



## Marching NZ Age-Grade Exception Guidelines

This summary should be read alongside the Marching NZ Rules of Participation and any application forms issued by Marching NZ.

### Purpose

To outline the process and criteria for granting age-grade exceptions for Marching NZ participants, ensuring fairness, safety, and inclusivity.

This guideline applies to all Marching NZ grades: Masters, Senior, Under 18, and Under 13, and covers marchers and team officials seeking age-related exceptions under MG1.

There may be other exceptions that need to be considered that are not listed here. A similar process will be followed for any other exceptions that may be submitted.

### Eligibility Criteria

Exceptions may be considered for members who fall outside the specified age and school year ranges but meet the relevant criteria.

#### Marchers:

- **Masters Grade (30+ years)** – The applicant is close to the minimum age (for example, 28 years).
- **Senior Grade (17+ years or Year 13)** – The applicant is 16 (Year 12) turning 17 within the first 3 months of the competitive season.
- **Under 18 Grade (12–17 years or Year 8–13)** – The applicant is 11 (Year 7) turning 12 within the first 3 months of the competitive season, or, if not in secondary school or equivalent, has turned 18 within the 3 months prior to 1 October.
- **Under 13 Grade (7–12 years or Year 3–8)** – The applicant is 6 (Year 2) turning 7 within the first 3 months of the competitive season, or turned 13 within the 3 months prior to 1 October.

#### Officials:

- **Coaches** – Must be registered as team officials and meet the minimum age requirements for their grade under the Marching NZ Rules of Participation. Any exception must consider maturity, experience, and welfare and safety responsibilities.
- **Chaperones, managers, and treasurers** – Must be registered as team officials and generally be at least 20 years of age. Any exception must consider maturity, responsibility, and the ability to meet welfare, safety, or role-specific obligations.

## **Application Process**

Applications for the next season open from 1 June. Associations and teams are encouraged to apply as soon as a member expresses interest in seeking an exception, rather than waiting until registration time.

1. A Team Official completes the MNZ Age Exception Application Form on behalf of the applicant before registration. The application form must be signed by the applicant, or by a parent or guardian for applicants under 18, to confirm their consent. Please note, preference is that the application process is completed before the applicant commences their role.
2. Supporting documents are attached, including proof of age, school year confirmation, parent or guardian consent, and capability statements if relevant.
3. The application is submitted to the local Association for review.
4. The Association tables the application for discussion, preferably at a committee meeting so there is ample time for its members to review, ask questions and seek additional information before determining their support, or non-support, for the application. The association completes the relevant section of the application form, clearly recording its decision and providing a brief rationale outlining the reasons for that decision.
5. The Association, whether they support the application or not, forwards the application to the MNZ EO for consideration by the Exceptions Subcommittee, and the outcome is then communicated back through the Association to the applicant.

## **Decision-Making**

- Decisions are based on fairness, safety, inclusivity, and consistency.
- The Subcommittee may consult relevant people or request further information before making a decision.
- All decisions are made in line with the MNZ Constitution, Rules of Participation, and relevant MNZ policies.
- The Balance is Better principles are considered when assessing what is appropriate, supported, and in the applicant's best interests.

## **Communication of Outcomes**

The outcome of the application will be communicated in writing to the Association, which will then advise the applicant. Where further information is needed, this will also be communicated through the Association.

## **Confidentiality**

All information provided in support of an application will be treated as confidential and used only for the purpose of decision-making.