

RFU REGULATIONS

RFU REGULATION 15 – AGE GRADE RUGBY

15.1 Objectives and Introduction

1. Regulation 15 applies to Age Grade Rugby and covers the playing, training and coaching of all variations of rugby for all age groups up to and including Under 18s, and including Under 19s playing down into Under 18s rugby. This Regulation 15 applies to both boys' and girls' rugby unless indicated otherwise.
2. The **objectives** of Regulation 15 are to ensure that Age Grade Rugby:
 - a. is played in a way which is **enjoyable for all** participants and which **aligns to rugby's core values** of Teamwork, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship;
 - b. is played in a way which puts **player safety and welfare at the forefront**;
 - c. creates an environment which **promotes and enhances player retention and recruitment**;
 - d. is regulated (via Regulation 15) and supported (via the documents in (3) below) in a way which provides players, coaches, match officials and all other participants with **clarity and consistency** and which **reduces the volunteer burden** wherever possible.
3. Regulation 15 is supplemented by the following documents:

Document	Link
Online Playing Out of Age Grade and Rugby Camps, Competitions & Events Approval forms	https://www.englandrugby.com/run/rules-governance/rfu-rules-and-regulations/regulation-15-age-grade-rugby
Competition Menu and Competitive Playing Calendar	https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby/playing-calendar
Age Grade Codes of Practice	www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby/codes-of-practice

Half Game Rule FAQs	www.englandrugby.com/participation/coaching/age-grade-rugby/half-game
RFU Regulation 21 (Safeguarding)	www.englandrugby.com/governance/rules-and-regulations/regulations
RFU Safeguarding Policy	www.englandrugby.com/governance/safeguarding

15.2 Key Playing Principles

1. What determines my age grade (for example, Under 7 or Under 16)?

- a. A player's age grade is determined by their age at midnight on 1st September at the beginning of each Season.
- b. That age grade applies for the whole Season. Players will move to their new age grade from 1st July before the beginning of the next Season.

Explanatory Note: This should include U18s for the purposes of playing adult rugby even if a player's 18th birthday falls within the Season (unless permitted otherwise in accordance with these regulations).

- c. Players must play in their own age grade unless permitted to play outside their age grade in accordance with these regulations.
- d. Age grades and corresponding school years are shown in the first column in the table at 15.6 below.

2. What Laws should I follow when playing Age Grade Rugby?

- a. When playing any format of contact or non-contact Age Grade Rugby, players and Match Officials must always do so in accordance with the Rules of Play set out Appendix 1 to 9 of this Regulation. The Rules of Play are marked with which Age Grade they apply to.
- b. The RFU may adopt other Law trials and variations which may apply to the Age Grade game. If that happens, the RFU will inform those it applies to, and these Law trials and variations must be complied with.

3. What types of rugby does this regulation apply to?

- a. There are several game variations for rugby union which Regulation 15 covers including non-contact T1 Rugby and Tag, XRugby, 7-a-side, 10-a-side and 15-a-side.

- b. Depending on your age grade, you may play a reduced player-number game to aid development (for example, U13 and younger who are transitioning towards full contact which starts at U14).

4. What if I want to play non-contact rugby?

Non-contact rugby can be played by all Age Grades at all times of year. This can be for players who only play non-contact, as well as those who play contact rugby as well. The basics of Regulation 15 apply to non-contact but with greater flexibility included due to contact not being part of the game. See section 15.9 for the key regulations of age grade non-contact rugby.

5. When and how often should I register to play?

- a. All Age Grade Club Players must be registered annually on the RFU's Game Management System:
 - i. for new Age Grade Players at a Club, they must be registered within 45 days of them first joining the Club; and
 - ii. for existing Age Grade Players at a Club, they must be registered within 45 days of the start of a new Season at the Club.

A link to the RFU's Game Management System (which is the central system run by the RFU) is [here](#).

6. What if I have a special dispensation under these regulations (for example, an approval to play out of age grade)?

If a Club or player has received any specific approvals under these regulations (for example, an approval to play out of age grade), CBs and/or event organisers may require digital access to these approvals to be taken to each match or festival.

7. How are disciplinary matters dealt with?

- a. Disciplinary matters relating to Age Grade rugby shall follow the procedures set out in Appendix 6 of RFU Regulation 19.
- b. That does not prevent a disciplinary matter being dealt with in accordance with any other part of RFU Regulation 19 (or any other RFU Regulation) if required.

You can access Appendix 6 of RFU Regulation 19 [here](#).

8. How do I apply to play out of my age grade?

- a. **The priority is always for Age Grade Players to play in their defined age/year group**, with their peers/friends and where those that support them are most closely connected. **Playing out of age grade is the exception.** For any player to do so, the circumstances, conditions, assessments and approvals required in regulation must be in place beforehand. The ultimate consideration must be the welfare and safety of all the players involved.
- b. All applications for playing out of age grade in clubs, schools and colleges (Combining, Playing Up, Playing Down and U17s Playing Adult Rugby - '**POOAG**') should be made on the RFU online forms provided.
- c. Any CB not using the RFU online POOAG systems must upload their data to the RFU system on a weekly basis.

For 17 year olds applying to play adult rugby, the club and player approval processes are within GMS. You can find a link to all the other POOAG forms [here](#). All POOAG applications will take up to 10 days to be considered. Please keep this in mind when making an application.

9. Is girls-only rugby permitted at Under 11 and below?

Girls can play both mixed (with boys) and girls-only rugby at Under 11 and below, provided that these regulations are always complied with in full.

Explanatory Note: Girls playing in an U12/U11 combined age band cannot play with boys (i.e. U12 girls are not permitted to play with U11 boys).

10. What else do I need to know?

- a. The Competitive Menu below (also contained in the Age Grade Playing Calendar) defines the competition formats that can be played at each age grade and sets out what constitutes contact and non-contact rugby. This must be complied with in full.
 - i. This includes that league rugby is only permitted from the Under 15 age group upwards. You can also only publish leagues tables from Under 15 upwards.
 - ii. The one exception to this is waterfall pools – these are permitted from the Under 12 age group upwards but must not be published as full league tables. Please see further details [here](#).

Competitive Menu

Competitive Menu By Age Group

The competitive opportunity available on the Menu progresses by age group. Progression is aligned to the developing competitive motivations of Age Grade Rugby players. Formats can be selected from the Menu. This **does not** mean that all formats **have to** be run.

Competition Format	Under 7 to 11	Under 12 Male	Under 13 Male	Under 14 Male	Under 15 Male	Under 16 Male	Under 17 Male	Under 18 Male	Under 12 Female	Under 14 Female	Under 16 Female	Under 18 Female
Friendly Fixture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Triangular	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Festival	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Waterfall Competition		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Knock Out Competition				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
League					✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Competition Format	Under 7 to 11	Under 12 Male	Under 13 Male	Under 14 Male	Under 15 Male	Under 16 Male	Under 17 Male	Under 18 Male	Under 12 Female	Under 14 Female	Under 16 Female	Under 18 Female

Competitive Format Descriptors

Friendly Fixture	Competitive style playing opportunity for two teams, often as part of a club or school/college block fixture, where focus is on maximising all your player's involvement, development and enjoyment.
Triangular	Competitive style playing opportunity for three teams where equal player participation is the emphasis. Focus is on maximising all your player's involvement, development and enjoyment rather than the score.
Festival	Competitive round-robin playing opportunity where equal team and player participation is the emphasis. Winning doesn't affect your ongoing participation as every team plays the same appropriate number of matches.
Waterfall Competition	Competitive playing programme where equal participation/progression is the emphasis. The outcome of your pool (not a league) games are recorded (but not published) to enable every team to advance to later rounds for an equal number of matches organised against similar level teams.
Knock Out Competition	Competitive playing programme where the outcome of the game is recorded and dictates your progression to later knock-out rounds or decides your final standing. Usually includes a winners trophy.
League	Competitive playing programme where the outcome of the game is recorded and points are applied to dictate your position and final standing in the published league table. Usually includes a winners trophy. May lead to a play off system to establish final champions.

- b. The age grade playing Season is defined in Regulation 15.10 below. It will usually be from the first Saturday in September to the first bank holiday Monday in May, inclusive. Regulation 15.10 also details permitted “Out of Season Activity”.
- c. For any Tours, local Tournaments, Festivals, Cups and Leagues, these must be run with the permission of your Constituent Body and must comply with the Age Grade Player Calendar. You can find more information in Regulation 15.10 below.
- d. Adults **must not** join in any aspect of contact training with Age Grade Players. This includes holding contact shields, tackle bags, or demonstrating tackling or techniques relating to the contact game (such as rucks, scrums, lineouts or mauls) or playing in semi-contact/opposed practices.

11. **What do the following terms mean in Regulation 15?**

Cluster means: *a short-term arrangement where Clubs, Schools or Colleges from the same age grade combine teams to fulfil playing opportunities during a Season.*

England Academy Player means: *Please see the definition in RFU Regulation 1.*

Girls Player Development Group Player means: *a Player who is part of the England Rugby Player Development Group programme.*

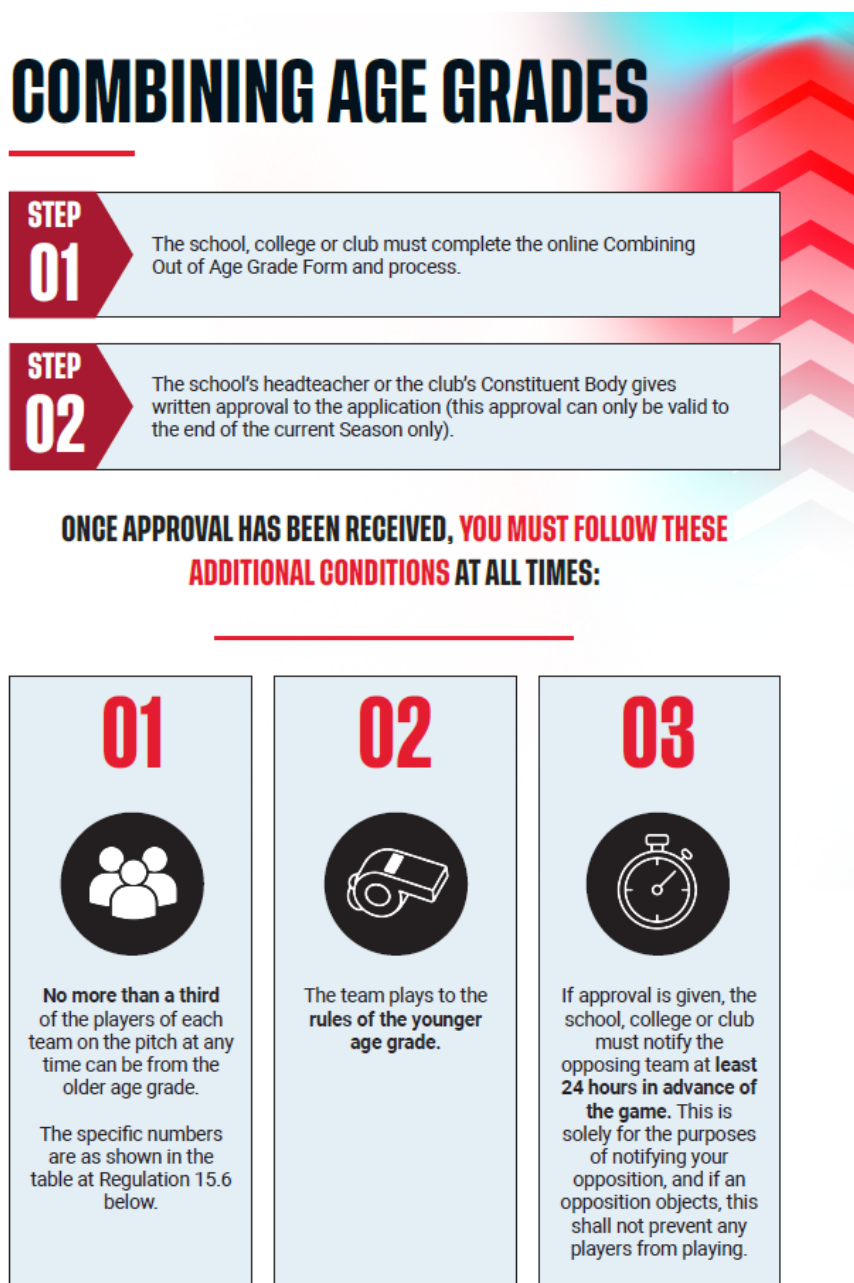
Prem Player Development Group Player means: *(i) a player who is selected for the confirmation phase programme; or (ii) a player who is selected for development phase programme; and (iii) who is a member of one of the RFU licensed club academies.*

If you cannot find a definition here, please check [RFU Regulation 1 \(Definitions\)](#).

15.3 Combining of Age Grades – When is it allowed?

1. Certain groups of players can apply to be combined together for training and playing – you can find the permitted age grades in the table at Regulation 15.6, and the relevant forms [here](#) for clubs, and [here](#) for schools.

- The **only** reason in which permitted age grades may be approved to be combined together is if the school, college or club **does not have a sufficient number of players to make up a team** in the single age grade.
- If that is the case, the following conditions **must** also be met:



15.4 Playing Up – When is it allowed?

- Certain individual players can apply (via the forms [here](#) for clubs, [here](#) for schools and [here](#) for colleges) to play up one or two age grades for training and playing if recommended by the player's club, school or college as set out in the table at Regulation 15.6. This does not apply to Girls' Age bands where the only playing up allowed is within the two-year

age band (e.g. a girl in the U14 age band cannot play up in the U16s).

2. If players are playing up, the following conditions **must** be met:

PLAYING UP

STEP 01

In each case a risk assessment must be carried out in the form approved by the RFU by the club/school/college. Best practice on carrying out an appropriate assessment is set out in the Age Grade Codes of Practice.

STEP 02

The club/school/college completes the online POOAG process.

STEP 03

CLUBS

In clubs, approval is obtained from an individual who has parental responsibility for the player, the club's Age Grade Chair and from the club's Constituent Body.

COLLEGES

In colleges (and irrespective of whether that college plays against other institutions), approval is obtained from an individual who has parental responsibility for the player (who may be the college principal in loco parentis), from the college's principal, and from England Colleges RFU.

SCHOOLS

In schools (and irrespective of whether that school plays against other institutions), approval is obtained from an individual who has parental responsibility for the player (who may be the school's headteacher in loco parentis) and from the school's headteacher.

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

▶ In school and club rugby at Under 9, 10 and 11, approval to play up can be applied for if the player is educated in the academic year above their age grade. This is only available if they are permanently in a single academic year group which is no more than one year above their chronological age grade, and is not available if they are in multiple year academic groups and/or classes.

▶ In respect of school or college rugby for U16s and above, the individual who has parental responsibility for the player (who may be the principal/headteacher in loco parentis) and the school headteacher or college principal is informed that it is possible that this dispensation may result in the player playing with and/or against one or more U19 players who are playing down in accordance with Regulation 15, and the assessment by the school or college includes reference to this age imbalance.

STEP 04

If approval is given, the club/college/school must notify the opposing team at least 24 hours in advance of the game although an opposition's objection shall not prevent the player from playing.

15.5 Playing Down – When is it allowed?

1. Certain individual players can apply (via the forms [here](#) for clubs, [here](#) for schools and [here](#) for colleges) to play down one or two age grades for training and playing if recommended by the player's club, college or school as set out in the table at Regulation 15.6 and only in the following circumstances:
 - a. the player must be in a younger academic year at school/college than the player's academic birth year; or
 - b. the player's safety may be compromised due to their small stature in comparison to other players in the same age grade or due to a developmental or a behavioural issue.
2. For an Under 19 (Year 14) player in a school or college to play down in age grade rugby:
 - a. the player must be in at least their third year of study at the school or college and in their second year of their first full level 3 qualification.
 - b. They must not:
 - i. have previously completed a full level 3 qualification; and/or
 - ii. be repeating or re-sitting a year that they have already studied; and/or
 - iii. have embarked on an 'additional' one year programme post 16 at any level.

- c. The following players cannot apply to play down as an Under 19:

Male players	National League Rugby, Champ Rugby or Prem Rugby players; England Academy Players, Academy Players, and CB Representative players.
Female players	Premiership Women's Rugby players and Girls Player Development Group Players

- d. the risk assessment (see "Step 1" In table below) must take into account the possibility of the U19 player playing with and against 15, 16 and 17 year-old players.
- e. the player, if approved, must only play in Under 18 rugby for the entire season in all playing environments (see "Specific Conditions" in the table below).

3. If players are playing down an age grade, the following additional conditions **must** be met:

PLAYING DOWN

STEP 01

In each case a risk assessment must be carried out in the form approved by the RFU to assess the risk to the individual and the potential players they will play with and against is carried out by the club/college/school. Best practice as to how to carry out an assessment is set out in the Age Grade Codes of Practice.

STEP 02

The club/school/college completes the online 'Playing Down' Out of Age Grade Form and process.

STEP 03

CLUBS

In clubs, the approval of an individual who has parental responsibility for the player and the club's Age Grade Chair, and for all ages, the approval of the club's Constituent Body is obtained.

COLLEGES

In colleges (and irrespective of whether that college plays against other institutions), the approval of an individual who has parental responsibility for the player (who may be the principal in loco parentis) and the college principal, and the approval of England Colleges RFU is obtained.

SCHOOLS

In schools (and irrespective of whether that school plays against other institutions), the approval of an individual who has parental responsibility for the player (who may be the headteacher in loco parentis) and the approval of the school headteacher is obtained, and for U19s playing down, the approval of England Rugby Football Schools Union is obtained.

SPECIFIC CONDITIONS

Any approval to play down is solely for one season only and the player must remain in that lower age grade for the entire Season in all playing environments, or their approval may be withdrawn at the discretion of the applicable CB and/or the RFU. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes U19s who are playing down into an age grade setting from adult rugby.

If approval is given, the club/college/school must notify the opposing team at least 24 hours in advance of the game although an opposition's objection may not prevent the player from playing.

PLAYING DOWN TWO AGE GRADES

For U18s and younger and if playing down two age grades, the written approval of the RFU Legal & Governance Director must also be obtained by sending a completed copy of the 'Playing Down' Out of Age Grade Form to regulations@rfu.com.

15.6 Playing Out of Age Grade Tables

PLAYING OUT OF AGE GRADE MALE & FEMALE PLAYERS

AGE GRADE (SCHOOL YEAR)	COMBINING	PLAYING UP	PLAYING DOWN
U6s (Yr 1)	U6s are not permitted to play matches, competitions, tournaments or festivals with any older age grades.		
U7s (Yr 2)	✓ U7s and U8s can play and train together.	✓ With U8s only.	✗
U8s (Yr 3)		✗	✓ U7s and U8s can play and train together.
U9s (Yr 4)	✓ U9s are permitted to be combined with U10s. See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 3 U10s on the pitch	✗	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U10s (Yr 5)	✓ U10s are permitted to be combined with U9s (see box above) or with U11s. See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 3 U11s on the pitch	✗	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U11s (Yr 6)	✓ U11s are permitted to be combined with U10s (see box above) or with U12s (in the boys game). See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 3 U12s on the pitch In the girls game: U11 girls can play with U12 girls in the U12/U11 Dual Age Band.	✓ In the girls game: U11 girls are permitted to play with U12 girls in the U12/ U11 Dual Age Band. ✗ In the boys game	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
From U12s and above, mixed rugby is no longer permitted and different regulations apply to male and female players as below.			

PLAYING OUT OF AGE GRADE

FEMALE PLAYERS

AGE GRADE (SCHOOL YEAR)	PLAYING UP	PLAYING DOWN
U12/U11 Dual Age Band (Yr 7/Yr 6)	✗	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances See Regulation 15.5
U14/U13 Dual Age Band (Yr 8/Yr 9)	✗	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U16/U15 Dual Age Band (Yr 11/Yr 10)	✗	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U18s/U17s Dual Age Band (Yr 13/Yr 12)	✓ 17 year olds and 18 year olds are permitted to play up in accordance with Regulations 15.7 & 15.8.	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U19s	N/A U19s are adult players.	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5

PLAYING OUT OF AGE GRADE

MALE PLAYERS

AGE GRADE (SCHOOL YEAR)	COMBINING	PLAYING UP	PLAYING DOWN
U12s (Yr 7)	✓ U12s are permitted to be combined with U11s (see U11s box above) or with U13s. See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 4 U13s on the pitch	✓ Playing up one age grade is permitted. See Regulation 15.4	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances See Regulation 15.5
U13s (Yr 8)	✓ U13s are permitted to be combined with U12s (see box above) or with U14s. See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 4 U14s on the pitch	✓ Playing up one age grade is permitted. See Regulation 15.4	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U14s (Yr 9)	✓ U14s are permitted to be combined with U13s (see box above) or with U15s. See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 5 U15s on the pitch	✓ Playing up one age grade is permitted. See Regulation 15.4	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U15s (Yr 10)	✓ U15s are permitted to be combined with U14s (see box above) or with U16s. See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 5 U16s on the pitch	✓ Playing up one age grade is permitted. See Regulation 15.4	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U16s (Yr 11)	✓ U16s are permitted to be combined with U15s (see box above) or with U17s. See Regulation 15.3 Maximum 5 U17s on the pitch	✓ Playing up one age grade is permitted, including in the front row. Playing up two age grades is permitted, but not including in the front row of contested scrums in 15 a-side rugby. See Regulation 15.4	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U17s (Yr 12)	✓ U17s are permitted to be combined with U16s (see box above). U17s are permitted to play with U18s.	✓ 17 year olds are permitted to play up in accordance with Regulations 15.7 and 15.8.	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U18s (Yr 13)	✓ U18s are permitted to play with U17s.	✓ 18 year olds are permitted to play up in accordance with Regulations 15.7 and 15.8.	✓ U18s are permitted to play with U17s. You can play down two age grades in limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5
U19s	✗	N/A	✓ In limited, exceptional circumstances. See Regulation 15.5

15.7 Playing Adult Rugby

1. Players can play and train in contact rugby with adults when they reach their 17th birthday provided the following conditions are met:
 - a. the player must not train or play in the front row of the contested scrum. Once a player has reached the age of 18, the player may play in any position;
 - b. the RFU Safeguarding Policy and RFU Regulation 21 are complied with in full;
 - c. the club has an appointed Safeguarding Officer;
 - d. the club has been approved by its Constituent Body to play 17-year-olds in adult rugby for the Season. This applies to all clubs (including professional clubs), and club approval must be in place before an application for approval in respect of an individual player at that club can be made;

You can find the Playing Adult Rugby – Club Approval Form and Process help guide [here](#).

- e. the player has been assessed as capable of playing with adults and the school, college or club's assessment has been countersigned and their individual application has been approved by the club's Constituent Body or the RFU Executive Director of Performance Rugby (or their delegate), depending on which option applies to the player (see below). This will allow the player to play adult rugby until their 18th birthday;
- f. Depending on your status as a player, approval is required as follows:

All clubs and all male and female players other than those set out below	You will require approval from your applicable Constituent Body. The help guide to complete this is here.
If you are: - an England Academy Player; - a Prem Player Development Group Player; - a Girls Player Development Player; - an England U18 Player; or - an EPS player playing in any level of male adult or female adult rugby	You will require approval from RFU Executive Director of Performance Rugby (or their delegate) in accordance with Regulation 15.8 The form to complete is: - For Boys, here; and - For Girls, here.

- g. subject to 15.8 below, no player in the U18 age grade or below is permitted to play in the following competitions:
- i. Constituent Body Adult Representative Rugby (Mens and Womens), including competitions which form part of the County Championships. This means that U18s are not permitted to play in the Jason Leonard Men's National U20s County Championships competition even if you've turned 18 during your U18 age grade year in any circumstances; OR
 - ii. Men's Prem Rugby League;
 - iii. Men's Prem Rugby Cup;
 - iv. Men's Champ Rugby;
 - v. Premiership Women's Rugby; or
 - vi. Premiership Women's Rugby Cup,

unless in exceptional circumstances. If exceptional circumstances exist, approval will be required as follows:

If you are: - an England Academy Player; or - a Prem Player Development Group Player;	You will require approval from your club, the RFU and PREM Rugby
If you are a Girls Player Development Group Player	You will require approval from the RFU.

- h. Boys and Girls U16 players (regardless of their status as a player) can only play in the U18 Prem Rugby Academy Competition and any Girls' Player Development Group Competitions with the prior written approval of the RFU Executive Director of Performance Rugby (or their delegate).

15.8 Elite Players and Representative Rugby

1. In addition to 15.7(1) above, if you are an England Academy Player, a Prem Player Development Group Player, a Girls Player Development Player or an England U18 Player, you can:
 - a. in respect of U15 boys only, play up in the U16 age grade (in respect of the Academy environment only, and not in any other playing environments such as school or club);
 - b. in the U16 age grade, play up in the U17 and U18 age grades including in the front row of the scrum;
 - c. at 16 years old, play and train with adults, except in the front row;

- d. in the U17 and U18 age grades (provided you are at least 17 years of age as set out in Regulation 15.7(1), play and train with adults except in the front row; and
- e. for England Academy Players only, in the U17 and U18 age grades, play and train with adults, including in the front row,

provided that the prior written approval of the RFU Executive Director of Performance Rugby (or their delegate) has been obtained and by completing the England Player Pathway POOAG process. In relation to these additional permissions for specific players, any approval will only be given in respect of their Academy environment, and not in any other playing environments such as their school or club.

You can find the England Player Pathway POOAG process [here](#).

2. For Age Grade representative teams forming part of a CB, a player may qualify to represent that team if they meet one of the following (although you should always check any specific competition regulations in case any different requirements apply for a particular competition):
 - a. They attend a school affiliated to that CB's Schools' Union;
 - b. They live or "reside" in that CB for any part of that Season;
 - c. They were born in that CB;
 - d. They are registered to play at Club who is a member of that CB;
 - e. They played for that CB in an Age Grade Representative fixture in the previous Season.
3. In addition to meeting one of the criteria in (2) above, they must also have a current age grade birthdate (i.e. adult aged players cannot play in age grade representative rugby).

Explanatory Note: This does not include players who play for an Academy or are part of a Player Development Group programme (boys or girls) based in that CB unless at least one of the above is met.

4. Where a player has not been selected for a CB, the Divisional Chair of Selectors may allow the player to play for another Constituent Body for which the Player is not qualified if it is in the interests of the player's development.

15.9 Non-Contact Age Grade Rugby

1. Players of all ages, both sexes and all genders may train and play non-contact rugby together. The basics of Regulation 15 apply but with

greater flexibility included in some areas due to contact not being part of the game.

2. What conditions **must** apply when organising age grade non-contact rugby?
 - a. The **lead organiser has risk assessed the activity**. The session, match or programme must be **safe, beneficial and appropriate** from a level and welfare perspective for all the players. This is especially important when a wide age-range of players are involved;
 - b. Under **no circumstances** is any element of **contact rugby** permitted; and
 - c. The activity is staged to the recognised rules of play and best practice principles

You can access the World Rugby Laws of our endorsed non-contact format T1 Rugby [here](#).

3. What key parts of Regulation 15 **must** be applied to the non-contact players and activity?
 - a. Player Registration (see Regulation 15.2.5) – players who only train or play non-contact need to be registered, just as for those doing contact;
 - b. Competitive Menu (see 15.2.10a) – the format of the competition must be right for the age of the players. If a mixed age group, the competitive format must align with the youngest player;
 - c. Activity Approvals (see 15.11) – all competitions, tournaments and festivals need to apply for approval; and
 - d. Playing Calendar (see 15.10) – this applies, but essentially non-contact rugby is available at all times of the year. The volume of rugby needs to be as per the in and out of season requirements.

4. When can Age Grade Players and adults play non-contact together?

This is permitted under the above regulations. However, it is essential that all of the requirements and safeguards outlined in this Regulation 15.9 are met. The risk assessment is critical and must be available to all before the activity starts.

15.10 Season and Out of Season Activity

1. In Age Grade Rugby the Season shall be as set out below:

- Season 2026-27 will run from Saturday 5 September 2026 until Monday 3 May 2027.
 - Season 2027-28 will run from Saturday 4 September 2027 until Monday 1 May 2028.
2. Rugby training and playing activity that is permitted during the Season and outside of the Season is specified in the RFU In-Season Activity Framework and RFU Summer Activity Framework. Both of these are mandatory and form part of this RFU Regulation 15.
 3. In the U13s and younger age grades (but excluding the girls dual U14/13 age band), all rugby activity is permitted during the Season as set out in the table below:

IN SEASON ACTIVITY

AGE GRADE /BAND	IN SEASON ACTIVITY				
	NON CONTACT		CONTACT		OUTGOING & INCOMING TOURS
	TRAINING	MATCHES & COMPETITIONS	TRAINING	MATCHES & COMPETITIONS	
U5s & U6s	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
U7s & U8s	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
U9s to U18s (Incl.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

4. Rugby training and playing activity is permitted out of Season as specified in the RFU Summer Activity Framework (please see below).
5. In addition to the RFU Summer Activity Framework, the following activity is permitted out of Season as long as Regulation 15.10 is complied with and written approval is applied:

- Outgoing Tours and preparations for such tours in the U14s to U18s age grades (including girls U14/U13 age band) only;
- at U15 and U17, CB Representative Rugby activity as per the Age Grade Playing Calendar up to and including the last May Bank Holiday Monday;
- if a competition match or rugby activity scheduled to be played within the Season is abandoned or postponed due to adverse weather conditions, it can be rearranged up to and including the last May Bank Holiday Monday; and
- Academy or Player Development Group activity is permitted if pre-approved by the RFU Executive Director of Performance Rugby (or their delegate).



AGE GRADE OUT-OF-SEASON SUMMER ACTIVITY PLAN

APRIL 2026

		MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
TRAINING	FREQUENCY	1-2 SESSIONS PER WEEK (INC GAME FOR U7-18)	1-2 SESSIONS PER WEEK (INC GAME)	1-2 SESSIONS PER WEEK (INC GAME)	1-3 SESSIONS PER WEEK (INC GAME)
	INTENSITY	LOW	LOW - MEDIUM	MEDIUM	MEDIUM - HIGH
	TYPE	GENERAL FITNESS AND SKILLS NON-CONTACT TRAINING FOR U13 & BELOW MAX 20 MINS CONTACT FOR U14-18 PER WEEK	GENERAL FITNESS AND SKILLS- MAX 20 MINS CONTACT PER WEEK	GENERAL FITNESS AND SKILLS MAX 30 MINS CONTACT PER WEEK	POSITION/GAME SPECIFIC SKILLS MAX 40 MINS CONTACT PER WEEK
	TIME	MAX 45 - 60 MINUTES + ACTIVATE	MAX 45 - 60 MINUTES + ACTIVATE	MAX 45 - 75 MINUTE + ACTIVATE	MAX 45 - 90 MINUTE + ACTIVATE
FIXTURES	TAG	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS
	NON-CONTACT/T1 RUGBY	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS	U7 - U18 BOYS & GIRLS
	X RUGBY	U14-18 BOYS & GIRLS	U14-18 BOYS & GIRLS	U14-18 BOYS & GIRLS	U12 - 18 BOYS U12, 14, 16, 18 GIRLS BANDS
	GAME ON ADAPTED CONTACT FORMAT	No	No	No	U14 - 18 BOYS U14, 16, 18 GIRLS BANDS
	FIXTURES/FESTIVALS	1 x FIXTURE/FESTIVAL FOR U7-18 BOYS & GIRLS PER FORTNIGHT	1 x FIXTURE/FESTIVAL PER FORTNIGHT	1 x FIXTURE/ FESTIVAL PER FORTNIGHT	4 x FIXTURES/FESTIVALS

THE PLAN IS A MENU TO CHOOSE FROM, YOU DON'T HAVE TO PLAY/TRAIN IN THE OFF SEASON. FOR THOSE THAT CHOOSE TO, THIS SHOWS THE MAXIMUM ACTIVITY PERMITTED EACH MONTH. ALL MATCHES/FIXTURES ARE FRIENDLIES DUE TO BEING OUT OF SEASON.

PLEASE REMEMBER PLAYERS MOVE TO THEIR NEW AGE GROUPS/BANDS ON 1st JULY



@AgeGradeRugby

@ERrugbycoach

@englandrugbycoach

15.11 How are Competitive Activity, Rugby Camps and Tours approved?

- Competitions, Tournaments, Festivals, Rugby Camps and Tours are permitted but the following conditions must be met:

- a. Regulation 15 is complied with in full;
- b. They are in line with the Age Grade Playing Calendar and competition format of the specific age grade;
- c. They have appropriate coaching, safeguarding, player welfare and safety provisions and insurance in place;

Explanatory Note: In the case of third party providers who are not endorsed, regulated or overseen by the RFU or CBs, we would strongly recommend that Clubs, Parents and Players undertake their own due diligence before engaging with a third-party provider.

- d. Written prior approval is obtained as set out in the table below by completing the online Approval of Activity form and process.

APPROVALS		
ACTIVITY	ORGANISED FOR	APPROVED BY
In Season & Out of Season Competitions and Locally organised Festivals, Tournaments and Competitions	Clubs	CB
	Schools	County Schools Body
	Colleges	England Rugby Colleges
National Festivals, Competitions and Camps if participating teams are from more than just neighbouring CBs and there are more than six entrants	Clubs	CB
	Schools	England Rugby Schools
	Colleges	England Rugby Colleges
Rugby Camps - Local/ County	All	CB
Rugby Camps - Regional/ National	All	RFU
Annual activity beyond club and school/college level (incl domestic Unions), to be included and approved in AG Playing Calendars and published on CB websites	All	CB Executive
Outgoing and Incoming Tours	See RFU Regulation 10 and Guidance at https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/running-your-club/rugby-tours	

15.12 How long can players play?

1. No player may play more than 35 matches per season. The maximum playing time per half and per day (for all matches and festivals) is set out in the table below.

Explanatory Note: Note this regulation is for age grade game and match play. There is guidance for rugby activity / training times per day included in the Codes of Practice.

2. No extra time is allowed in any match except any time added by a Referee for an injury time stoppage. No place-kicking (or similar) contests are permitted in order to resolve a tie.

PLAYING TIME

AGE GROUP	MAX MINUTES EACH MATCH HALF	MAX MINUTES OF RUGBY PER DAY
U7s & U8s	10	50
U9s & U10s	15	60
U11s & U12s	20	70
U13s & U14s	25	80
U15s	30	90
U16s and above (incl. girls dual U16/15 age band)	35	90

**AN EXTRA 15 MINUTES PER DAY IS ALLOWED FOR “ACTIVATE”
(THE RFU’S INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAMME)**

For example, U16s and above can have up to 105 minutes total on a match day
(90 minutes playing + 15 minutes Activate).

3. When must a match be stopped?

WHEN A MATCH MUST BE STOPPED

A match must be stopped as follows:

U7 - U13	In Under 7s to Under 13s: If one team leads by more than 6 tries.	U14 - U18	In Under 14s to Under 18s (including the girls' dual U14/13 age grade), if any one team leads by more than 50 points.
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If a match is stopped, the coaches can agree to continue with an alternative format of play to make the game fairer. Any additional playing time or results from this alternative format will not be officially recorded.

15.13 Half Game Rule

1. All clubs, teams, schools and colleges must ensure that each player selected in every match day squad plays at least half of the "Available Playing Time". This applies to all contact and non-contact age grade matches, including 7 a-side matches and festivals/tournament matches.
2. Half of the Available Playing Time is referred to as the "Half Game Threshold".
3. "Available Playing Time" means the total amount of time allocated to a particular match (or matches) by RFU Regulations, any specific Competition Regulations or by the coaches of the playing teams (where those coaches have agreed to play a shortened match). Additionally:

- a. Any stoppages that may occur during a match are not to be taken into account when calculating the Available Playing Time, and no time past expiry of the half shall count towards the calculation.

Explanatory Note: Expiry of the half is calculated in accordance with World Rugby Law 5.7 (which you can find [here](#)). This means the time past the moment at which the half will end if the ball becomes dead will not count towards the calculation.

- b. In all cases where a team is participating in multiple matches in one day, the Total Available Playing Time will be the total number of minutes allocated to all matches played by the team on that day.
- c. For example, where a match is 70 minutes long, the Available Playing

Time is 70 minutes and each player must receive a minimum of 35 minutes playing time to meet the Half Game Threshold. Where a team is participating in multiple matches in one day, the Total Available Playing Time will be the total number of minutes allocated to all matches played by the team on that day.

4. After the Available Playing Time has been set and the Half Game Threshold calculated, the only times at which playing time spent off the pitch can be considered eligible towards meeting the Half Game Threshold for each player are:
 - a. playing time spent off the pitch due to a temporary injury or enforced absence from the match up to a maximum of 10 minutes; or
 - b. playing time spent off the pitch due to a yellow card.
5. Where a player is capable of meeting the Half Game Rule, Regulation 15.13(1) above will not apply if a player is permanently removed from the match:
 - a. due to an injury incurred during the match;
 - b. as a result of a genuine risk of injury;
 - c. as a result of a red card or if a referee requests that a player be permanently removed from the match; or
 - d. if a match is abandoned or shortened for genuine reasons or shortened in accordance with Regulation 15.12(3).
6. In respect of the U18 PREM Rugby Academy Competition only, all clubs must ensure that each player selected in every match day squad plays at least 20% of the Available Playing Time.

15.14 Clusters

1. Teams from two or more clubs, schools or colleges may Cluster in their age grades as a temporary measure if it will increase participation and ultimately ensure the teams can decluster and stand alone.

Explanatory Note: Focus and support must focus on helping all players to play but in an environment that mirrors what an individual club would provide.

2. If teams wish to Cluster, the following conditions must be met:
 - a. a primary Club, School or College must be identified and this must be agreed by all Clubs, Schools or Colleges participating in the Cluster;
 - b. a Lead/manager, a safeguarding officer and a discipline lead, all with a current DBS check, must be named for the cluster team(s);

- c. all players must be registered to their own Club on GMS (all players' discipline records and registrations will remain with their own Club); and
 - d. Other than in the National U16 and National U18 Girls Cups, no Clusters may participate in any of the competitions set out in Regulation 15.15.
3. If teams from two or more Clubs, Schools or Colleges Cluster on more than three occasions in a Season, they must:
- a. jointly register the Cluster with their Constituent Body via the form available [here](#);
 - b. If teams involved in a Cluster are members of more than one Constituent Body, they must register with each Constituent Body using the form above; and
 - c. If the cluster has not met the conditions in 2 above, the Constituent Body, as part of its support, can suspend the cluster until these are all in place.

Further guidance on Clusters is available [here](#).

15.15 Competitions Regulations

1. Unless otherwise specified in individual Competition Regulations, the following regulations in Regulation 15 will apply to all RFU National Competitions and CBs/Organising Committees/third party organisers will apply these to all local competitions:
 - a. Regulation 15.3 (Combining);
 - b. Regulation 15.4 (Playing Up);
 - c. Regulation 15.5 (Playing Down); and
 - d. Regulation 15.6 (Playing Out of Age Grade Tables).
2. If an individual set of Competition Regulations refers to incoming players who are recruited to a school, college, or club (and specifies any limit on how many of these players may be permitted in a match day squad), then players arriving from overseas must be treated in the same way. This applies to any Competition Regulations for RFU National Competitions and in the competition regulations set by CBs/Organising Committees/third party organisers.
3. There are specific competition regulations relating to the following Age Grade competitions and these are available on the Competitions Regulations page of the RFU website:
 - a. U15s and U18s Schools Cup (Boys)

- b. ACE League (Boys)
 - c. ACE League (Girls)
 - d. National U18 Clubs Cup (Boys)
 - e. U18 Prem Rugby Academy Competition (Boys)
 - f. National U16 Clubs Girls Cup
 - g. National U18 Clubs Girls Cup
4. If an Age Grade Player has a competitive fixture clash, the RFU National Competitions (listed in 15.15(3) above) will take priority at all times and without exception.