



## Pitch Allocation Policy

*August 2023*

### Background

Despite the growth and success of the club we still do not have claim to any playing pitches. This presents huge challenges, particularly for the organisation of home fixtures but also for the provision of training spaces that allow for proper player development. It has to be acknowledged that, until the club can acquire proper facilities, the options for training will continue to be to somewhat inadequate. The situation can, at times, be frustrating for coaches, players and parents/guardians. However, as a club we have developed a strong sense of community and cooperation that has allowed us to make the best use of limited resources.

### Aims

The aims of this policy are to outline the principles and process for the allocation of limited training spaces for juvenile teams in line with the mission and values of the club which include:

- Ensuring that teams are being coached and mentored to the highest standard.
- The promotion of inclusion and diversity
- Addressing the issue of player retention which has been identified as a major challenge for the club.

### Current facilities for training

Aside from Cathal Brugha, Bushy Park and Dartry all of the club's training sessions, including the academy, take place on non-Gaelic pitches. While training for Gaelic games on non-Gaelic pitches is never ideal the degree of suitability of the alternative venues varies according to a number of factors including:

- The playing surface.

- The presence or absence of goal posts.
- The size and number of the pitches.
- Availability of floodlighting.
- Available time slots.

## Principles for allocation

The allocation of training resources is aligned with the mission, values and vision of the club. This ensures equality of access to suitable training facilities for boys' and girls' teams. However, for as long as non-Gaelic pitches are used for training, priority for the most suitable alternative venues will be given to the more senior teams. The overarching principle is that as players move up through the club they will get the opportunity to access facilities which gradually improve in how they approximate proper Gaelic training facilities. This principle aligns closely with the club strategy for retention of players as they move up through the club and also ensures that skill and game development is accompanied by improvement in facilities.

## Allocation of Timeslots

Teams have varied preferences for training days and time slots based on a number of factors including:

- Number of training sessions per week
- Days that match fixtures are usually played.
- Facilitating players' participation in other sports/activities.
- Availability of particular preferred pitches.

In trying to meet these varied requests the committee will, where necessary, give preference to the more senior teams. However, for midweek training, preference for earlier timeslots will be given to the more junior teams.

## Matches and Training

In terms of pitch allocation the main priority for matches is to ensure that, whenever possible, home fixtures are played at home. When pitch availability is limited priority will be given to allocating home ground for matches. On occasion this will require that scheduled training slots for other teams are either relocated, postponed or, possibly, cancelled. In addition, priority for home ground will be given to championship matches over league matches.

## Shared training spaces.

Where it is necessary to share training spaces preference will be given to teams training for the same code of similar age and gender. However, this will not always be possible. When dividing pitches for different squads the age and number of players will be the main

considerations. The committee can suggest specific pitch divisions however, in practice, this is usually best sorted out between the lead coaches of the relevant teams.

## Other considerations

In allocating pitches for training the committee must also consider:

- The location of the venue in relation to the catchment area of the club.
- Access arrangements including parking, drop off and pick up.
- Requirements for parental supervision during training.
- Changing room & toilet facilities.
- The number of players in the squad.
- The number of weekly team training sessions.

## Review process

The general allocation of pitches will be reviewed on an annual basis to take effect at the start of September each year. Interim changes may also be made for the period from March-June each year when daylight allows for evening training on non-floodlit pitches. Changes may also be required in January each year when teams change age category and the days for weekend matches change. In addition, there may also be short term changes necessitated by changes to pitch availability or other unforeseen circumstances.

This policy was ratified by the committee on 15 August 2023.