



DULWICH CRICKET CLUB POLICY FOR JUNIOR CRICKETERS PLAYING IN ADULT MATCHES

Dulwich Cricket Club (DCC) recognises the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people in sport and has adopted the ECB guidelines on *Junior Cricketers playing in Adult Matches* as set out in *Safe Hands*, cricket's policy for safeguarding children. For the purposes of this policy a junior player is a player in an age group under 19 or below.

DCC recognises that transition to open age cricket is a significant moment for a young cricketer, and that their experience is likely to influence their future attitude to the game. A positive experience will help to develop their skills and their love of the game, while a negative experience may put them at risk or contribute to them giving up the sport.

DCC does not believe there is a "right age" for transition (though it applies the minimum ages set out below) and requires that every case is treated individually according to the principle that no factors other than the junior player's best interests are taken into account.

DCC acknowledges that it has a duty of care towards all junior players who represent the club in adult (open age) matches and this is interpreted in the following two ways:

1. We will not place a junior player in a position that involves an unreasonable risk to that young player, taking into account the circumstances of the match and relative skills of the player.
2. We will not create a situation that places members of the opposing side in a position whereby they cannot play cricket as they would normally do against adult players.

In accordance with ECB guidelines the following rules apply to all adult matches at DCC:

- All junior players who have not reached their 18th birthday must wear a helmet with a faceguard when batting and when standing up to the stumps when keeping wicket.
- The ECB fielding and fast bowling regulations will be adhered to and we will take all reasonable steps to make sure that the umpires and captains enforce these regulations. (The umpires are empowered by these fielding regulations to stop any game immediately if a young player comes within the restricted distance).
- We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the umpires and captains are notified of the age group of all players participating in an adult match who are in the under 19 age group or younger even if the player is not a fast bowler. This requirement will also cover any young player taking the field as a substitute fielder.
- We will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the players are placed in a cricketing environment that is supportive at all times for all forms of effort, gives encouragement and praise and ensures that the players safety, personal development needs and overall cricket experience are considered.

Age eligibility for open age cricket

Only junior players in the under 13 (school year 8) age group or higher will be considered for selection to play in adult matches.

In the case of the under 13 (year 8) age group, only exceptionally talented players will be considered for selection in adult matches. From the under 14 (year 9) age group, a broader range of junior players may be considered for adult matches of an appropriate standard, subject to obtaining the assurances about ability and maturity outlined below.

Approval for individual under 13 (year 8) players will be given by the Head Coach and either the Junior Co-ordinator (for boys) or the Girls Lead (for girls), following consultation with the individual player's age group manager and lead coach to ensure that the player is of appropriate cricketing ability and physical and emotional maturity.

For under 14 (year 9) and under 15 (year 10), approval will be given by the Junior Co-ordinator or the Girls Lead (as appropriate) following consultation with the relevant age group manager (the Head Coach's approval is not required). This approval may be given to a list of eligible players at the start of a season, which can be added to as the season progresses.

Written consent from a parent or guardian is required for any player in the under 15 (year 10) age group or below prior to that junior player participating in an adult match.

For the under 13 (year 8) age group, this consent should be obtained strictly in accordance with the following procedure (and, if necessary, with league officials) before the junior player participates in an adult match. This is designed to ensure that decisions are always taken in the best interests of under 13 players and with the best available information about their cricketing, physical and emotional development, with key discussions with the junior player's parents or guardians led by the relevant age group manager (who will usually be the DCC representative with the closest personal knowledge of the player – including not only their technical ability, but how they might cope with a difficult situation, on or away from the pitch). It will also stop DCC from sending mixed messages to parents or guardians, and avoid conflicts of interest (for example, a senior captain who needs extra players to make up a team).

If a different procedure is to be followed (for example, for a player who is new to the club and unknown to the age group manager, but well known to another coach or club officer) it should be approved in advance by the club's safeguarding officer.

- An adult team manager, captain or coach wishing to consider a junior for selection should discuss the individual player with the relevant age group manager, before approaching the child's parent or guardian.
- An age group manager or coach wishing to propose a junior for selection in open age cricket, should discuss the individual player with the relevant adult team manager / captain before approaching the child's parent or guardian.
- If a junior's parent or guardian approaches anyone at the club about the possibility of their child playing open age cricket, the age group manager, open age manager, and coach should discuss the proposal together, before any response or encouragement is given to the parent or guardian.

Factors to consider in such discussions include the junior's cricketing ability, their physical and emotional development (e.g. how large/strong are they? How do they respond to adversity in a match

or off the field?), what is their injury history, and how much cricket they are currently playing (so that we do not encourage overuse injuries).

If age group manager, open age manager/captain and coach agree, and ONLY IF THEY AGREE, the AGE GROUP MANAGER should approach the child's parent or guardian for a discussion, flagging risks, and asking open questions rather than seeking to persuade.

Should the parent or guardian give consent following this discussion, this should be obtained in writing. The age group manager should then ask the Junior Co-ordinator (for boys) or Girls Lead (for girls) and Club Head Coach, for written permission. Should the Head Coach not know the individual concerned, (s)he should consult with the lead age group coach as required.

The captain or manager of the open age team for which the junior is selected should then log the written permission from the parent or guardian and the club with the club's safeguarding officer, and the county or league administering the relevant competition if this is necessary for its rules. For friendly fixtures, the opposition should be informed and consent.

For juniors in the *under 14 (year 9) age group and above*, parental consent may be given via league or cup registration processes, including online registration.

Note that DCC's policies on *Managing Children away from the Club, Transport, and Changing and Showering* also contain provisions relating to junior players and must be adhered to.

February 2024