JUNIOR GOLFERS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A GOLF CLUB’S MEMBERSHIP AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE TREATED IN AN EQUITABLE MANNER.
SECTION 5

Juniors within your Club

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Introduction

JUNIOR GOLFERS ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF A GOLF CLUB’S MEMBERSHIP AND THEREFORE SHOULD BE TREATED IN AN EQUITABLE MANNER, SO THAT THEY FEEL WELCOME AND AT EASE WITHIN THE GOLF CLUB ENVIRONMENT.

It shouldn’t be assumed that juniors or any new members will know the club rules and regulations and therefore a thorough induction should be provided as highlighted in Section 3.

Opportunities should be available for juniors to receive coaching, access the course and take part in competitions as part of their membership package.

By providing juniors with the required information they will know what to expect from the golf club and where they can receive support. By communicating this information, the golf club is less likely to experience a high turnover in junior members as they will be well educated and happy within the club.

Communication

By actively communicating with juniors and their parents, golf clubs can clearly highlight the messages they want to promote.

COMMUNICATION CAN BE VIA:

- JUNIOR NOTICE BOARD.
- JUNIOR WEBSITE (or section on main site).
- JUNIOR HANDBOOK/INDUCTION PACK.
- NEWSLETTERS – hard copy or email.
- TEXT MESSAGES.
- AT WELCOME EVENINGS/EVENTS.
- SOCIAL NETWORKING.
- LETTERS TO JUNIORS AND PARENTS.

Please note that junior notice boards should be clearly accessible to all juniors and their parents. Guidance on the use of social media is available (see Section 8).
Below is some advice which golf clubs can communicate to parents and guardians to ensure juniors have a positive experience in the game:

- Encourage the effort as well as the results - your expectations will always be high, but be realistic about performance and communicate this in a positive manner.
- It’s not just about golf – encourage your child to play other sports, (including team sports), to help develop a variety of skills.
- Cheating and bad behaviour – prompt action is required, as turning a blind eye will increase the chance of it occurring again, however there may be specific reasons why this is happening.
- Fear of failure – your child should never be frightened of playing poorly because of the way you may respond.
- Injuries – keep a watchful eye out for injuries, as well as burnout, as it is possible to play too much golf.
- Coaching – avoid coaching from the sidelines, this often causes confusion and may be contrary to professional advice.

Children and young people have the right to...

- Enjoy sport in a safe & enjoyable environment
- Participate on an equal basis
- Experience coaching & competitive opportunities
- Be safe
- Ask for help
- Be respected
- Be listened to
When providing juniors with rules and regulations, a golf club should consider how they sound from a juniors’ perspective and therefore the wording applied is crucial so that it does not deter them from the game.

As oppose to using phrases such as “you shall not”, the following can be used:

“What we do”

“The way we dress”

“About safety”

“About the Clubhouse”

By using appropriate language juniors will understand and appreciate the need to follow certain guidelines for their own enjoyment, safety and the benefit of others. The more serious information can then be given to parents and guardians.

Codes of conduct are a really useful tool for juniors, staff, volunteers, members and parents to safeguard the welfare of children and further details can be found in Section 8.

In addition to these, there are some general codes of conduct which juniors should abide by:

- Behave and listen to all instructions.
- Take care of equipment owned by the golf club.
- Show respect to other members.
- Regularly support junior coaching and competitions.
- Play fairly.
- Respect officials and accept decisions with dignity.

Adult members also have a role to play, as aggressive or harsh words from an adult member can put a child off golf club membership for life. It is essential that the golf club communicates the rights of children and young people to all members as part of their overall club rules and regulations.

Question: DOES YOUR GOLF CLUB REGULARLY REVIEW ITS RULES, REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE EQUITABLE?
PART OF GOLF’S TRADITION IS THE SMART APPEARANCE OF GOLFERS AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THIS IS MAINTAINED AND TAUGHT TO THE JUNIORS.

Most juniors want to follow their heroes and do want to dress as smartly, however some of the more traditional dress codes are not always appropriate to the juniors and it is important that this is considered and a sensible attitude to dress codes is required.

Dress codes should be relaxed when introducing new juniors to the golf club environment and then guidance can be provided on dress codes (on and off the course) once they have shown a commitment to the golf club.

There are a variety of different posters/diagrams which can be sourced highlighting appropriate dress codes.
The Clubhouse

THE FOLLOWING MAY ACT AS CLUBHOUSE GUIDANCE FOR JUNIORS:

- Juniors should not be excluded from the clubhouse (however licensing laws must be adhered to).
- Some restrictions especially in the evening may be required, such as being accompanied by an adult after a particular time.
- If a junior room is provided, ensure the juniors are responsible for keeping it tidy and looking after it.
- As part of the juniors’ induction, provide them with a copy of the clubhouse rules and if necessary ask a few questions to make sure they have understood.
- Juniors and their parents should be aware of the consequences if they break the club rules.

Rules & Etiquette

It is important for golf clubs to uphold the rules of golf and golfing etiquette and educate their juniors on this. By doing this golf clubs are teaching juniors discipline, honesty and developing them as individuals.

Junior golfers will not necessarily be aware of the traditions of golf, therefore to ensure they have a quality experience within the game, golf clubs can offer regular, fun and interactive rules and etiquette sessions, which can include quiz nights or sessions during the winter and rules scenarios can be set up on the course.

All juniors should be given rules and etiquette information as part of their induction. Publications are available through the R&A and England Golf (see Section 9).
Playing Standards

Playing standards vary between golf clubs, as some courses are more challenging than others. Nevertheless, a junior golfer should not have to achieve a higher standard than that asked of an adult member to gain access to play on the golf course.

If a golf club insists on its junior members obtaining a maximum handicap of 28 (boys) and 36 (girls) before playing on the course, then the golf club should consider providing an affordable coaching programme that will allow juniors to progress to this level. By not doing so, the golf club may be giving the impression that they are happy to take the junior’s subscription, but not allowing them to actually play.

A golf club may wish to offer a series of coaching sessions to junior members as part of the introductory membership package. The PGA Coach is then able to support the early development of the junior player and the golf club will be comfortable knowing that juniors have reached an acceptable standard to progress onto the course.

The recommended CONGU Junior Handicapping Scheme allows juniors to be initially granted a maximum handicap of 54 and with coaching and support from the golf club, this can be developed so that juniors can progress to the required standard (see Section 7 for further details).

Access to the Golf Course

**GOLF CLUBS SHOULD CONSIDER WHETHER IT IS EQUITABLE FOR JUNIOR GOLFERS TO HAVE RESTRICTED ACCESS TO THE GOLF COURSE BASED SOLELY ON THEIR AGE. IF RESTRICTIONS DO EXIST:**

- Tee times should be displayed for all golf club members and a copy given to the parents of the junior members.
- When the demand for tee times is low, restrictions for juniors should be lifted.
- A junior accompanied by an adult should not be restricted.
- All golf clubs should ideally provide a maximum amount of tee times for juniors consistent with other sections within the golf club.
- The retention of current junior members and the recruitment of future golfers could be affected by any restrictions to the golf course.

Many golf clubs have a heavy demand upon their tee times and some restrictions on all sections of the membership may be necessary. However, juniors should be given the same opportunity as an adult member to play the course if they have reached an appropriate standard.

Although juniors do not pay the same subscriptions as an adult member, they should still have equal playing rights, as they do not have the opportunity to use the golf club facilities on such a regular basis as the adult members, due to being at school for a high proportion of the year.
Junior Tees/Markers

To support juniors in making the transition from the practice ground onto the full course, golf clubs should look to offer some form of junior tees/markers from a more forward position on the course. Below are some ideas:

- **FROM THE 150 YARD MARKERS**
  - Allowing juniors to tee the ball on the fairway and play to the green.

- **FROM THE START OF THE FAIRWAY**
  - As a further progression, juniors can tee the ball up at the start of the fairway, with no carry and fewer hazards.

- **BLUE TEE MARKERS**
  - These junior tees can be placed on flat ground in front of the main tees or alongside the ladies tees.

Regular Coaching & Competitions

Junior members must be supported and encouraged to attend regular coaching and to participate in competitions. Not only does this produce an active junior section it is a real opportunity for juniors to improve their game, reduce their handicap and develop some close friendships – a healthy junior section is one where the majority of members attend coaching sessions and enter competitions.

An active junior section relies on the golf club doing all it can to make the opportunities affordable, accessible, diverse and enjoyable to maintain interest. By giving the players the opportunity to participate, it is their choice as to whether they partake.

The golf club may wish to address any situation where a junior is not taking full advantage of their junior membership opportunities through encouragement, as inactive juniors may take the place of keen players. Competitions and coaching should be regular, fun and offer a reward for good performances, whereas rules and etiquette can be taught on those rainy days in the clubhouse.
Disciplinary Procedures

GOLF CLUBS SHOULD HAVE A DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE THAT THEY SHOULD ADHERE TO.

England Golf can provide support and guidance to clubs on dealing with disciplinary issues (see Section 9). It is important to deal with any incidents regarding juniors in a professional and sensitive manner and safeguarding guidance is available on the Children in Golf website.

All junior members and their parents should be made aware and have an understanding of the club’s disciplinary procedures upon joining.

IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT:

- The parent/guardian should be informed and the club’s disciplinary procedures consulted.
- Club members should not approach juniors in relation to disciplinary matters and any problems should be reported to the junior organiser and/or club secretary/manager straight away.
- If you are unsure whether there might be child protection implications, please consult with your welfare officer and/or junior organiser (see also Section 8).

Fact:

91% OF GOLF CLUBS OFFER JUNIOR ONLY COMPETITIONS.

Golf Club Membership Questionnaire – England Golf
JUNIORS WITHIN YOUR CLUB

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SINCE ACHIEVING GOLFMARK, ABBEY HILL HAS WORKED HARD TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR JUNIORS TO JOIN AND PLAY AND THERE ARE NOW SIX CATEGORIES OF JUNIOR MEMBERSHIP WHICH INCLUDE A PAR 3 MEMBERSHIP. BLUE TEES HAVE ALSO BEEN ADDED TO THE START OF THE FAIRWAYS AND WE NOW HAVE A HANDICAP AND COMPETITION SYSTEM FOR BOTH THE PAR 3 AND MAIN COURSE BLUE TEES. THIS ALLOWS JUNIORS TO START AT A YOUNGER AGE AND HAVE A CLEAR PATHWAY TO BECOMING INTEGRATED IN THE CLUB WITH A FULL HANDICAP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

The club offers roll up sessions on the driving range for three different age groups every week which helps to get people playing with no commitment, and we have a full programme which includes ‘coach and challenge days’, summer camps and 8 week coaching sessions for different abilities as well as different ages.

We take the health and wellbeing of all juniors very seriously at Abbey Hill and ensure that all juniors on the coaching programme are issued with a medical emergency card to keep on their golf bag.

Both male and female juniors are able to play in adult competitions enabling them to develop their social skills as well as their golf skills and they are more than welcome in every area of the clubhouse and golf centre.

In October 2011 Abbey Hill opened a new 18 hole pirate themed adventure golf course which massively increased the number of families coming to the site and has lead to more juniors and families using the range and par 3 course.

We also take golf outside the club to children and adults in the community. With our close connection to the BB&O Golf Partnership, the Golf Foundation and local council we run courses for underprivileged and troubled youths and their local Community Support Officers. As part of the ‘Golf for Schools’ programme we have also given out as many free clubs as we could to school students in order to encourage them to come to the club and get into golf.

Gordon Forster
General Manager

“I am extremely proud of the energy and enthusiasm of all the staff at Abbey Hill. They are a credit to themselves and the game of golf. The number of children that now play at the club that would not have even tried the game is truly amazing and due to their hard work.”

CASE STUDY | ABBEY HILL GOLF CLUB, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

THE BENEFITS OF INTEGRATING JUNIORS

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Communicating with both juniors and their parents is essential to provide them with expectations, advice and information about the golf club. Consideration should be given to how things are communicated to ensure they are done in a junior friendly way.

Juniors and adults should be expected to follow a code of conduct, so that all sections of the golf club are treated fairly.

Ensure juniors are integrated into the golf club and are able to use the facilities so that they feel part of the membership.

By offering regular coaching and competitive opportunities and by actively educating on the rules and etiquette of the game, the golf club will produce better golfers who will feel more at ease on the golf course.

If there are playing standards and restrictions in place for juniors, the same should also apply for adult members to ensure they are treated equitably.

England Golf’s Club Services Team can provide advice on policy, legislation and other golf club operational areas (see Section 9 for contact details).