



Purpose:

Football Manitoba recognizes that player safety is the priority in all that we do. We also recognize that developmentally-appropriate play is a key component in player development. This policy is designed to guide decisions regarding player movement between age categories, in appropriate situations for contact football.

Procedures:

The following criteria must be met to allow consideration for a player to play up or down an age category:

- A letter from the players NCCP-certified coach, attesting that the player is capable, physically, emotionally and socially, of competing in the proposed age category.
- A letter from a Sports Medicine practitioner, or in cases where this is not possible, the athlete's Family Physician. This letter needs to affirm that an examination of the player has taken place within one month of the application, and that this examination has indicated that the player is physically capable of participating at the applied-for level and declaring a clear understanding by the medical practitioner of the physical and competitive environment that should be expected at this level.
- A letter from the athlete's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) outlining the athlete's contextual maturity level in social development and declaring a clear understanding of the physical and competitive environment that will be expected when playing with older/younger athletes.
- Athletes are only eligible to play a single year above or below their actual age. As an example, a 12-year-old could advance to play as a 13-year-old, but an 11-year-old may not play as a 13-year-old. Alternatively, that 12-year-old could apply to play as an 11-year-old, but not as a 10-year-old.
- The application form attached to this policy must be completed and submitted as well.
- All the above requested information, or requests for exemptions from any of the above criteria must be submitted to Football Manitoba no later than 30 days prior to the start of the season to be competed in.
- If play in the proposed age category is approved, the standing will only be for that season. If the player is to play outside their age category again in subsequent years, the process must be started once again.

- The application to play in an alternate age category may only be made by a member club representative, or by the coach of the player in question, to Football Manitoba. The process cannot be initiated by the player themselves, nor by their parents/guardians.
- Any Evidence of "Coercion" or Undue Influence in respects to any of the participating parties will constitute the application null and void. Any/All parties involved could be subject to appropriate discipline under section 12 in the Football Manitoba Complaints policy.
- By contrast, "undue influence" is defined as occurring "through an offer of an excessive, unwarranted, inappropriate, or improper reward or other overture to obtain compliance.
- By contrast "coercion" is defined as occurring "when an overt threat of harm is intentionally presented by one person to another in order to obtain compliance."

Once all the required materials have been submitted a panel of 3 will review and make a ruling. The panel will consist of a representative of Football Manitoba, a football coach from a team not affiliated with the player, and a League representative.

Once a player has been moved to a new age category, they will remain in this category for the remainder of that calendar year, or the competitive season, whichever is longer. There is no option to return to their previous age category once the change has been approved, meaning an application to change categories should only be made in extreme and certain circumstances.

Decisions made on an initial application are final, and appeals will not be heard. A subsequent application may only be made in the next calendar year or competitive season, whichever is first.

If it is found at any time that the process has been intentionally abused, or that an application has been made for any reason other than the greatest developmental opportunity for the athlete involved, steps will be taken to rectify the situation. There will be sanctions against individuals, teams and clubs submitting applications found to be for any reason other than the developmental good of the athlete.

Application for Play Outside of Designated Age Category

Completed form, along with supporting materials, to be submitted to Football Manitoba at 145 Pacific Ave, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2Z6

PLAYER:	
Email:	Telephone:
Club:	Playing Position:
Date of Birth	Current Age:
Height:	Weight:
Age Division (according to age):	Proposed Age Division:
I believe that my physical development, skill and experience is at an appropriate level that makes me capable of safely competing with players in a higher age group, OR I believe that my physical development, skill and experience is at such a level that playing with younger athletes in appropriate for my development as a player.	
I understand that I will be competing against older players and this may involve an increased risk of injury OR that I will be competing with younger players.	
Signature: _____ Date: _____	
Parent/guardian signature: _____	
Rationale for playing in a different age category:	

COACH
Name: _____
Email: _____
Telephone: _____
NCCP Number: _____
Coach will evaluate the applicant against the following criteria. If the answer to any of the following is NO, the player shall not be considered for advancement.
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT: In your opinion does the player's level of physical development allow the player to compete with players in the proposed alternate age classification?
SKILL LEVEL: In your opinion is the player's skill level comparable to others in the proposed alternate age classification?
LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE: In your opinion does the player have the experience to compete with other players in the proposed alternate age classification?
STANDARD OF COMPETITION: In your opinion is the standard of competition in the proposed alternate age classification suitable to allow this player to compete safely?
In my opinion, the player's physical development, skill level and experience is at an appropriate level to allow the player to compete safely with the players in the proposed alternate age classification. I have explained to the player and his/her parent/guardian that competing against older players may involve an increased risk of injury.
Signature: _____ Date: _____
Printed Name: _____

CLUB PRESIDENT (OR DESIGNATED EXECUTIVE MEMBER)

Please read and agree to the following:

- I have been provided with a copy of Football Manitoba's Age Category Movement Policy
- The coach has explained to me that in his/her opinion, the player's physical development, skill level and experience is appropriate to perform safely in the proposed alternate age classification.
- It has been explained to me that the risk of injury may be increased by playing in an advanced age classification.
- I understand that, with football being a contact sport, that players are exposed to a risk of injury. I also understand that the level of risk of injury is higher where players participate in an age classification where the players physical development, skill level and experience are inferior to that of the players he or she will play against.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Club Position: _____

PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN

Please read and agree to the following:

- I am the parent or legal guardian of the player applying for age advancement.
- I have been provided with a copy of Football Manitoba's Age Category Movement Policy.
- The coach has explained to me that in his/her opinion, the player's physical development, skill level and experience is appropriate to perform safely in the proposed age classification.
- It has been explained to me that the risk of injury may be increased by playing in an advanced age classification.
- I understand that, with football being a contact sport, that players are exposed to a risk of injury. I also understand that the level of risk of injury is higher where players participate in an age classification where the players physical development, skill level and experience are inferior to that of the players he or she will play against.

- I give permission for my son / daughter to participate in the proposed alternate age classification for the upcoming season.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Printed Name: _____ Relation: _____

Passed January 2023.