



ECB guidance for children playing in open age groups. Adopted by Stour Provost Cricket Club

## **ECB Guidelines for Junior Players in Open Age Group Cricket**

The ECB has issued guidance covering the selection and participation of young players in open age group cricket. This is to help clubs decide when to select young players in open age group cricket and how best to help their cricketing development when they play within open age groups. The guidance applies to boys and girls. The ECB keeps these guidelines under review. Put simply, the overall aim is to allow young players to develop in safety, but not to spoil the game for adults. For the avoidance of doubt, this guidance applies to training and nets as well as games.

### **The guidance is as follows:**

#### **General**

- Making the step up from junior to open age group cricket is an important event in any player's cricket experience. The player's safety, personal development needs and overall cricket experience must be considered
- Clubs, squad coaches and managers must take into account the requirements on age detailed in this guidance.
- Each case must be determined on an individual basis, depending on the player's ability and stage of cognitive and emotional maturity to take part in Open Age cricket – The minimum age guidance provided below **MUST** be followed.
- 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 and put them in situations where they will experience some success (however small) and ensure plenty of praise and encouragement
- The captain must inform the Umpires of under 18s 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 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 1<sup>st</sup> September in the year proceeding 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.

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

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

**The duty of care should be interpreted in two ways:**

1. Not to place a young player in a position that involves an unreasonable risk to that young player, taking account of the circumstances of the match and the relative skills of the player
2. 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.

**ECB Guidelines on Girls Playing in Boys Age Group Leagues and Competitions**

In response to a number of requests the ECB has issued the following guidelines concerning the participation of girls in boys' cricket:

- The ECB wishes to encourage the development of girl cricketers and is happy for them to participate in boys' cricket
- Team managers and coaches have a duty of care to all players and girls should only be allowed to participate if the responsible adults are satisfied they are competent to do so
- Suitable arrangements need to be in place, particularly in relation to changing facilities and transportation arrangements, if applicable
- In ECB national competitions the age group requirements apply to all players regardless of their sex
- In local Leagues, and other competitions, it is up to each League, or competition, to specify age group requirements. If girls who are older than the specified age group are allowed to play, the League must specify a maximum age for the girl players and confirm how many older girls can play in any team. The same regulations must apply to all clubs in that League or competition
- For the sake of clarity it should be understood that boys cannot play in girls Leagues or competitions unless explicit provision for this is included in the rules of that League or competition. Boys cannot play in the ECB girls' competitions Any questions relating to these guidelines should be referred to the ECB Cricket Department at Lord's – 020 7432 1200 or [cricket@ecb.co.uk](mailto:cricket@ecb.co.uk).