



PLAYER DISPENSATION POLICY & APPLICATION: Play Up/Play Down Mini/Youths (2026/27 Season)

SCOPE & PRINCIPLES

Age grade rugby applies to U6-U18. (Girls and Boys). Safety and welfare are the overriding considerations; competitive needs can never outweigh player welfare. Players normally participate in their designated age group; any variation (play up or play down) requires a formal dispensation under this policy.

*Note this form is not to be used for U18 to Senior Rugby dispensation. Senior Rugby applications must follow the designated Form A and Form B process.

ELIGIBILITY

Play up: A player may play up a maximum of one age band with dispensation (e.g. U13 into U14) with parent/guardian sign off and a level 2 coach's sign off. These play ups must still be communicated in writing with HKCR, who have the right to ask for a formal dispensation to be submitted if they have reasonable concern.

Any player who has communicated that they will 'play up' into the age group above cannot 'play down' into their chronological age group without written communication with HKCR, who have the right to ask for a formal dispensation to be submitted if they have reasonable concern.

Play down: A player may play down a maximum of one age band only once granted Age Dispensation for clear welfare needs (e.g. late maturation or medical related reasons) and must not confer unfair advantage.

Age Turning in Calendar Year	Actual Age Grade	Eligible Age Grade (Without Dispensation)	With Age Dispensation (1 Age Grade Down)
5	U5	U6 or U7 (non-contact)	N/A
6	U6	U7	N/A
7	U7	U8	N/A
8	U8	N/A*	U7
9	U9	N/A*	U8
10	U10	U11	U9
11	U11	U12	U10
12	U12	N/A*	U11
13	U13	N/A	U12
14	U14	N/A	U13
15	U15	N/A	U14
16	U16	N/A	U15
17	U17	U18	U16
18	U18	Senior Rugby**	U17



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19	Senior Rugby	Senior Rugby	N/A***
20	Senior Rugby	Senior Rugby	N/A

*U8 and U9 Age Grade player requires a dispensation before playing contact U9 and U10 rugby as these are progressively designed programs to introduce contact rugby, U12 requires dispensation for U13 having only played 10-a-side rugby

** U18 player who is not yet 18 years of age requires Senior Rugby dispensation before playing Senior Rugby

***Dispensation must be submitted for a 19-year-old player to play U18 rugby

REQUIRED INFORMATION

Please see the dispensation application form collecting:

- Objective data: height, weight, growth/maturation status, injury history, positional history.
- Rugby profile: playing experience, game time, training load, and primary playing position (especially front row).
- Coach input: assessment of technical competence, contact skills, decision making, and emotional readiness.
- Parent/guardian consent for all players under 18.

TIMELINE

- Player registers in their correct age grade in the HKCR registration system at the start of the season.
- The timeline of the play up / play down request is as long as it takes to complete the necessary steps outline in the duration and review section

DECISION MAKING STEPS

1. Club completes online Dispensation Request Form (Play Up / Play Down) with all required data and signed consents.
2. HKCR Dispensation Panel (HKCR Executive Director Domestic Rugby, HKCR General Manager Club Development & Sustainability, HKCR Head of Development) checks completeness
3. HKCR Dispensation Panel reviews the assessment and: approves, declines, or Club and parents/guardians are notified in writing.

DURATION AND REVIEW

- Dispensations apply for one season only and must be re applied for annually.
- HKCR may review or revoke a dispensation at any time if:
 - player's physical profile changes significantly,
 - there are serious welfare concerns, or
 - competition structures change.



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1. PLAYER INFORMATION

Name:

Surname:

Date of Birth:

(dd/mm/yyyy)

HKID No:

Playing position:

Club:

Gender:

School:

Playing experience (seasons):

Applicable age grade based on date of birth:

Request for player to play in:

(Specify whether the player is playing Up or Down and the age group)



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2. PARENT / LEGAL GUARDIAN

Name:

Surname:

Email:

Contact Number:

Relationship to the player:

Parent/Legal Guardian Declaration:

I hereby declare and understand that:

- a) I am a parent or legal guardian of _____ (Player Name & Surname)
- b) The above-mentioned player and I have been notified of the World Rugby and HKCR Age Differential Playing Guideline.
- c) The above-mentioned player and I accept all inherent risks associated with doing so.

Parent / Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____



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3. CLUB/SCHOOL SUPPORT: COACH (Age grade coach)

Name:

Surname:

Email:

Contact number:

Club/School:

Position at Club/School:

Reason for Request:

On Field Rationale:

Off Field Rationale:

Coach Declaration:

I support and endorse this submission, and I am confident that the decision has been made with the best interest of the player's development in mind.

Parent / Legal Guardian Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____



4. CLUB SUPPORT

Chairman / General Manager of Youth Club / School or Section

Name:	Surname:
Email:	Contact number:
Club / School:	
Position at the Club / School:	
Chairman (Youth Club / School) Declaration: I support and endorse this submission, and I am confident that the decision has been made with the best interest of the player's development in mind. Chairman (Youth Club / School) Signature: _____ Print Name: _____ Date: _____	

5. LEVEL 2 COACH ASSESSMENT

Assessment must be conducted by a World Rugby Level 2 coach or higher. The assessor must be fully independent and cannot be the player's current coach or the coach of the age grade for which the application is being made. The Level 2 coach is required to attend a minimum of one training session and attend at least one match within their current age group as part of the assessment process. The match must be recorded for future reference.

Name:	Surname:
Email:	Contact number:
Club:	WR Level:

The following fields must be completed by the level 2 coach

- maturity data
- considerations
- match analysis

Maturity Data

Birth Mother Height (measured/estimated – delete as appropriate):

Birth Father Height (measured/estimated – delete as appropriate):

Child Country Of Birth (optional):

Child Ethnicity (optional):

Primary Sport (optional):

Weight:

Height:



Sitting Height (buttocks firmly against a wall, chin tucked, distance from floor to top of head):

Considerations

The coach must assess the player against the following considerations: (If there are any **NO** answers to any of the considerations, the player should **NOT** be allowed to participate in Age-grade Rugby, as this indicates an increased risk to safe participation.)

Physical Development	Is the age grade you are applying for the player to play into appropriate for their physical development?	Yes	No
Skill Level & Ability	Is the age grade you are applying for the player to play into appropriate for their skill level and ability?	Yes	No
Social & Emotional Development for their age	Is the age grade you are applying for the player to play into appropriate for the player's social and emotional development?	Yes	No
Level of Experience	Does the player have the necessary experience in his/her position to compete with other players at a comparable standard in the age grade you are applying for them to move to?	Yes	No
Safety Risk	Can the player compete safely in his/her nominated position in the age grade you are applying for them to play into, and is the player and other players within the age group at no more risk of serious and catastrophic head, neck or cervical spine injury than if the player did not move age groups?	Yes	No



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Match Analysis

The coach must assess the player's match performance. **The match must be recorded for future reference.**

SKILL	DESCRIPTION	COACH COMMENT
Tackling	Technique, body height, shoulder contact, leg drive, safety, consistency	
Ball Carrying	Footwork, contact height, ability to win collisions, ball security.	
Catching & passing	Handling skills – accuracy and variety (spin, pop, long pass), decision timing.	
Breakdown Skills	Cleanouts, jackal attempts, body position, speed to ruck.	
Decision making & Game understanding	Spatial awareness, identifying space, option selection and communication	
Physical attributes in match context	The players speed, recovery, strength, collision dominance, endurance, work rate across the match, repeat efforts, agility and adaptability.	

Independent Coach Final Recommendation:

Independent Coaches Signature:_____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____



6. RECOMMENDATIONS HKCR HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation:

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

7. CHAIRPERSON MINI/YOUTH COMMITTEE

SIGNATURE CONFIRMS THE RECOMMENDATION BY HKCR COACH EDUCATION & GAME DEVELOPMENT.

ANY CONTRARY DECISION IS STATED BELOW:

Signature:

Print Name:

Date:

Players note, submission of this form does not confirm authorisation of dispensation. Authorisation for an Underage Player taking part in adult rugby will be granted by the HKCR Performance department. Please send this form to kevin.west@hkrugby.com Allow a fourteen-day window for HKCR to process submissions.