

ST. JOHN'S GAA



Est. 1987

**St. John's GAA Player
Participation Policy from U7-8
to U17-18**

Mission:

The focus for the juvenile section is **player development**. From U12 upwards, we also aim to compete on behalf of the club to the best of our ability with the ultimate aim of having a successful club, while adhering to the principles listed below.

Principles

- Loyalty
- Fairness
- Respect
- Honesty
- Participation
- Communication
- Club & Community
- Commitment
- Friendship
- Development

Metrics

How do, and should we measure success at the end of the year?

- Games played per player
- Training sessions attended by each player
- Player retention: squad members at beginning of year vs end of year and reason for change

Player Participation Model

In terms of translating the participation model into guidelines, broad guidelines are necessary, but it needs to be recognised that they cannot cover every eventuality. In parallel with developing guidelines we must also trust and empower our coaches and managers to follow the above principles and be guided by the above mission.

Scope

This document applies to all juvenile teams in both codes (LGFA & GAA) up to and including minor age groups.

Purpose

The intent of this policy is to outline clear, consistent, and fair team structures that will foster the participation and development of all players, regardless of skill or ability. It also aims to retain players into adult competition while helping them to achieve their full playing potential.

Training

- In general, all players will train and play with their age group, based on the calendar year. However, under certain circumstances consistent with our mission of player development and our principles, a player may train one year up, e.g.
 - On joining the club players may want to stick with their friends or schoolmates who may be born in a different calendar year. This will be permitted in keeping with the child welfare guidelines recommending coaches ensure children have fun with their friends and they will come back.
 - From U12 (Girls) and U13 (Boys) up it may be deemed beneficial for players with advanced skills or advanced physical development to train one year above in addition to training with their own group. Training at one's own age group will be prioritised.
- Attendance at training will be recorded whether on computer or paper and should include what mentors were present.
- Training for each group will reflect the guidelines for each grade (GAA) and Player Pathways (LGFA) and will seek to maximise time spent with the ball for each member.

Games

- All players who train regularly will be provided with an equal opportunity to play games regardless of ability.
- Match teams will normally be divided into even teams or according to year of birth unless competition dictates otherwise.
- Player's commitment and attendance at training will be taken into account in team selection i.e. players with poor attendance (not including non-attendance due to injury) or discipline will not displace others.
- We seek to maximise the game time for all players.
- The practice of 'parachuting', whereby a supposedly strong player who has not shown commitment to training and less glamorous matches is brought into a team for an important match runs totally contrary to our principles and mission and is not permitted.

Streaming

- Training sessions will not be streamed but players of similar ability may be paired in drills and/or game-based match scenarios.
- Training matches will not be streamed, and we seek to maximise ball time per player and minimise the numbers per side in training matches, coach numbers permitting.

- Players shall not be streamed by ability for matches below U12 unless competition rules dictate otherwise.
- Streaming will not result in fixed teams and will be fluid within the rules of competition eg nominated players competitions
- Where teams are streamed for games, each team will be treated equally by mentors and given equal opportunity for game time. E.g. A Team and B Team. Consider the benefits of an alternative name e.g. Navy Team, Sky Blue Team.

Playing Up

- Playing up an age is permitted when a team is short of numbers or where it is judged to contribute towards player development. (GAA)
- Playing up two grades is permitted by LGFA rule. The principles above still apply. A younger grade player should not displace an older player.
- Where playing up does occur, the team manager must ensure it is done in a structured and well communicated manner (to be agreed with the players' parents and current age grade coaching team). Playing up in a competitive situation will normally require some level of participation in training with the higher age group.
- If a second team of the age is in place, players of the age will be selected in preference over players being played up.
- Where playing up does occur, the relevant manager will send a record of the names of players involved to the juvenile chairperson (GAA) or chairperson (LGFA).

Competitions/ Blitzes

- Up to and including U11 level:
 - All players in an age group shall play the same level of competitive matches / blitzes regardless of ability. Therefore, if we are limited to entering one team in a blitz and some players are left out, those players will be prioritised for selection at the next competitive opportunity
 - Even teams will be fielded in all blitzes / competitions unless rules dictate otherwise
- Games played by each player will be recorded and reported at year end.
- Where multiple teams are entered in a competition neutral teams names should be used assuming this is permitted by the rules of a competition teams i.e. names such as St. John's A, B, C should be avoided in favour of alternatives e.g. colours.

All Persons

- All persons involved with the club will adhere to the GAA Underage Code of Behaviour available at <https://www.gaa.ie/news/gaa-code-behaviour/>
- All persons involved with the club will be positive role models.

Players

- Players will not be allowed to play or train beyond one 'free' introductory training session unless they are registered members.

- Players will not be allowed to play without a gum shield.
- Players will respect their mentors, referees, opponents, play by the rules, accept the decisions of officials, and be role models.
- Players will not be discriminated against.

Mentors

- All mentors must be club members, be garda vetted, have a minimum coaching qualification of Foundation or FUNdamental level, and have completed the appropriate child protection course.
- Mentors will lead by example, put the player's interests first and treat all players equally.
- Mentors children will not be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged.

Parents, Guardians & Supporters

- Parents, guardians and supporters are encouraged to show approval for how the game is played and must not criticise officials, mentors or players.

Complaints

- Perceived breaches of this policy should be discussed with the team manager and / or reported to the juvenile chairperson / LGFA chairperson.
- Every effort will be made to address any issues at this level.

Communication

- Coaches must communicate their plans around games and team selection openly and honestly with parents and players.
- Feedback shall be sought from all players from U12 upwards annually on a formal basis on their strengths, weaknesses and development focus. This feedback will be used as a basis for one to one interaction between players' mentors during the season.
- This document shall be posted on the club website