Olds Minor Hockey Association:
Underage Player Acceleration Policy and Procedure

Organization: Olds Minor Hockey Association (OMHA)

Policy Name: Underage Player Acceleration Policy and Procedure

Date of Policy Adoption: 2024 (through Team Formation Handbook)

Date of Policy Amendments: August 19, 2024/August 26, 2025/September 8, 2026

Policy Purpose: The purpose of the Association's Underage Player Acceleration Policy and Procedure is, in recognition that player acceleration is at the discretion of the minor hockey association, to determine eligibility for player requests to advance above their prescribed age category and to ensure a competitive and fair hockey program throughout the Olds Minor Hockey Association.

Applicable Hockey Canada Regulation(s):	No	Yes
Applicable Hockey Alberta Regulation(s):	No	Yes
Applicable Olds Minor Hockey Association Bylaw(s):	No	Yes

This policy is authorized under Article 3.7(i) of the Olds Minor Hockey Association bylaws.

Olds Minor Hockey Association Policy:

Acceleration Request-to-Tryout Application and Processing Requirements:

- All players must register within their appropriate age division, even if they are applying for player acceleration.
- Players requesting to accelerate above their age division must complete the Player Acceleration Request-to-Tryout Form with their general registration. The acceleration tryout application fee must be paid within seven days of receiving the

invoice from the Association for the fee. The acceleration tryout application fee is non-refundable.

- When a player acceleration tryout is compliant with Hockey Alberta and Association policy, the advancement is for evaluation purposes only and does not presume the player is guaranteed a roster position in the advanced age division.
- If the player's original age division evaluations are prior to the requested accelerated division evaluations, the player must attend their original age division evaluations for team formation purposes in case they do not meet the rankings threshold for the accelerated age division.
- If a player secures a roster position in an age division that results in higher registration fees, the additional registration fees applicable to the higher division will be added to the player's outstanding fees.
- Acceleration applications must be made on an annual basis with registration.
- Applications for an acceleration tryout must be received by the general registration deadline.
- The Association reserves the right to waive the acceleration application process if the acceleration is proactively sought by the Association.

Supporting Documentation:

- The following supporting documents are required when a "Player Acceleration Request-to-Tryout Request Form" is submitted:

    - Player Resume:
        - List of teams and category for the past three years; and
        - List of additional programs or clinics attended.

    - Additional Background Information:
        - Brief letter from player and/or parents outlining the rationale for the acceleration tryout request; and
        - Contact information for a head or assistant coach reference.

- If a player was with another local minor hockey association in the previous season, supporting documentation from the previous local minor hockey association will be accepted.

Age Division Standards for Acceleration Consideration:

- Players must only be one year underage from the division they are applying for advancement to.
- Parents/guardians of players applying for an accelerated tryout must acknowledge and attest to the following standards, as applicable to their player's age division:

  Applications from players registered in U7, U9 and U11:
  - Players applying for an accelerated tryout from U9 to U11 must have consistent ability and intensity to participate in full ice practices and games.

  Applications from players registered in U13:

  - Male players in U13 division applying for advancement to U15 must be able to safely participate in contact hockey.

Decision-Making on Acceleration During Evaluations Process:

- Once the evaluation process has commenced, a player may be recommended for an acceleration tryout under the following conditions:
  - The independent evaluators make a recommendation to the Team Formation Executive;
  - The Team Formation Executive makes a unanimous recommendation to the Board of Directors;
  - The Board of Directors affirms the recommendation by majority decision; and
  - The player and player's parent or guardian consents to the acceleration tryout.

Team Placement for Players in Accelerated Tryouts:

Mainstream:

- The player must be evaluated in the top fifty percent of the accelerated age division.

AA Program:

- The underage player must evaluate to be selected for the AA team (for U11 to U18) in the accelerated age division, as outlined in the "Team Formation Policy and Procedure". If this ranking threshold is met, team placement for the accelerated player then falls within the "Team Formation Policy and Procedure".
- For the AA program, the Association will follow the guidelines laid out in Hockey Alberta's AA Hockey Model, and specifically abide by the maximum of one underage player per team.

Team Formation Decision-Making for Underage Player Advancement:

- The Association recognizes that acceleration decisions affect the individual player requesting acceleration, as well as players throughout the Association's hockey program. Notwithstanding the requirements set out in this policy and procedure, the Board of Directors will be the final decision-maker for team formation for accelerated players only based on the recommendations of the Team Formation Committee.
- Even if a skater evaluates in the top fifty percent of evaluations rankings, the skater is not guaranteed underage player advancement based exclusively on evaluations rankings.
- The Board of Directors will make determinations for team formation for underage player advancement on the basis of the following:
    - The evaluations ranking of the underage player in contention for underage player advancement;

  - The evaluations rankings of other underage players in contention for underage player advancement;
  - Affected division registration numbers on potential team formation if allowing or disallowing the advancement of an underage player in a division may better balance player numbers between divisions;
  - The safety of the players in the lower age division and whether the size, speed, skill, strength, and other factors of the player requesting acceleration may detrimentally affect the safety of other players if he or she plays in an age division below his or her skill level;
  - The safety of the player requesting the acceleration and whether the size, speed, skill, strength, and other factors of the player will allow the player to safely compete with players in the higher age division; and
  - Under no circumstances will Board Members use the accelerated player(s) team formation discussion to otherwise influence other aspects of the team formation process.
- The decision of the Board of Directors will be final.

Players Who are Not Placed on an Accelerated Team:

Players Who are Not Placed on an Accelerated Team (U7 trying out for U9):

- A U7 player who is approved to tryout in an accelerated division, but who does not make the accelerated division as outlined by the "*Team Placement for Players in Accelerated Tryouts*" section in this policy, must then choose one of the following options that reasonably applies to their accelerated tryout circumstances:
  - Return to mainstream evaluations in their current age division. The player will subsequently be placed based on the independent evaluators rankings and according to the "Team Formation Policy and Procedure"; or
  - If applicable under the Association's "Player Release Policy", request a release to tryout in an accelerated age division with another minor hockey association.

Players Who are Not Placed on an Accelerated Team (U9 trying out for U11, U11 trying out for U13, U13 trying out for U15, U15 trying out for U18):

- A player who is approved to tryout in an accelerated division, but who does not make the AA team in the accelerated division as outlined by the "*Team Placement for Players in Accelerated Tryouts*" section in this policy, must then choose one of the following options that reasonably applies to their accelerated tryout circumstances:
    - Return to their current age division to tryout for AA, if applicable (applies to U11 to U15 only);
    - Return to mainstream evaluations to tryout in the accelerated division;
    - Return to mainstream evaluations in their current age division. The player will subsequently be placed based on the independent evaluators rankings and according to the "Team Formation Policy and Procedure"; or
    - If applicable under the Association's "Player Release Policy", request a release to tryout in an accelerated age division with another minor hockey association.

Policy Review: This policy will be reviewed annually by the Olds Minor Hockey Association Board of Directors.

Policy Oversight:

The Board of Directors is primarily responsible for the implementation of this policy, although there are policy accountabilities for all Association affiliates.

Operational Appendix:

Underage Player Acceleration Request-to-Tryout Form