

Payment and Subscription Policy

Policy owner: Southside Star Youth FC Committee

Applies to: All players, parents / carers, coaches and team managers

Review date: 30/06/2027 and annually thereafter

Version: 1.0

1. Purpose

Southside Star Youth FC is a club for all and is committed to providing a positive, inclusive and enjoyable football environment for every player.

This policy explains the clubs approach to team selection, matchday playing time, player development and communication with parents / carers.

The aim of this policy is to support fairness, transparency and consistency, while recognising that children develop at different rates and that football becomes more competitive as players get older.

2. Club Philosophy

Southside Star Youth FC believes that grassroots football should be enjoyable, safe and developmental.

Where possible, the club encourages fair and balanced playing time for all players. Coaches should make reasonable efforts to ensure that players are given opportunities to play, learn, develop and feel part of the team.

However, equal playing time may not always be possible in every match, age group or circumstance. As players become older, more experienced and more developed, team selection and playing time may also take into account ability, effort, attitude, attendance, commitment, development needs and the level of football being played.

3. General Principles

When making decisions about team selection and playing time, coaches should consider:

- Player welfare and confidence.
- Age and stage of development.
- Training attendance and attitude.
- Commitment to the team.
- Effort and behaviour.
- Ability and current development level.
- Match format, opposition and level of competition.
- Safety of the player and others.
- The need to support all players across the season.

Coaches should always aim to make decisions in the best interests of the players and the team.

4. Younger Age Groups

At younger age groups, the focus should be on enjoyment, participation, confidence and development.

Coaches should aim to provide broadly equal playing time across the season wherever possible.

Players should be encouraged to try different positions, develop new skills and enjoy football without undue pressure.

Winning should not be prioritised above player development, inclusion or enjoyment.

5. Older Age Groups and Competitive Football

As players move into older age groups, football may become more competitive and differences in physical, technical and tactical development may become more noticeable.

At these ages, equal playing time may not always be possible or appropriate in every match.

Coaches may take additional factors into account, including:

- The players current ability level.
- The players understanding of the game.
- The level of the opposition or competition.
- Training attendance and commitment.
- Effort, attitude and behaviour.
- Positional needs of the team.
- Player safety and confidence.
- Readiness for the level of football being played.

This does not mean that players should be overlooked or excluded. Coaches should continue to support all players and provide development opportunities wherever possible.

6. Playing Time Across the Season

Playing time should be considered across the season, not just on a single match by match basis.

There may be occasions when a player receives less playing time in one match due to the circumstances of that game. Coaches should aim to balance this over time where possible.

Where there are cup games, tournaments, finals, grading matches or particularly competitive fixtures, playing time may differ from normal league or friendly fixtures. Coaches should communicate this clearly where appropriate.

7. Player Development and Support

If a coach feels that a player is not currently at a suitable level to receive equal playing time, this should be handled sensitively and constructively.

The coach should have a confidential conversation with the players parent / carer. This conversation should be supportive and should focus on the child's development, confidence and enjoyment.

The aim should be to agree practical steps to help the player improve and feel more confident.

This may include:

- Clear development goals.
- Extra support during training.
- Feedback on specific areas to work on.
- Opportunities to try different positions.
- Encouragement to attend training regularly.
- Additional practice outside training, where appropriate.
- Review points between the coach and parent / carer.

Any development goals should be realistic, age appropriate and focused on supporting the child, not criticising them.

8. Communication With Parents / Carers

Coaches should communicate openly and respectfully with parents / carers about selection and playing time where concerns arise.

Where a player is consistently receiving reduced playing time, the coach should speak with the parent / carer privately and confidentially.

These conversations should not take place in front of other players, parents or spectators.

Parents / carers are encouraged to raise any concerns calmly and directly with the coach at an appropriate time. Concerns should not be raised during matches, immediately after emotional fixtures, in team Spond / WhatsApp groups, or on social media.

For non-urgent match related concerns, parents / carers are encouraged to follow a 24 hour rule before contacting the coach.

9. Expectation of Players

Players are expected to:

- Attend training and matches regularly where possible.
- Arrive on time and be ready to play.
- Listen to coaches.

- Try their best.
- Show respect to teammates, coaches, referees and opposition.
- Support other players.
- Work on agreed development goals.
- Show a positive attitude, even when not selected or substituted.

10. Expectations of Parents / Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Support the coaches decisions.
- Encourage their child positively.
- Avoid comparing children with other players.
- Avoid challenging coaches publicly.
- Raise concerns respectfully and privately.
- Support any agreed development plan.
- Help their child understand that selection and playing time are part of learning team sport.
- Remember that coaches are volunteers giving their time to support grassroots football.

11. Team Selection

Team selection is the responsibility of the coach / team manager.

Selection decisions may be based on a range of factors, including:

- Player availability.
- Training attendance.
- Effort and attitude.
- Behaviour.
- Fitness and injury status.
- Player development needs.
- Positional balance.
- Opposition and match format.
- Competition rules.
- Player readiness and confidence.

Coaches should use their judgement fairly and consistently.

12. Substitutions

Substitutions are at the discretion of the coach / team manager.

Substitutions may be made for reasons including:

- Player development.
- Tactical changes.
- Fitness or injury.
- Player confidence.
- Behaviour or attitude.
- Match circumstances.
- Ensuring players receive appropriate playing time.

Players and parents / carers should understand that being substituted is a normal part of football and should not be viewed as a punishment unless clearly linked to behaviour or conduct.

13. Movement Between Teams

Where a players development needs may be better supported in another team or environment, the club may consider movement between teams, subject to availability and agreement between coaches, parents / carers and the club.

Any discussions about moving teams should be handled sensitively and with the child's welfare and enjoyment as the priority.

Movement between teams is not guaranteed and will depend on squad sizes, league rules, player suitability and team needs.

14. Concerns and Disputes

If a parent / carer has a concern about team selection or playing time, they should first raise this calmly and privately with the coach / team manager at an appropriate time.

If the matter cannot be resolved, it may be referred to the Club Secretary, Club Welfare Officer or Committee.

Concerns involving bullying, discrimination, safeguarding or inappropriate behaviour should be raised through the club's safeguarding or complaints procedures.

15. Committee Support

The Committee will support coaches in making fair and reasonable decisions in line with this policy.

The Committee may become involved where:

- There is a repeated concern about playing time.
- A parent / carer feels communication has not been handled appropriately.

- A coach requires support with a difficult conversation.
- A player's confidence, welfare or enjoyment is being significantly affected.
- There is a dispute that cannot be resolved at team level.

16. Review and Communication

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Southside Star Youth FC Committee.

Coaches, parents / carers and players will be made aware of the club's approach to team selection and playing time at the start of each season and whenever required.

The club will continue to promote a positive football environment where children can enjoy the game, develop at their own pace and feel supported as part of Southside Star Youth FC.