GOLF IRELAND U-18 JUNIOR POLICY DOCUMENT

1.1 Introduction

This Junior Policy has been created with the intention of outlining best practice for clubs in relation to the recruitment and retention of junior boys and girls in the game. Golf Ireland through their staff and volunteer workforce will endeavour to assist clubs in every way possible to adopt and implement this policy.

Following a consultative process with clubs to identify any perceived barriers to implementation and how these can be overcome, this policy will become a requirement of Golf Ireland affiliation as of the 26th April 2022.

We strongly recommend and encourage clubs to have a clear policy outlining the rights of the junior members (which can be derived from the Golf Ireland Policy) that is visible on the club's notice board and communicated to all members. It is important that all members and parents/guardians understand and are aware of the playing rights of all juniors.

1.2 JUNIOR CONVENOR

1.2.1 Appoint a Junior Boys and Junior Girls Convenor for the development of juniors (some clubs may choose to amalgamate this role). The Junior Convenor shall be part of the overall Junior Committee within the club and will work on the development of junior golf (boys and girls) but will have a primary responsibility for the development of boys or girls' golf.

1.2.2 The Junior Convenor shall be nominated onto the Men's/Women's/Management Committee, or a representative of the Junior Committee shall be invited to attend each committee meeting to provide an update on junior boys/girls' golf.

1.3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE(S)

1.3.1 Support the work of the Junior Convenor and the Junior Committee in the development of junior golf within the club, while also encouraging the membership to support the junior section of the club.

1.3.2 Table junior golf as an agenda item for every Men's/Women's/Management committee meeting.

1.3.3 Put in place a structured programme to support juniors which will include the following:

1.3.3.1 All juniors must be registered on the Centralised Database of Handicaps once they become a playing member of the club, irrespective of whether they have acquired a World Handicap System (WHS) handicap index or not.

1.3.3.2 Ensure all juniors are enabled to obtain a WHS handicap index.

Specific to Junior U-18 Boys:

1.3.3.3 Junior boys with a WHS handicap index of 19.9 or less **must** be allowed to have the opportunity to compete in and win men's competitions. Additionally, there should not be any restrictions for juniors competing, as such restrictions place barriers to boys competing in these competitions - e.g., restrictions such as 'juniors must play with an adult'.

1.3.3.4 All junior boys with a handicap index in excess of 19.9 should have provision made for them to compete in nominated 9- & 18-Hole Competitions during the year by the club to encourage and enable them to integrate into club life just like their more skilled fellow junior members.

1.3.3.5 It is at the discretion of clubs to designate six competitions that boys with a WHS handicap index of 19.9 or less may be restricted from winning first and second prize only.

1.3.3.6 The only circumstance where it is acceptable for juniors, with a handicap index of 19.9 or less to be restricted from playing in major competitions is where the timesheet cannot accommodate all adult competitors (clubs should clearly publish and display prizes which boys are eligible to win).

Specific to Junior U-18 Girls:

1.3.3.7 All junior girls with a WHS handicap index of 39.9 or less **must** be allowed to have the opportunity to compete in and win women's competitions. Additionally, there should not be any restrictions for juniors competing, as such restrictions place barriers to girls competing in these competitions - e.g., restrictions such as 'juniors must play with an adult'.

1.3.3.8 All junior girls with a WHS handicap in excess of 39.9 should have provision made for them to compete in nominated 9- & 18-Hole Competitions during the year by the club to encourage and enable them to integrate into club life just like their more skilled fellow junior members.

1.3.3.9 It is at the discretion of clubs to designate six competitions that girls with a WHS handicap index of 39.9 or less may be restricted from winning first and second prize only.

1.3.3.10 The only circumstance where it is acceptable for girls with a handicap index of 39.9 or less to be restricted from playing in major competitions is where the timesheet cannot accommodate all adult competitors (clubs should clearly publish and display prizes which girls are eligible to win).

This policy and clubs' adherence to it will be kept under review so as to ensure that the next generation of golfers can be nurtured and encouraged.

1.4 DRESS CODE

Clubs are encouraged to introduce a relaxed dress code in relation to juniors.

1.5 SAFEGUARDING

Golf Ireland's Safeguarding Policy document is underpinned by national policy and legislation, in the Republic of Ireland, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the requirements under The Children First Act 2015 and in Northern Ireland – the Children (NI) Order and Cooperating to Safeguarding Children and Young People 2017.

Although the Children First Act does not apply as a legal requirement in Northern Ireland, the principles of best practice to safeguard children are relevant to all golf clubs/organisations and should be adhered to as we seek to adopt the highest possible standards and practices on an all-Ireland basis.

In addition to the above clubs must:

- Carry out a risk assessment and produce a Child Safeguarding Statement
- Complete appropriate vetting checks (Garda Vetting or AccessNI)
- Appoint a Club Children's Officer and Designated Liaison Person
- Sign codes of conduct annually
- Attend appropriate safeguarding training – for all volunteers and staff including your PGA professional working with juniors in your club
- Have in place a proper recruitment process
- Communicate safeguarding procedures to staff, coaches, volunteers, parents, members, and juniors. (e.g., website, newsletter, notice boards, junior induction day)
- Complete Sport Irelands Safeguarding Audit Framework – Golf Ireland's safeguarding department will assist and support your club on timely completion of this framework.

Further information on all the above can be found in Golf's Safeguarding Policy and by visiting https://www.golfireland.ie/club-support-safeguarding

1.6 PROCEDURE FOR A JUNIOR MEMBER TO REPORT BREACHES OF GOLF IRELAND JUNIOR POLICY

1.6.1 Highlight the breach to the Club Junior Convenor and request them to address it with the appropriate Committee

1.6.2 Highlight the breach to your parent and request them to also raise the issue with the Men's/Women's/Management Committee

1.7 PROCEDURE FOR AN ADULT MEMBER TO REPORT BREACHES OF GOLF IRELAND JUNIOR POLICY

1.7.1 Refer the breach to the Club Junior Convenor and the appropriate committee. Preferably in writing and seeking a response.

1.7.2 Should the appropriate committee fail to agree or should the parent/guardian be dissatisfied with the response from the committee, the issue should be referred to the Regional Executive.

1.7.3 If the issue remains unsolved, it shall be forwarded to the Golf Ireland National Junior Development Committee who will work in conjunction with the board. The board decision will be final, and sanctions may apply.

Important Points:

- Golf Ireland's Junior U-18 policy does not infringe on the rights of full members.
- It is important for the development of juniors that they are entitled to win, and their achievement of winning is recognised.
- While preferred, it is not necessary for boys and girls to have equal rights as girls are an underrepresented group, therefore this is referred to as positive discrimination.
- The Junior Development Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis to evaluate its detail and effectiveness.