

PRUFC—Playing out of age grade policy



This document details the policy for playing out of age grade for the Minis & Juniors sections.

1. Juniors

- 1.1 In the Juniors section, a player shall play in their own age grade unless they fall within one of the following exceptions:
 - (a) Very talented or physically developed players in the U13, U14 and U15 age grades may play up one age grade with appropriate permission.
 - (b) Those in the U16 and U17 age grades may play up two age grades.
 - (b) In very exceptional circumstances, where a young person's safety may be compromised due to a developmental disability (physical or behavioural) that young person may play down one age grade.
- 1.2 Players may only play adult rugby, or train with other adults, when they have reached their eighteenth birthday unless they comply with one of the following exceptions:
 - (a) Players who are aged 17 may play adult (including Under 20) rugby and train with adults provided they have been assessed as capable of playing with adults. This exception does not apply to playing in the front row of the scrum during contested or uncontested scrummages either during training or in a match, where there is an absolute prohibition on players under the age of 18 playing in adult rugby.
 - (b) Players of both sexes and of any age may train or play together in non-contact variations of rugby, providing the organiser has assessed the session as safe for all players.
- 1.3 Permission to play must be obtained from either the player's parent or guardian before any person under the age of 18 plays adult rugby or plays with players who are not in the same annual age banding. When assessing whether a player under 18 is capable of playing adult rugby, those responsible for making the decision must take account of the guidelines given later in this document.
- 1.4 The age limit for all age grades is determined as being under the specified age at midnight on 31 August at the beginning of the season in which matches are to be played. The appropriate age group applies for the whole season. At representative level (U17 and U18 only) the age limit is determined at midnight on 31st December of that season.
- 1.5 The process detailed in section 3 shall be applied the first time the player plays out of age grade. Playing out of age grade may continue as long as the receiving Head Coach believes it to be necessary.
- 1.6 The Club Secretary and the Club Safeguarding Officer will review all players playing out of age grade at least once a season.
- 1.6 The Club Secretary is responsible for making sure this policy is observed.

2. Minis

- 2.1 The age grades are defined as follows:
- **Under 7 and Under 8 (stage 1)** - both age grades play **Mini Tag Rugby** to the same rules except that Under 8s can only be tagged a maximum number of times.
 - **Under 9 and Under 10 (stage 2)** - both age grades play **Mini Rugby** to the same rules except Under 9s have uncontested scrums and line-outs and Under 10s have contested scrums and line-outs.
 - **Under 11 and Under 12 (stage 3)** - both age grades play **Midi Rugby** to the same rules.
- 2.2 A player's age grade is determined by their age at midnight on 31 August at the beginning of each season.
- 2.3 During the course of each season, players may only play rugby with other players in their age grade unless they are permitted to play with players from a different age grade under a dispensation.
- 2.4 When participating in Fixtures or Festivals, the Head Coach must inform the coaches and match officials of opposing teams of any dispensation being applied and identify each player concerned.
- 2.5 Dispensation will last for one season only. Dispensation must be reapplied for each season. The process detailed in section 3 shall be followed to gain dispensation.
- 2.6 During training, players may train together and play internal training matches without individual dispensation. The following groupings will apply:
- (a) Under 7s and Under 8s can train and play together.
 - (b) Under 9s and Under 10s can train and play together.
 - (c) Under 11s and Under 12s can train and play together.
- 2.7 Players may enter the Under 7s squad immediately they attain their sixth birthday. These players shall stay with the Under 7s squad for the following season.
- 2.8 Players under the age of six are not permitted to train or play as this would invalidate our compulsory insurance cover.
- 2.9 No Under 13 player is permitted to train or play with an U11 or U12 squad in any circumstances.
- 2.10 Applications to play down an age grade must be submitted to the RFU Tournaments & Competitions Director by the Club Secretary.
- 2.10 The Club Secretary is responsible for ensuring this policy is observed.

3. Process

- 3.1 On making the initial decision to play an individual out of their age grade, the first step will be for the normal age grade Head Coach to complete the form attached to this policy filling in the justification section and signing where indicated.
- 3.2 The player's parent or guardian will sign the form where indicated.
- 3.3 The form will be sent to the Club Secretary.
- 3.4 The Club Secretary and the Club Safeguarding Officer will review the form and discuss an assessment plan with the receiving age group Head Coach. The assessment plan will be recorded on the form.
- 3.5 The receiving Head Coach will conduct the assessment of suitability of the player to play in their age group within the plan agreed. Whilst assessment is taking place, the player shall **not** play in any competitive games.
- 3.6 On completion of the assessment, the receiving Head Coach will notify the Club Secretary of the outcome of the assessment.
- 3.7 The Club Secretary and the Club Safeguarding Officer will review the outcome of the assessment with the Head Coaches of the two age grades and the parent or guardian as required.
- 3.7 If the assessment is negative then the player will return to their normal age grade.
- 3.8 If the assessment is positive then the player will stay with the receiving age grade and may begin playing in competitive games.
- 3.9 The outcome of the assessment will be recorded on the form by the Club Secretary. The receiving Head Coach, the Club Secretary and the Club Safeguarding Officer will all sign the form.
- 3.10 For Mini section players playing down, the Club Secretary will notify the RFU Tournaments & Competitions Director.
- 3.11 The form will be retained by the Club Safeguarding Officer.

The Club Safeguarding Officer will make the final decision to allow a young person to play out of age grade.

4. Guidance

- 4.1 The decision to allow a young person to play out of age grade lies with the person in the best position to assess all the relevant circumstances. In our case this will generally be the Club Safeguarding Officer supported by the Club Secretary and the Head Coaches of the age groups concerned.
- 4.2 In making a decision the following aspects shall be considered:
 - (a) The physical and mental development of the individual and his playing colleagues.
 - (b) The skill level and experience of the individual.
 - (c) The individual's playing position in the team.
 - (d) The competitive standard of the particular matches and playing conditions.
 - (e) The effect of removing the individual from the normal age group on the rest of the team.
 - (f) Any other considerations as may apply to the individual case.
- 4.3 The ultimate consideration must be for the welfare and safety of the player and those with whom the individual will be playing.
- 4.4 Clear and complete records should be kept of decisions taken and the bases for them.

PRUFC – Playing out of age grade record



Player's Name:

Player's Date of Birth:

Justification for playing out of age group:

Assessment Plan:

Decision:

**RFU Notification
Required:**

Yes / No

RFU Notified:

Yes / No

Signatures:

Parent:

Normal Age Group Head Coach:

Receiving Age Group Head Coach:

Club Safeguarding Officer's Signature:

Club Secretary's Signature:
