



## Juniors Playing Open Age Cricket Policy

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Stretford Cricket Club (SCC) 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 Open Age Matches” as set out in “*Safe Hands*” *Crickets policy for safeguarding children*.

SCC acknowledges that they have a duty of care towards all young players who represent the club and this is interpreted in the following two ways:

- We will not place a young 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.
- Not to 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 covering the participation of young cricketers SCC has adopted the following regulations:

- All young 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.

We will comply with the ECB guidelines with regards to the minimum age a young player can play in open age cricket:

The guidance is as follows:

- Making the step up from junior to open age group cricket is a significant event in any player's cricket experience. It is essential to ensure that the player's safety, personal development needs and overall cricket experience are considered.

- Clubs, coaches and managers must take into account the requirements on age detailed in this guidance
- Each case is to be determined on an individual basis, depending on the player's ability and stage of cognitive level – however, the minimum age guidance provided must be adhered to.
- Juniors should be involved in all aspects of the game wherever possible i.e. socialising, team talks, practice, decision making and so on, so they feel part of the team.
- Children will often feel more comfortable and able to perform if they have a family member or friend also playing in the side
- Remember, children's early experiences will remain with them always and will often determine whether they want to remain playing the game or give up and do something else.
- Provide an opportunity for players to show their talents in an appropriate way. Children who are just used as fielders will not fully experience the game.
- Be supportive, at all times, for all forms of effort even when children are not successful. Try to put them in situations where they will experience some success (however small) and ensure plenty of praise and encouragement.
- The captain should inform the Umpires of under 18's in the side.

### **Restrictions**

ECB Helmets, Fast Bowling Directives and Fielding Regulations should always be adhered to for junior players in Open age group cricket.

### **Minimum Age**

Players who are selected in a County U12 squad in spring for a summer squad or in another squad deemed by the ECB Performance Managers to be of a standard above "district level" for that season are eligible to play open age cricket. This is providing they are at least 11 years old, are in School Year 7 on 1st September in the year preceding the season, and have written parental consent to play. In allowing these players to play in open age cricket it is essential clubs and coaches recognise the "duty of care" obligations they have towards these young players. (Please see below for further details).

This means boys and girls who are county squad and area squad players, are able to play open age group cricket if they are in an U12 age group and are a minimum of 11 years old on 1st September of the year preceding the season.

District and club players who are not in a county or area squads must wait until they reach the U13 age group, be in year 8 and be 12 years old 1st September of the preceding year before being able to play in any open age group cricket. As before, written parental consent is required for these players.

### **Duty of care is interpreted in the following two ways:**

- Not to place a young 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.
- Not to 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 addition, the guidelines note the need for clubs and leagues to recognise the positive experience young players should have in open age cricket. Clubs should provide an opportunity for players to show their talents in an appropriate way.

**NB The Policies: Managing Children When Away, Transport To and From Matches and Changing and Showering must be adhered to.**

Last Reviewed 25/03/25