly above their Natural age group.**
- 3. Players should not play 2 years above their Natural age group, unless there is no team available at their own Natural age group or the age group directly above.**
- 4. A player may Play up on a temporary basis, where the Club does not have sufficient players to field a team in the age group directly above and requires players from the team in the age group below to fulfil their fixtures. (U12 upwards).**
- 5. The priority for Players Playing up on a temporary basis will always be to train and play with their Natural age group primarily and these players should not be prevented from playing in their Natural age group as a result.**
- 6. Where Players are requested to Play up on a temporary basis, the priority in terms of development and game time should be given to Players playing in their natural age group over Players playing above their Natural age group.**
- 7. New or returning Players joining the Club should only join the team of their Natural age group, regardless of whether they have played in an above age group previously with the Club or indeed with another club.**



# JUVENILE PLAYING POLICY (MINOR AND BELOW)

8. Where a Player is currently playing U12 to minor on a permanent basis in a team in an age group above their Natural age group, they will be asked by the relevant Lead Mentor and/or Juvenile Chairperson/Coaching Officer to revert to playing in their Natural age group, with immediate effect.

9. Where a Player is currently playing in an U5s to U11 age group which is above their Natural age group, the player should transition into their correct age group as soon as possible.

10. No player should play up for Go Games. If the older team is short numbers they must work that out with the opposition and not request players from a younger age grouping.

*It is not the role of Lead Coaches to lobby on behalf of parents regarding the age group their child is playing in, nor to make any determination as to what age group a child should play in. It is the Lead Coaches responsibility to ensure this policy is applied consistently for the Players under their care and to communicate the application of this policy to parents within their age group. If a parent of a Player has a concern with the age group the Player is participating in or should be participating in, they should contact the Lead Coach as a first point on contact to outline their specific concerns. The lead coach can take these concerns forward to their relevant Coaching committee link member or indeed any member of the coaching committee.*

*At all times, this decision will be based on what is best for the welfare, well-being and development of the Player and the decision of the Executive Committee shall be final and shall be communicated directly by the Executive Committee to the parent of the Player in question.*



# **PROCESS FOR PLAYING UP ON A TEMPORARY BASIS: U12 -MINOR**

**1. From time to time, Players may be invited to Play up on a temporary basis by the Lead Coach (through contact with their own Lead coach not directly to parents or players) of the team in the above age group, due to that team having insufficient Players to field a team. (15 aside games required number is 18 so 3 subs) There are Fair Plays rules whereby opposition teams must play to the starting number available i.e., 13 v 13 / 11 v 11. It is not deemed appropriate to request Players to Play up if that team in the above age group has sufficient Players in their Natural age group. The coach of the younger age group will each time it is requested, select, and rotate this to players that are physically able for the playing in an older age group.**

**2. Any requests to Play up on a temporary basis should only be in addition to the Player playing and training within their own age group and it should never result in the player not being available for a match for their Natural age group (notwithstanding injury)**

**3. Where possible, Lead Coaches should at the beginning of each season, set out their intentions with regard to allowing younger players to Play up with their team and also explain this to parents of Players in that team so it is clear on which basis Players will be invited to Play up and why, whilst reassuring parents that the Club's policy is to give priority to Players in their Natural age group.**

**4. Lead Coaches should work closely with the age groups directly above and below them from the start of the season to ensure the right decisions are made early and consistently with this policy and to avoid misunderstanding, differences, and conflict. A rotation of players is strongly recommended so to afford the opportunity to play up to those that are physically able and want to avail of the opportunity with parental consent.**



# **PROCESS FOR PLAYING UP ON A TEMPORARY BASIS: U12 -MINOR**

5. The Lead Coach of the older team should contact the lead coach of the younger team to request for Players to Play up, through the Player's Parent/Guardian (and not through the Players themselves). the Lead Mentor of the above age group should not contact the parents of the any player directly. The Coach seeking the players should not ask for specific players, that decision is made by the coach of the group supplying the players to play up.

6. The Lead Coach of the Player's Natural age group must first acquire the parental consent of the Players (that he/she selects) in question, before agreeing to release the Player.

7. Player welfare is of utmost importance. The priority for Players playing up should always be the team in their natural age group and where there is a clash of matches, the natural age group will always take precedence. No pressure whatsoever should be exerted on a Player to "Play up" if they are not comfortable doing so.

8. Once parental consent has been obtained, the Lead coach should confirm their decision to release the Player to the age group above on a temporary basis.

9 Where a Lead coach from an older age group requests players from a younger age group to play up and the coach of the player in the natural age group will not release players (upcoming matches/Injuries etc) the Lead coach if dissatisfied can refer the matter to their coaching committee liaison or any coaching committee member.



# **STANDARDS OF APPROACH FOR COACHES:**

- **Clear communication in relation to training and matches. Coaches will endeavour to plan four weeks in advance. Advance notification of four-week training/match schedule should be clearly advised to parents/players. All coaches to take part in coaching courses, workshops, and meetings to improve their coaching skills.**
- **Coaches to follow Give Respect, Get Respect Initiative, Code of Conduct, and club ethos. Coaches to value and prioritise good communication, and work together to resolve any issues that may arise.**
- **All coaches need to be members of the club, complete safeguarding, Garda vetting and where possible coaching courses. It is imperative for the success of the standard of coaching that all coaches participate where possible in any coaching events, courses, and avail of any supports from the coaching committee and our Games Promotion Officer.**
- **A six week break over the Christmas holiday period for all club teams has been agreed. All competitive teams should aim to be back training before the first week of February each year. (It's at the coaches' discretion whether or not to avail of the full six-week break, but no team should be away from training for longer than this period). Younger aged teams may wish to take a longer break period, i.e. those not playing competitive leagues.**





# PLEASE NOTE

These policies are in line with Nationally adopted and monitored GAA guidelines that we are obliged to implement to ensure every child has equal opportunity to develop within their age grade. This is to protect participation, retention, and enjoyment for the children.

At all times, this decision will be based on what is best for the welfare, well-being, and development of the Player. There may be times where exceptions to these policies may be considered after consultation/agreement between lead coaches of both teams, parents, and the coaching committee.

Disputes relating to this policy shall be heard by the disputes committee and will refer to the Executive Committee as appropriate. The decisions of the disputes/executive Committee on aspects relating to this policy and any resulting appeals/disputes shall be final.

The decision of the disputes Committee shall be final and shall be communicated directly by the disputes Committee to the Lead coaches of both age groups.



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Policy document formally ratified by the club executive committee*