



FOOTBALL CLUB FREDERICK



FC FREDERICK

Age Group Transition Policy

Birth Year → School Year | Effective: 2026–27 Season

Approved by FC Frederick Club Leadership | Spring 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes FC Frederick’s official plan for transitioning all programming from a birth-year (January 1 – December 31) to a school-year (August 1 – July 31) age group formation, effective with the 2026–27 season. The 2025–26 season continues under existing birth-year rules with no change.

2. Guiding Principles

- Player development is the primary lens for every placement decision.
- No player receives an automatic roster spot for a specific team in the new age group — every player must be evaluated.
- Club Directors and the Director of Coaching retain discretion to place players outside their standard age group when it serves the player’s individual development.
- Communication with families will be proactive, transparent, and individualized.
- Decisions will account for technical ability, physical development, emotional maturity, coachability, and long-term pathway goals.

3. Implementation Timeline

Timeframe	Action
April 2026	Distribute parent/player age group change summary to families. Club begins internal roster mapping under new age bands. Age group matrix published on FC Frederick website and Playmetrics app. Host parent information sessions.
April – May 2026	Host pre-tryout training pools organized by new age bands. Allow staff to evaluate players in the new groupings before formal tryouts begin.
April – May 2026	Conduct formal tryouts for all 2026–27 teams under the August 1 – July 31 age system. All players — returning and new — must participate in the evaluation process for their new age group.
May – June 2026	Finalize rosters. Notify families. Process any approved age group exceptions. Complete registration under new system.
August 2026	2026–27 season begins. New age groups in effect.



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4. Tryouts and Evaluation Requirements

Every FC Frederick player — regardless of tenure with the club, prior team assignment, or level of play — must be evaluated in their new age band before being placed on a 2026–27 roster. There are no automatic placements. This ensures that team composition is based on current player development, not historical team affiliation.

- Pre-tryout training pools will be organized by new age band and held in April & May 2026 to give players and staff familiarity with the new groupings ahead of formal tryouts.
- Staff will assess players across multiple sessions (training pools and tryout days) before making final placement decisions, ensuring no player's evaluation rests on a single performance.
- Tryouts are open to all eligible players, including those from partner clubs and community programs within FC Frederick's regional network.

5. Age Group Flexibility — Director Discretion

FC Frederick's Club Directors and Director of Coaching retain discretion to place players outside of their standard school-year age group when doing so is clearly in the best interest of a player's development. Factors considered when approving an age group exception:

- Technical ability and tactical readiness relative to the target age group
- Physical and emotional maturity
- Long-term development pathway and college recruiting considerations
- Input from the player's coach and, if appropriate, the player's own goals and preferences
- Governing body eligibility rules for the applicable league or competition (MLS Next, Girls Academy/Aspire, UCL, NCSL, EDP, etc.)

Age group exceptions are identified and approved by Club Directors and the Director of Coaching based on staff evaluation. Approved exceptions will be documented and communicated directly to the family. Exceptions approved for one season do not automatically carry forward — each season the placement is re-evaluated.

6. Family Communication Plan

- A plain-language summary of the age group change will be distributed to all FC Frederick families in April 2026.
- Parent information sessions will be held in April 2026 to explain the transition, answer questions, and describe the tryout process.
- Individual outreach will be made to families whose player is most affected by the transition to proactively address concerns.

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