

ECB Safety guidance on the wearing of cricket helmets by young players.

In February 2000 the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) issued new safety guidance on the wearing of helmets by young players up to the age of 18. This guidance document can be found at www.play-cricket.com/helmets. In brief, the guidance recommended that:

- helmets with a faceguard or grille should be worn when batting against a hard cricket ball in matches and in practice sessions
- young players should regard a helmet with a faceguard as a normal item of protective equipment when batting, together with pads, gloves and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box)
- young wicket keepers should wear a helmet with a faceguard when standing up to the stumps.

With the assistance of schools, cricket clubs and leagues, the wearing of helmets by young players is now a common sight on playing fields throughout England and Wales. Helmets are widely available and are covered by a British Standard (BS7928:1998).

However despite the guidance and the risk of injury some young cricketers playing with a hard ball do not wear a helmet. The ECB has advised all coaches, teachers, managers and umpires that they should not allow a young player without a helmet to bat or to stand up to the stumps when keeping wicket against a hard ball except with written parental consent.

The ECB is recommending that this guidance is followed by all players up to the age of 18. It applies to young players in adult cricket as well as to all junior cricket played with a hard cricket ball.

The ECB asks that the guidance is communicated to the parents or guardians of all young players through clubs and schools, and that parental consent is always obtained before young players are allowed to bat or stand up to the stumps when keeping wicket against a hard ball without wearing a helmet.

The ECB also has regulations covering the minimum fielding distances for young players in all matches where a hard ball is used.

- No young player in the Under 15 age group or younger shall be allowed to field closer than 8 yards (7.3 metres) from the middle stump, except behind the wicket on the off side, until the batsman has played at the ball.
- For players in the Under 13 age group and below the distance is 11 yards (10 metres).
- These minimum distances apply even if the player is wearing a helmet.
- Should a young player in these age groups come within the restricted distance the umpire must stop the game immediately and instruct the fielder to move back.
- In addition any young player in the Under 16 to Under 18 age groups, who has not reached the age of 18, must wear a helmet and, for boys, an abdominal protector (box) when fielding within 6 yards (5.5 metres) of the bat, except behind the wicket on the off side. Players should wear appropriate protective equipment whenever they are fielding in a position where they feel at risk.
- These fielding regulations are applicable to all cricket in England and Wales. Age groups are based on the age of the player at midnight on 31st August in the year preceding the current season.