

Cambridge City Hockey Club



CCHC

Youth Section Handbook (U6s-U18s)

Vision, Principles, Policies and General Information

Edition 4.0 - January 2025

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1 Introduction

CCHC Youth Section caters for players in the U6-U18 age groups:

- in their peer age group training and competition, and
- their integration into senior hockey and league competitions when appropriate.

This document sets out the vision, policies, principles and general information for the Youth Section. It should be read in conjunction with the other CCHC policy and information documents.

2 Youth Section vision and objectives

The CCHC Youth Section aims to:

- promote the love and enjoyment of hockey for players of all abilities and to encourage a lifelong enjoyment of hockey and sport in general
- continue the development of youth players both in their peer age group and in senior teams
- raise the standard and competitive performance of CCHC league hockey
- provide access to quality coaching and competition opportunities for players of all standards - fun hockey for all
- support the development of the most committed players with aspirations to play elite level hockey
- facilitate the introduction of youth players into senior hockey, balancing the interests of both the youth players and the senior teams.

Youth teams will be entered into national and regional competitions.

3 Player Centric Pathway

CCHC is committed to supporting and aligning with the England Hockey Talent Development Framework and System.

This puts the player at the centre and encourages diversity and inclusion to both broaden the talent pool for elite hockey selection and grow the sport nationally across all age groups and levels.

CCHC subscribes to the Right Athlete, Right Environment (RARE) principles which are designed to ensure that a player is playing the right hockey at the right level at any given time and to ensure effective communication between the club, the player and parents.

Our pathway approach includes a “playing profile” template. This is used to help players from U12 upwards to think about their strengths and areas of development for discussion with their coach.

The Youth Committee includes a Player Pathway Manager who on behalf of the Youth Head Coach oversees the coaches’ player management and manages the integration of youth players into senior hockey.

4 Leadership and management

Transparency and open communication, combined with strong leadership, are key to the success of the Youth Section. If these are in place, then the best outcomes for players and the club are more likely to be achieved.

The Youth Section is led by the Section Chair and by the Head Coach, supported by a team of managers (or admins) and coaches.

The Chair sets the vision and direction for the section and represents the interests of the section with the overall club and external stakeholders.

The Head Coach is an experienced hockey player and coach. They work with the age group coaches on player development and selection - and on the development of coaches themselves. The Head Coach also oversees the integration of youth players into senior hockey, working with senior club coaches and captains.

The Lead Managers lead and works with the team managers across the youth section. There is a lead year group manager to manage (generally) the Tier 1 team and team managers for the other teams. These team managers are sought from parents in the year group.

The section heads appoint coaches and managers respectively, with the approval of the CCHC Welfare Officer. The Head Coach has an overall veto.

Section heads are supported by deputies who represent the interests of age groups across the youth section.

4.1 Youth Section Committee

The Youth Section has its own core management committee comprising for 22/23:

- Chair – Stuart Rye
- Head Coach – Jon Peckett
- Assistant Coach – Paul Denny-Gouldson
- Lead Manager - U18-U14 – Denise Graham

- Lead Manager - U12s -U6s – Liz McDade
- Indoor Manager – Katharine James
- CCHC Treasurer – Rob Harris
- CCHC Welfare Officer – Sharon Ely
- Player Pathway Manager - Tara Goldsmith
- Fixtures Secretary – Felix Polonius
- Youth Committee Secretary – Ness Kemp
- Talent Centre Project Manager – Sarah Papworth-Heidel
- Umpire Co-ordinator – Sam Pettengal

Other attendees may be co-opted from time to time to support the management of the section.

The Youth Section Committee meets monthly at least or as required.

4.2 Coaching Committee

There is a Youth Section Coaching Sub-Committee responsible for the player pathway. This is led by the Youth Head Coach and attended by age group lead coaches and the player pathway manager.

The Youth Section leads call regular meetings of the team managers and coaches throughout the season as required.

The Chair and Head Coach also sits on the CCHC Club Committee (as does the overall club Welfare Officer).

5 Coaching

Coaching is provided as part of the overall CCHC player pathway. It is a mix of coaching dedicated to the peer group and as part of senior club training. By taking part in senior club training, adult players in the senior and players in the Youth Section will become familiar with each other, helping with the transition into senior teams.

Each age group will have dedicated coaches for training. Coaches are drawn from the senior club, third party professionals and volunteers.

The U16, and if possible U14, age groups are led by qualified paid coaches, independent of any player. It is our ambition to extend this policy to the U12 age groups and younger in coming seasons.

U18s coaching is delivered in the main as part of senior club training. Age group match preparation sessions are held for competition matches.

As far as possible, coaches will attend competitive matches with their teams. If their own senior club commitments make this difficult (1st team and youth games are usually both on Sundays and can clash), then other coaches will step in. They and the teams will be familiar with each other from joint coaching sessions during the season.

From October 25 we are fortunate to have secured a regular slot for Indoor training for those who wish to take part. It is intended to make this a part of curriculum for all players at U12, rather than just those who elect to do indoor as an extra.

The standard schedule for youth coaching takes place as follows:

Age Group	Main Session	Additional sessions
U6–U10	Sunday 9:15 – 10:15	
U12	Sunday 10:15 – 11:45	Wednesday 17:30 – 18:30
U14	Sunday 11:45 – 13:15	Wednesday 18:30 – 19:30
U16	Wednesday 18:30 – 20:00	Some Sundays
U18	Senior Club Coaching	Match preparation
GK	Ad hoc depending on coach availability	
Indoor	Wednesday evenings	

The use of the training sessions will vary during the season according to players' and teams' needs. The objective is to ensure players get access to a balanced amount of training across the week, taking into account commitments at school, to the England Hockey system and to senior club hockey

The full training season included in the membership fee for 2023-24 is:

- Pre-Christmas
Sunday 3rd September - Sunday 8th December 2024
- Post-Christmas
Tuesday 5th January – Sunday 6th April 2025
EH Competition training will continue as required

Provision of coaching to prepare for out of season festivals and tournaments may also be provided and will be chargeable on a per player basis, along with any entry fees etc..

Up to date details on the coaching timetable throughout the season can be found at any time on the CCHC website.

5.1 Senior Club Training

Youth players aged 13 and above may also be invited to join senior club training at the discretion of their lead coach, when it is appropriate (in line with RARE principles) and if it is something they would like to do. (See section 9.)

6 Outreach Development Hockey

Cambridge City Hockey club has an established, weekly 'Youth Development Training' session focused on State School children - Years 6 and up to Year 10 to encourage as much diversity in the talent pool as possible. These children have expressed an interest in playing hockey though have limited opportunities through school due to minimal PE provision, extra curriculum clubs and/or lack access to all-weather pitches. Some of these children are not yet members of a hockey club, in which case the Development Training provides their first experience of hockey outside of school.

Other players already belong to a club (Cambridge City Juniors, Cambridge City or other local clubs). For these members, the Youth Development sessions provide additional training to boost their skills through additional 'time on the ball' and a player:coach ratio.

In both cases, CCHC Youth Development training helps to balance out hockey provision that most club players receive through their schools with year-round access to hockey facilities, coaching and competitions.

At a point where the coaches feel newer members of the Development squad have the necessary skills and where they are keen to further extend their abilities, players will be encouraged to join in with age group and or senior hockey. At a point where that makes sense, the lead coach will then have a discussion with the appropriate age group/senior coach to establish objectives, strengths and weakness and ease the onboarding process. A review will take place with both coaches and the player to ensure the fit is correct and make adjustments as necessary.

CCHC will prioritise development players inclusion in squads over and above new players coming in to the club mid-season.

7 Competitions

The club will enter teams into England Hockey National, Area and Sub-Area outdoor competitions. Other competitions (indoor and outdoor) will be entered on an ad hoc basis.

Where there are sufficient numbers, more than one team will be entered, with Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 etc. squads competing at the appropriate level.

8 Core principles and rules of operation

- Core principles
 - Everyone is given opportunity to develop and have fun
 - Talent is to be nurtured and celebrated.
 - Developing youth players should benefit from exposure to older age groups or more developed youth players in their age group.
 - Coaching opportunities should be made available to all but competition squads will receive extra focus at key times.
 - Commitment to the club is key; players will be less likely to be selected for top-level coaching or competition opportunities if they cannot commit to the club.
 - Renewing members are required to pay their fees before being eligible to attend training (youth and senior) and be selected. (Subs can be paid in installments. If there are concerns about ability to pay, these should be raised with the treasurer in case the club can help.)
- Youth team selection
 - Coaches manage team selection; the Head Coach has the final say.
 - Teams will be drawn from the relevant age group.
 - Initial selections for the season will be based on performance and commitment at training.
 - Ongoing selection for a team is dependent on performance and commitment. Players at any point may be asked to play down or up a team or stand down depending on their own and the team's performance or another team's need. The Head Coach will work with the age group coaches to ensure this is applied.
 - Players and parents should be encouraged to share with coaches their aspirations and overall time commitment to sport and hockey. This will help coaches make appropriate judgements about coaching and selection for the individual.
 - Questions about selection must be raised by parents/players with coaches; coaches will not delegate discussions about selection to the manager.
- Team and player management
 - Coaches must be copied in on manager correspondence with players.
 - Team selections are published to the entire age group and in good time.

- Team communications should be shared with all age group members even if they cannot play in a given game or period.
- Raising concerns:
 - If parents have any concerns about their child's welfare or the child themselves has concerns, they should raise these with the CCHC Welfare Officer. This is in complete confidence.
 - Concerns about selection should be raised with the age group lead coach in the first instance, and then with the Youth Head Coach if necessary.
 - Concerns about team management should be raised with the Youth Section Manager or the Head Coach.

9 Welfare

Teenagers face many challenges in balancing sports and other commitments. The Youth Section has members undertaking GCSEs and A-levels. Ambitious and capable players may also find themselves involved in hockey for school, senior and youth CCHC teams and in the England Hockey Talent System (Talent Academy, EAGS, DiSE) – as well as other sports.

Coaches always place the welfare of players first.

The Youth Section works with local schools to share coaching and match schedules so all parties understand the demands on players and can ensure a sensible balance of demands. Players may also need to make their own choices about their priorities which the club will respect.

Players are also encouraged to share the details of their individual calendars with their coaches and school.

All coaches and team managers will be DBS checked.

The CCHC Welfare Officer is available for parents and players to discuss pressures or concerns at any time. The full welfare policies for CCHC can be found in the "Safeguarding and Protecting Young People" section of the website.

10 CCHC Joining Policies (including inter-club transfers)

Players apply to join CCHC on Teamo.

No youth player may train or play with CCHC, even for a trial, until they have been accepted into the club on Teamo, primarily for safeguarding reasons but also other aspects of our joining policies described in the following sections.

CCHC is a non-selective club, serving primarily the Cambridge and surrounding area and will prioritise local players and players who have shown a commitment to the club and are already in the CCHC player pathway. We apply the EH RARE principles for considering applications for club membership.

CCHC will not, nor want to be seen to, "poach" youth players from other clubs in order to enhance club competition outcomes.

Where a youth player applies to join CCHC from another club (whether for youth, senior hockey or both) or some distance away, the following guidance will be followed:

- Up to U12, the default position will be to refer the player to their local hockey provision where there should be sufficient opportunity and stretch.
- For U14s and U16s, the preferred position is that the player plays their hockey locally. However, under the RARE principle, there may be a conversation between the player and parent/guardian, their current club and the CCHC coach about what is right for the player and their hockey capability and ambition. This may also be the case in exceptional circumstances for U12s.
- U18s train with our senior section and so, as well as considering the RARE principles, their application will be considered in the context of the capacity for the senior section to accommodate them and the pipeline of players already in the CCHC pathway.

11 Youth players playing for other clubs

As a guiding principle, CCHC requires youth players to play both their youth and senior hockey at CCHC, where we are able to maintain an holistic view of the player's development. This also ensures that members fully committed to CCHC do not find themselves displaced by players from other clubs who may have cherry picked CCHC for youth or senior hockey, to the detriment of their other club and players on the CCHC pathway. Exceptions may apply, for example where the Talent Academy feels a player needs access to Area Prem or National Hockey for their development. These will be considered on a case by case basis by the Head Coach in conjunction with the player, their other club and their parents.

This aligns also to England Hockey's intent to avoid the creation of super clubs drawing talent away from other clubs.

12 Youth players in senior teams

Playing in senior league hockey is an ambition of many youth players and is encouraged but not expected. It provides valuable and enjoyable hockey experience at a different level and pace and can make a significant contribution to their development. Youth players are present in all teams across the club and in turn make a significant contribution to the club's overall competitive achievements.

It is important that youth players should enter into senior hockey at the right level commensurate with their physical and mental development, skill and experience (applying RARE). It is also important that they are seen to earn their stripes with the senior players as part of their integration into senior squads.

The Youth Section will poll members from time to time to identify players who have an appetite for senior hockey. Youth players may also raise their interest with their age group coach at any time.

If a youth player has expressed a desire to play senior hockey, they will be invited at the discretion of the youth coaches and respective club captains to join senior club training, enabling assessment of their performance and a decision to be made about the right starting level for senior hockey.

Players should also be aware that they are not selected to be a member of a particular squad exclusively. They may be asked to play up or down a team, or not to play at all on certain weekends, depending on the needs of the club and their own performance and development needs.

The club captains and the Youth Head Coach oversee selection of youth players for senior teams. The club keeps a careful eye on the youth player playing across the senior teams, with regular review by the Club Captains and Youth Head Coach. This process is overseen by the Player Pathway Manager.

Captains are fully briefed on safeguarding requirements and are expected to ensure the interests of youth players are protected.

In line with the RARE principles and player-centric pathway, deciding on how and when a youth player plays senior hockey is best made with a holistic view of the player. This view cannot be optimally taken if a youth player plays their age-group hockey with another club. Therefore, it is CCHC's policy that youth players should play their senior and youth hockey with CCHC (as per Section 12) unless exceptional circumstances apply. Youth players wanting to join CCHC for senior hockey from outside our player pathway should also be aware of the policies about new joiners (Section 11).

The overall policies for senior team selection are described in the CCHC selection policy. The specific aspects of this policy relating to U18 players are listed in the extract below but any youth player wishing to play senior hockey is encouraged to read the full policy:

Integration and Development of Junior Players (extract from CCHC selection policy)

Cambridge City HC is committed to the development of young players. The club will always act in the best interests of the individual. They are the future of our club and of hockey in general. The policy aims to ensure that our young members are given every opportunity to reach their desired potential whatever level that may be (international, regional, county, social or otherwise).

The Integration Policy States:

- i) The club will take a long term view of the development of all its youth players in line with the principles of and adopted within England Hockey's Talent System.
- ii) The club will ensure that a player must have reached the age of 13 to be eligible to play in adult only competition
- iii) The club will enforce the England Hockey League (EHL) regulation stating that a player must have reached the age of 13 to be eligible to be registered to play in the EHL.
- iv) Young players will not be called upon to play in adult competitions until it is in the best interest of the young player. If an adult team is short and the only option is a young player who is not ready either physically, mentally or socially, then the adult team will play short.
- v) The club will abide by England Hockey Board recommendations regarding player eligibility and competition rules.
- vi) The club will abide by the England Hockey Board centralised calendar and the priority this provides to ensure that young players at each stage of their development are given the opportunity to play and train at the right level for them without being overplayed.
- vii) For young players eligible to be involved in adult teams, careful consideration will be given to ensure that the distance travelled is proportional to the likely pitch time for the young player. As a guide, it is suggested that players who will play less than half a game should not travel for longer than 60 minutes.
- viii) All selection will be made in line with the principles outlined in the EHB Equality Policy (Found within the Code of Ethics & Behaviour – RESPECT) and EHB Proud to Protect - Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Hockey Policy adopted by this club.
- ix) As much as practically possible, peer group teams will ensure that each member of the squad is given as equal as possible an amount of pitch time per match or per event to ensure every individual has the opportunity to develop.

13 Team kit

Players will wear the CCHC strip.

CCHC will provide training tops for U6-U10 players, to be worn for competitive matches.

Match shirts will be provided for age group fixtures for U14s and above. Youth players regularly playing senior league hockey will need to buy their own playing shirts

Players will need to purchase their own shorts/skorts and socks and will be allocated a club number which will apply for senior and youth hockey.

The club will assist if possible with kit for keepers. Players should ask for information on what is available.