# GGHA Travel Play Up Policy

## Core Philosophy

- Players should compete within their age group
    - Playing up is exceptional, not typical
    - Focus is on development, safety, and competitive balance
- All play up requests must meet USA Hockey, the Carolina Amateur Hockey Association, and any other leagues/governing bodies.

## Play-Up Limitations

- A player is only allowed to play up one age level
- Underage players may be asked to allow “of age” players to showcase their skills during player evaluations which may result in less ice time at the tryout.
- If rostered at an older age group, player cannot move down to their original age level.

## Evaluation & Approval Process

- **Step 1: Written Request**
    - A written email request should be submitted before tryouts to the President and Director of Hockey Operations of the desire to play up. This email should explain the reasons to play up and provide a compelling case.
- **Step 2: Tryout Evaluation**
    - Players will be expected to skate at both tryouts. If the player is not competitive or there is a safety risk at the higher level, the player can be removed from the older age group tryout session at any time without refund.
- **Step 3: Review**
    - During the team selection process, a review board will discuss the best overall option for the player’s development, organizational needs, and conduct a cross player review (see section 5).
- **Step 4: Decision and Offer**
    - An offer may be presented to the player to play on their natural age group team or an invitation to play up one (1) age level.

## Cross Player Review

After tryouts are completed, the review board will conduct a placement review. Criteria for the review will include, but not be limited to:

- Assumed safety or injury risks for the player
- Player's tryout performance at both levels
- Assumed contribution level by the player at the higher level
- Developmental impacts on playing up vs playing at their natural age level
- Team needs, roster composition, and competitive balance
- Emotional readiness
- Physical readiness
- Hockey IQ

## Review Board

- The play up review board will be led by the Director of Hockey Operations and will be formed with no less than 3 people.
- The review board may be comprised of:
    - Current age group coaches
    - Older age group coaches
    - Independent evaluators
    - Prior coaches
    - GGHA Board Members

## Roster & Placement Authority

- GGHA & Coaching Staff has full discretion over team placement – Players may be moved or reassigned as needed
- There is and will be no appeal process. All decisions are final.

## Annual Review Requirement

- Play-up approval is valid for one season only
    - Players must re-qualify each year

  NOTE: Please note, due to current CAHA rules, you can only play up once.

## Development Protection Clause

- GGHA may deny play-up for any reason – This clause is in effect to protect team balance and player safety.