

## Harrison Soccer Club – 2026–27 Age Group Transition FAQ

### What is changing?

Starting **Fall 2026**, U.S. Soccer is moving from a **birth-year model** (Jan 1–Dec 31) to a **school-year model** (Aug 1–July 31). This is a **national mandate**, not a Harrison SC decision.

### Why is this happening?

U.S. Soccer used the school-year model prior to 2017 and has decided to return to it after several years of the birth-year format.

### How is Harrison SC handling this?

We've made limited adjustments to better align with **New Jersey's October 1 school cutoff**, while still following league rules. Our goals are to:

- Keep players with classmates when possible
- Maintain competitive balance
- Retain teams through high school
- Support long-term player development

### How does this affect Recreational Soccer (U4–U8)?

- **Jan 1–July 31 birthdays:** stay in current age group
- **Aug 1–Sept 30 birthdays:** may play with school-year classmates *or* new soccer age group
- **Oct 1–Dec 31 birthdays:** placed in school-year age group
- Players **may not play down** an age group

### How does this affect Travel Soccer (U8–U14)?

- **Jan 1–July 31 birthdays:** remain in current age group
- **Aug 1–Sept 30 birthdays:** may remain with school-year age group regardless of team level; may try out for both age groups
- **Oct 1–Dec 31 birthdays:** may stay only if they make the top team of their current age group

### What if a player tries out for two age groups?

Players will be placed on the **highest-level team** they earn based on evaluations.

### Can exceptions be made?

Yes. The Executive Board may make exceptions to ensure proper skill-level placement.

### Is soccer age based on school grade?

No. Soccer age is determined strictly by **birthdate**, not grade level. Players cannot play in a younger age group.

### Questions?

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