



Silson AC– Under 18 Participation & Safeguarding Policy

This policy outlines the rules, safety requirements, and boundaries for admitting older adolescents into an adult-focused running club.

1. Purpose and Scope

Silson AC is primarily an adult running club. However, we welcome young runners aged **16 and 17** to join our main club training sessions and social runs, provided they can comfortably match our minimum training paces and follow our safety guidelines. We also welcome runners aged **12 – 15** to join our club training sessions provided they run with their parent or guardian.

We do not offer a dedicated junior academy, track coaching, or primary school-age sessions. This policy exists to protect both our teen runners and our adult volunteers/members.

2. Age Limits and Supervision

- **Minimum Age:** The absolute minimum age for membership or trial sessions without a parent also attending is 16. We cannot accommodate unaccompanied children under this age on our runs.
- **Independent Running:** Members aged 16 and 17 are permitted to run within adult groups without a parent physically running alongside them, *provided* a signed **Parental Consent Form** is on file.
- **Run Leader Responsibility:** Our Run Leaders are volunteers guiding adult groups. They are responsible for navigation and pacing, but they do not provide individual childcare or continuous 1-on-1 supervision.
- **Children aged 12 – 15:** Children of this age may attend sessions and become members as long as they have a parent or guardian running with them. The parent or guardian must be in the same training group as the child. The child will remain under the supervision of their parent or guardian at all times, the run leaders or other adults will not be sanctioned to perform this role.

3. Mandatory Safety Requirements for Teens

To participate in adult runs, all under-18 members must strictly adhere to the following:

- **Pace & Distance Limits:** The teen must be physically capable of completing the advertised group distance at the group's minimum pace.
- **Winter/Night Running:** During low-light or winter sessions, the teen **must** wear high-visibility clothing (reflective vest) and a working headtorch or chest light. Failure to bring safety gear will result in the runner being turned away from the session.

- **Emergency Contact:** The teen must carry a mobile phone or wear an ICE (In Case of Emergency) tag/wristband containing their parent/guardian's phone number on every run.
- **Running Safety:** The teen runner must remain with the group and follow the Run Leader's instructions; if they become separated, they should stop in a safe location and contact the Run Leader/parent according to the club's procedure.

4. Boundaries & Codes of Conduct

To ensure a safe environment for everyone, the club enforces strict boundaries between adult members and under-18 runners:

- **No Private Messaging:** Adult members, coaches, and run leaders must not engage in private messaging (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, Strava) with under-18 members. Under 18 members must also not direct message adult members, coaches or run leaders. All club communications regarding timings, routes, or cancellations must go through the parent/guardian or via the public club Facebook group/Strava page.
- **Transport & Lifts:** Adult members must not offer private car lifts to under-18 members to or from club sessions, unless explicit, prior permission has been granted by the parent, or in an absolute medical emergency.
- **Changing Rooms:** Where club facilities include changing rooms or showers, under-18s must use separate facilities from adults, or use them at staggered times.

5. Parental Consent and Responsibility

- **Trial Runs:** A parent or guardian must accompany teens aged 16 – 17 to their very first club session to meet the Run Leader, verify their emergency contact details, and sign the consent form in person.
- **Drop-off and Pick-up:** Parents are responsible for ensuring their teen arrives safely at the session start point and is collected promptly at the published finish time.

6. Safeguarding Concerns

The club maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward any form of bullying, harassment, or inappropriate behaviour between any club members.

If any club member or parent has a concern regarding the safety or welfare of an under-18 runner, it should be raised immediately with our Welfare Officer.

- **Club Welfare Officer Name:** Helen Heley and Karen Teago
- **Welfare Officer Email:** silsonwelfare1@gmail.com

Policy Review Date: September 2026

Approved by: Bob Kellam