**Staffordshire Rugby Union – Mini &Youth**

**Movement of Age Grade players between SRU Clubs - Voluntary Protocol**

The SRU Mini & Youth Committee has resolved to provide SRU affiliated Clubs with the option of signing up to a voluntary protocol relating to the movement of age grade players between Clubs.

The context for this is the vulnerability of some clubs to the movement of players to other clubs that may be perceived as having a higher profile or greater prospect of providing a pathway to representative rugby. Such movement may generate problems for the clubs that both lose and gain players by compromising squad viability or by placing stress on coaching and other infrastructure.

The SRU accepts that parents and players may choose to change clubs for various reasons, and that they are free to exercise choice. The introduction of the protocol may, however, support the objective of developing and maintaining healthy, locally based Age Grade sections and squads across the County. It may also highlight instances where Clubs may need coaching or other support.

The Age Grade Protocol is based on the principles of courtesy and respect. It is voluntary and relies on a dialogue between coaches and managers. The Age Grade Protocol: -

* relates to all male and female players from Under 7 to Under 18
* relates to all players registered on the RFU GMS system
* applies to all SRU Affiliated Clubs (should they wish to adopt it)
* applies to all player movements ‘in season’ (as defined in Regulation 15)

The Age Grade Protocol is not intended to prevent the amalgamation of squads where that provides opportunities for player participation in rugby that might not otherwise arise. Such amalgamations must, nonetheless, in all cases be ratified by the SRU M&Y Committee.

**The Age Grade Protocol is not mandatory. However, the SRU strongly encourages Clubs to sign up to it.**

The Age Grade Protocol encourages the following behaviour.

The coach/manager approached by the parent/guardian of a player wishing to join their squad/club should ask the parent/guardian: -

* how long the player has played at their current club
* the reason for the player seeking to change their club
* whether the move can be delayed until the end of the current season

If the player is currently at an SRU Affiliated Club, the coach/manager that has been approached will explain that their club has signed up to the Age Grade protocol. They will advise the parent/guardian of the player that they will not agree to the player joining the club until they have contacted the player’s current Coach.

The coach/manager will contact the player’s existing coach/manager and will advise that they have been approached by a player wishing to move. The purpose of the call is to ensure awareness of the player’s current club of the proposal to move.

The player’s current coach/manager may then either: -

1. speak to the parent/guardian and player to find out if there is anything that can be done to encourage the player to stay at the club;
2. ask if they can delay any move until the end of the season;
3. use the information given about the reason for the player wanting to move to address any ‘push’ factors to support retention of other players (e.g. address issues relating to coaching, any issues within the squad of players, perceived issues relation to playing time etc).

Once the conversation has taken place coaches/managers should exchange emails to confirm that coaches have spoken. The email exchange should be forwarded on to the CB.

If the player completes a move, the club losing the player should de-register the player within 4 weeks and the club gaining the player should re-register them within 4 weeks. This will allow player movements to be tracked/monitored on GMS and clubs offered support where necessary.

**Club:**

**Name (Mini and Junior Chair):**

**Signed (Mini and Junior Chair):**

**Date:**

Completed forms should be returned to Robin Websdale, Staffordshire Rugby Union Honorary Secretary at **robin.websdale@hotmail.co.uk**;