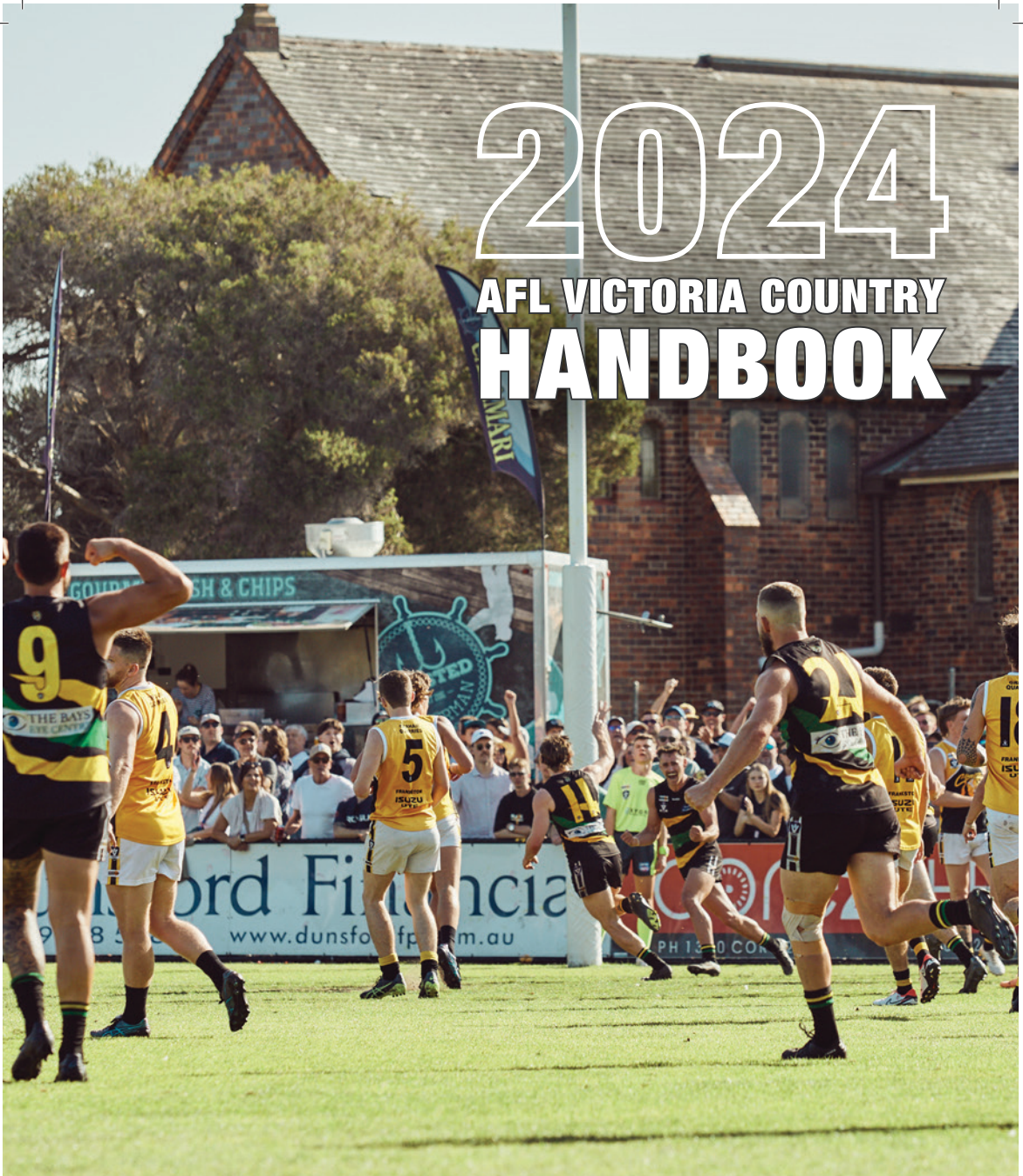


2024

AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY HANDBOOK



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WORKSAFE AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY

2024 HANDBOOK

Incorporating the rules and regulations of the Victorian Country Football League as adopted by AFL Victoria Country.

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To be read in conjunction with the Laws of Australian Football and Rules of Affiliated Bodies. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the contents of the Handbook for 2024.

All fair and reasonable means have been taken to ensure accuracy at the time of printing.

For all Forms, Policies and Procedures please go to the AFL Vic Country website.

Cover Photograph courtesy of Carly Ravenhall

AFL Victoria Country Handbook 2024 \ 1



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**For Contact details of the following, please refer to the
AFL Victoria Website at www.aflvic.com.au/contacts**

AFL Victoria Regional Offices and Staff
Country League Contacts
Umpiring Association Contacts
AFL Victoria Staff
Coates Talent League Staff
Metropolitan Football Development Managers
Metropolitan Leagues
State Football Bodies
Netball Victoria Contacts

1. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take

unfair advantage of another player. Your involvement to play is for fun and enjoyment

2024 WORKSAFE AFL VICTORIA COUNTRY RULES

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OBJECTIVES AND DEFINITIONS

Objectives

AFL Victoria Country and Leagues wish to ensure that teams fielded in competitions conducted by a League are as strong and well matched as possible. The continuing support of such competitions and the opportunity for players to develop and employ their skills depend upon a League continuing to conduct vigorous competitions between evenly matched and financially viable clubs.

To achieve these objectives, AFL Victoria Country has adopted these Rules and Regulations to supplement the provisions of player declarations of service between players and their clubs to provide a system that will:

- (a) Ensure sufficient stability in the membership of Club teams to enable team spirit and public support to be maintained.
- (b) Provide opportunities for players to enter competitions conducted by Leagues and for an orderly system for:
 - i) players to move between Clubs; and
 - ii) Clubs to move between Leagues.
- (c) Provide Clubs with an incentive to expend time, effort and resources in the development of Australian Football.
- (d) Provide Junior Leagues and Clubs with the opportunity to expand participation within all levels of underage football.

These Rules apply to Regions affiliated to AFL Victoria Country and leagues, clubs and players linked through affiliation to these Regions.

Under these Rules, a player or a Club is restrained in its freedom to transfer if it can be demonstrated that the restraint is necessary to achieve the objectives referred to above. These Rules also establish relevant bodies and a mechanism by which reportable offences and alleged conduct of persons can be referred to, heard and determined by the relevant body.

Australian Football competes with numerous other sports, not only with respect to public attendances, but also participation at a junior and senior level. At a time where athletes have numerous choices between competing sports, AFL Victoria Country and Leagues recognise that it is important to encourage such athletes to play Australian Football. This can be achieved, in part, if Australian Football is seen not only as a physical and skilfully demanding sport, but also a sport played within the Rules of game and in the spirit of true sportsmanship.

AFL Victoria Country and Leagues consider that Australian Football played within the competitions conducted by the Leagues should aspire to the game being played both competitively and fairly. It is against this background that relevant disciplinary bodies have been established and are given power to impose sanctions (such as suspension or a monetary sanction) in circumstances where the conduct of a person is in breach of rules applicable to that person or the Laws of Australian Football. AFL Victoria Country considers that the imposition of such penalties is reasonably necessary to ensure fair and responsible conduct and thereby encourage participation in Australian Football in the competitions conducted by Leagues affiliated to AFL Victoria Country.

Definitions

Unless the context requires otherwise, definitions and interpretations relevant to these Rules are listed in Section 1 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook (NCFPH).

In addition, the following words shall have the following meanings:

AFL Victoria Country – the part of AFL Victoria which administers, manages and develops Australian Football in country and regional Victoria.

AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel – the body established by AFL Victoria Country to hear appeals from a decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Region Appeal Committee.

AFL Laws of Australian Football – the Laws of the Game as published by the Australian Football League. **Aggrieved Person** – any person or organisation subject to the decision of a League Independent Tribunal or Region Appeal Committee, excluding umpires and witnesses.

Area – has the same meaning as “Region”

Bye – That a bye shall be defined as a break in a draw.

(a) That is caused by an uneven number of teams in a competition in any round.

(b) That is caused by a split round or suspension of a complete round of matches.

Club – a body which participates in Australian Rules competitions conducted by affiliated bodies.

Days – means each day of the week including Saturday or Sunday and includes public holidays.

Destination Affiliate - the league to which a player, team or club seeks to transfer to.

Investigations Officer – a person appointed by a relevant League to investigate a matter referred for investigation, who is Accredited by AFL Victoria

Junior League or Club – An affiliated body which provides football competition at under 16 and a half (or upper age as determined by local Region) and younger age levels only.

League - a league associated with a State Body or Region via an affiliation agreement.

League Independent Tribunal – the tribunal appointed by the relevant League in accordance with regulation 7.

Region – an organisation that

(a) Has governance responsibilities for football in a designated location.

(b) is affiliated with AFL Victoria and

(c) which the League is a member of and/or affiliated with.

Region Appeal Committee – the body established under regulation 8.1.

Region Manager – the person appointed to manage designated AFL Victoria Country Regions.

Source Affiliate - the league from which a player, team or club seeks to transfer from.

1. REGISTRATIONS AND TRANSFERS – PLAYERS

All Player Registrations and Transfers shall be administered consistent with Section 3 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

1.1 Penalty for playing ineligible and/or unregistered players.

If the League Manager or Board substantiates that any player, playing with any club affiliated or unaffiliated with AFL Victoria Country, without having first been granted the necessary registration, transfer and/or permit to play, required under these Rules, and is therefore deemed ineligible and unregistered, shall be deemed to be ineligible. The AFL Victoria Country Club with which the player concerned played shall be required to provide a written submission outlining reasons behind the misdemeanour and forward such submission to the League Manager or Board who in turn will address the matter with the Region Manager and determine that the club be subject to:

- a) If the Senior Club wins the game:
 - (i) fine not less than \$500;
 - (ii) reversal of match points;
 - (iii) loss of all points for pertaining to that game; and
 - (iv) may be subject to further penalty as determined by the League.
- b) If the Senior Club loses the game:
 - (i) fine not less than \$500;
 - (ii) loss of all points for pertaining to that game; and
 - (iii) may be subject to such penalty as determined by the League.
- c) If the Junior Club wins the game:
 - (i) fine not greater than \$250;
 - (ii) reversal of match points;
 - (iii) loss of all points for pertaining to the game; and
 - (iv) may be subject to further penalty as determined by the League.
- d) If the Junior Club loses the game:
 - (i) fine not greater than \$250;
 - (ii) loss of all points for pertaining to that game; and
 - (iii) may be subject to such further penalty as determined by the League.

If a club wishes to appeal any penalty applied under Clause 1.1 this appeal will be to the Region according to its own relevant appeal processes.

1.2 Transfer appeals body

A Player who is refused a transfer from their current Club may lodge an appeal in accordance with Clause 8.1.3 of these AFL Victoria Country Rules.

1.3 Players Transferred in Employment

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere appearing in these Rules, in the event of a player who has been in the service of their employer for three consecutive months immediately preceding their transfer, being transferred by their employer after the 1st July to another branch of the same employers business within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated area, they shall be entitled to make application for a transfer and permit to play with a League in the

Region to which they have been transferred at any time after the 1st July, provided that such transfer is completed in time to permit the player playing at least one competition match with a club in the League to which they are being transferred, prior to the first final match of that League. Provided further that where such League prescribes its own domestic residential or a minimum number of qualifying matches in excess of one for a player to participate in Finals matches, such domestic rules shall take precedence.

The child of a person who is transferred in employment under the above condition is eligible to make application for a transfer and/or permit after the 1st July to play in the Region to which their parent(s) is transferred.

The Region Manager shall determine the validity of the players exceptional circumstances to be eligible for this clause – consistent with Section 3.3 (b)(ii)(A) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

1.4 Players in Armed Forces

Notwithstanding anything elsewhere appearing in these rules, a player engaged in the Armed Forces, including a National Service Trainee, transferred in the course of their duties, shall be entitled to receive a transfer and permit to play with a league in the Region to which they are transferred, any time after the 1st July provided that such transfer is made and completed in time to permit their playing of at least one competition match with a club in the League to which they are being transferred, prior to the first finals match of that body.

The child of a person who is transferred in employment under the above condition is eligible to make application for a transfer and/or permit after the 1st July to play in the Region to which their parent(s) is transferred.

The Region Manager shall determine the validity of the players exceptional circumstances to be eligible for this clause, consistent with Section 3.3 (b)(ii)(A) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

1.5 Underage player – Compassionate Transfer

In the event of a player eligible to play in an under age junior affiliated competition being required to move residence for compassionate reasons from one Region to another Region after 1st July, they shall be eligible to make application to their club for a transfer and, subject to the satisfaction of the Region Manager concerning the compassionate reasons, receive a Transfer to play from the respective Region Manager to which they transfer, providing that in the season of receiving a transfer under this rule, the player shall only be permitted to play in under age grades or competitions.

1.6 Transfer Fees – AFL Victoria Country Clubs

Consistent with Section 3.6 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, no club shall offer, pay, demand or receive a transfer fee for a transferring player.

The Region Appeals Committee of an AFL Vic Country Region, operating under Clause 8.1 of these AFL Victoria Country Rules shall determine any penalty which may include the following:

- 1) a substantial fine; and
- 2) such penalty as is determined by the Region Appeals Committee.

2. PERMITS

2.1 Endorsement

A game permit granted pursuant to this Regulation to provide for even teams shall not require any endorsement or approval by the League of the club granting the permit.

2.2 One Match per Day - VFL Coates Talent Approval

Players of a VFL team or the Coates Talent League Competition may only play with their AFL Victoria Country Club on the same weekend when the player has played less than twenty-five (25) minutes of actual playing time and has been granted approval from the VFL or Coates Talent League Club.

2.3 Permits for Players of Opposing Teams

Affiliated Leagues may approve the granting of a game permit to reserve grade and under-age players to play with the players opposing Reserve grade team or under-age competition team where the opposing team does not have the required number of players for that match. (These permits are to be entered as game permits within the Competition Management platform).

Where a Senior grade team does not have the required number of players for a match and requires extra players from an opposition team, the Affiliated League may apply to the relevant Region Manager, for approval to grant requested game permits prior to the season commencing.

Affiliated Leagues approving the granting of such permits must obtain from their Region Manager, approval for the system under which the League will grant day permits for players to play with the opposing clubs.

2.4 Area Agreements

Notwithstanding anything contained in these Rules requiring the production of a transfer by a player, Leagues of a Region and Leagues in adjacent Regions may enter into written agreements to allow an interchange of players.

The written agreements must be submitted to and approved by the respective Region Manager concerned before the agreements become operative.

The respective Region Managers shall be empowered to approve agreements to operate between Affiliated AFL Victoria Country Leagues including underage competitions for the interchange of players between the competitions.

Area Agreements shall operate under the following:

An Agreement between the Football League and the
Football League for the Season.

This agreement is signed pursuant to AFL Victoria Country rules pertaining to permits and in particular Clause 2.4– Area Agreements, whereby an interchange of players between clubs of the abovementioned Leagues may take place without a transfer and is subject to any provisions contained within this agreement.

Area Agreements / Interchange Agreements are ongoing from year to year unless revoked by one of the football bodies party to the agreement by advising AFL Victoria.

PROVIDED HOWEVER:

- (i) That this permit is in force for the current season only.
- (ii) Prior to each match the player shall obtain permission electronically from their parent club using a Season permit.
- (iv) Players of any club having a bye will not be allowed to play with another club on that day unless they have previously played with that club in the current season under this agreement. The club playing the player from the other League shall show their registered club on the match team sheet. Players of third 18 teams of Senior Grade competitions are not to be classified as players of Junior age competitions.
- (v) A local interchange agreement can override clause (iv) to restrict junior players playing on permit when their club has a bye.
- (vi) That this agreement cannot be altered unless agreed to by the Region Manager.
- (vii) That in order for a player playing under such Area Permit to participate in a finals series in that season the player must have played a minimum of five (5) matches in the team of the grade in which they have been selected to play in the finals and has met any additional league eligibility requirements.

Local Conditions

Area Agreements shall detail any Local conditions relevant to the interchange of players between the two leagues party to the interchange agreement.

2.5 Under Age Compassionate Permit

- a) Where a player eligible to play in an under age junior affiliated competition is in a situation where the parents have separated and have special custody arrangements, such players may be eligible to apply for a permit to play at a second or alternate club which is more than 100km away from their original club or upon approval of the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department.

A player eligible under this permit may only participate in one game per weekend and may be eligible for finals providing they have qualified under the local provisions however they may only play in one finals series per weekend. Permits will not be granted where a local Area Agreement can be applied.

The ultimate verification and approval of a permit under this Clause will rest with the respective Region Manager after lodgement of the Compassionate Permit Form, available on AFL Victoria's website, and proof of separation and residence of both parents, as requested.

Compassionate Permits under this Clause must be applied for and approved prior to July 1st in each year and is only applicable for that year.

2.6 Permits – Students Living Away from Home

- a) A player residing away from their usual place of abode while attending a secondary/TAFE college, institution or university on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any competition may, **during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by the Region Manager, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered before being transferred to their current club** from the respective Region Manager where such former club is located. If required by the respective Region Manager, the player shall supply documentary evidence of their attendance at the said college, institute or university.
- b) In order for a student playing under such permit to participate in a finals series in that season a student must have played a minimum of five (5) matches in the team of the grade in which they are selected to play in the finals and met any other local finals requirements and only **during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations** approved by the Region Manager.

2.7 Permits –Agreements with the VAFA and NFNL and AFL Victoria Country Clubs

a) VAFA Student Permit

This agreement is only open to players who are full-time students. A player residing away from their usual place of abode while attending a secondary/TAFE college, institution or university on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any competition may, during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by the VAFA Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered before being transferred to their current club. If required by the VAFA Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, the player shall supply documentary evidence of their attendance at the said college, institute, or university. Permits for any player using this agreement must be in place prior to July 1st.

b) NFNL Student Permit and NFNL Family Permit

- i) **Students:** This agreement is only open to players who are full-time students. A player residing away from their usual place of abode while attending a secondary/TAFE college, institution or university on a full time and continuous basis and playing in any competition may, during registered school holidays and registered semester vacations approved by the NFNL Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, receive a permit to play with the club with which the player was last registered before being transferred to their current club. If required by the NFNL Operations Department or AFL Victoria Football Operations Department, the player shall supply documentary evidence of their attendance at the said college, institute, or university. Permits for any player using this agreement must be in place prior to July 1st.
- ii) **Family Permit:** Where a player eligible to play in an under age junior affiliated competition is in a situation where the parents have separated and have special custody arrangements, such players may be eligible to apply for a permit to play

at a second or alternate club which is more than 100km away from their original club or upon approval of the NFNL Operations Department or AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department .

A player eligible under this permit may only participate in one game per weekend and may be eligible for finals providing they have qualified under the local provisions however they may only play in one finals series per weekend.

The verification and approval of a permit under this Clause will rest with the NFNL Football Operations Department and the AFL Victoria Football Operations Department after lodgement of the Compassionate Permit Form, available on AFL Victoria's website, and proof of separation and residence of both parents as requested.

Compassionate Permits under this Clause must be applied for and approved prior to July 1st in each year and is only applicable for that year.

2.8 Permits for Players of Clubs in recess

Leagues who have clubs who go into recess, as determined by AFL Victoria, shall be required to adopt a provision permitting any player to play with a club without a transfer for not more than one season provided that before or during the season they shall obtain approval from their parent club/league.

All such permits shall be filed as a Season Permit by the respective club. Permits cannot be issued for players to represent multiple clubs. Any player having played under the provisions of this rule and desiring to continue to play with the League club, shall only be permitted to do so upon applying for and receiving a transfer from their club and League in the usual manner or where such is refused upon an appeal being lodged and upheld. This clearance must be applied for prior to 1 July.

Once the players registered club comes out of recess all existing permits cease to exist in each case.

2.9 Players suspended while on permit

Players who are playing on permits in other Leagues and are reported for a field offence shall have the charge heard by the League tribunal in which the alleged offence occurs which in the event of finding the player guilty shall determine the penalty which shall then apply to matches of the club in the grade of competition where the offence occurred. Players are unable to play for any team if suspended.

3. TRANSFER OF CLUBS AND TEAMS / ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CLUBS AND TEAMS / AMEND OR INTRODUCE AGE GROUP TO A COMPETITION

- a) These rules associated with Club and Team Transfer, the establishment of a new club or a new team and changes to competition Age Groups are to be read in conjunction with Section 4 and 5 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Rules.

- b) Where a club or team transfer within the same AFL Victoria Country Region, that Region will manage the transfer process consistent with the requirements of Section 4 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulation unless otherwise advised to the AFL Country Region by AFL Victoria.
- c) Where a new club or new team is established, the approval process will be managed by the AFL Victoria Country Region consistent with Section 4 of AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations, unless otherwise advised to the AFL Country Region by AFL Victoria.
- d) Where a club or team transfer is across AFL Victoria Country Regions, that club or team transfer will be managed by AFL Victoria consistent with Section 4 of AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- e) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, Country Regions will manage the process for any amendment to age groups or introduction of new age groups in competitions, with any such process administered consistent with Section 5 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- f) For the avoidance of doubt, any process as detailed at clause 3 (a) – (e) of these AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulation may also arise where a review has been conducted by a Region or AFL Victoria consistent with clause 4.3.

4. APPEALS UNDER CLAUSE 3 - TRANSFER OF CLUBS AND TEAMS / ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CLUBS AND TEAMS / AMEND OR INTRODUCE AGE GROUP TO A COMPETITION

4.1 Appeal Panel

For the purposes of this regulation the Appeal Panel where indicated as AFL Victoria Country shall be the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel as it sees fit. Where indicated as a Region, it shall be the Appeal Panel appointed by that Region to which the club is affiliated as it sees fit.

4.2 Appeal Process

Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, any Appeal process shall be as detailed in Section 4 and 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.

4.2.1 Club or team transfer within a Region

- a) A Source League may appeal to the Region in respect of a decision of a Destination League to accept a club or team Transfer to another league within the same AFL Victoria Country Region, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- b) A Source League may appeal to AFL Victoria in respect of a decision of a Destination League to accept a club or team Transfer to another league in another AFL Victoria Country Region, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.

4.2.2 Establishment of a new club or new team

- a) A League may appeal to the Region in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League to establish a new club or team within the Region it is affiliated with, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- b) A League or Region may appeal to AFL Victoria in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League in another Region to establish a new club or team, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations

4.2.3 Amend or introduce age group to a competition

- a) A League may appeal to the Region in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League to change age groups within the Region it is affiliated with, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.
- b) A League or Region may appeal to AFL Victoria in respect of a decision of an Affiliated League in another Region to change age groups, provided the appeal is lodged consistent with Section 6 of the AFL Victoria Community Affiliate Regulations.

4.3 AFL Victoria Country Reviews - Implementation and Appeals

All Reviews conducted by AFL Victoria, or a Region must be approved by the AFL Victoria Community Football Manager prior to commencement.

Where approval has been granted and AFL Victoria Country or the Region has conducted a review of an Affiliated League(s) or Region, the recommendations are required to be accepted, provided that the following requirements have been met:

- Review – framework identifying and distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – consultation meetings offered to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – draft review recommendations distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – submissions on draft review recommendations from all affected stakeholders named in the framework considered by the Review Panel as identified in the review framework
- Review – submissions on draft review recommendations for stakeholders not originally included in the initial review framework considered by the Review Panel
- Review – final review recommendations distributed to all affected stakeholders named in the framework
- Review – appeal against the implementation of the review recommendations by an affected stakeholder(s)

Any appeal against the implementation of the final review recommendations would be heard by AFL Victoria following the procedures of 4.3.1.

4.3.1 Appeals of Stakeholders

- a) For the purposes of this regulation, if the review was conducted by AFL Victoria and impacts across two or more Regions, the Appeal Panel shall be the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel.
- b) For the purposes of this regulation, if the review was conducted by a Region and impacts across a single Region or multiple Regions, the Appeal Panel shall be the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel established as it sees fit and consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.
- c) An affected stakeholder to a review may appeal to the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel in respect of review recommendations, provided the appeal is lodged in writing (“the Notice of Appeal”) with the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

5. UNBECOMING CONDUCT

5.1 Appointment of Accredited Investigation Officer

Each league shall only appoint an AFL Victoria Country Accredited Investigation Officer to investigate any matter referred, pursuant to Rule 5.2 (unbecoming conduct).

5.2 Unbecoming Conduct

- a) League, League Executive members, Club, Player, Region or a AFL Victoria Country appointed official, who alleges that a player or an official of a club, umpire, official of an umpires’ Association, AFL Victoria Country Official, League official, Club, player advocate, or League appointed official has been guilty of conduct which is unbecoming to a player, umpire, such official, or club, or which has or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute, may lodge with the League a Notice in writing setting out particulars of the allegation. Unless the notice is lodged by the Region Manager, a deposit of \$500 shall accompany the notice which shall be forfeited in whole or part in the event that the Investigation Officer or Independent Tribunal considers it frivolous.

A Notice under this paragraph must be **lodged with the League within five days** after the date of the act or omission to which it relates unless the League agrees to extend this period to a maximum of thirty (30) days.

An extension agreed to by the League may be subject to such conditions as the League thinks fit and such request for an extension is to be provided to the League in writing outlining the reasons for the extension request. When a League grants an extension, it shall do so in writing and advise all parties to the matter.

Only AFL Victoria Accredited Investigation Officers can be used to investigate under this regulation. A list of Accredited Investigation Officers shall be maintained by the AFL Victoria Football Operations Department.

Within two (2) days of the request for an investigation the League is required to provide all parties notification of the investigation outlining details of the requested incident or matter for investigation.

- b) Notice of any allegation received under paragraph (a) shall be referred to the Accredited Investigation Officer for investigation. The Accredited Investigation Officer may investigate the allegation as they see fit. **Such investigation shall be completed within 10 days** of the matter being referred to the Accredited Investigation Officer unless, at the completion of the 10 days, one (1) extension of time being not more than ten (10) days is then granted by the League at the request of the Accredited Investigation Officer.
Request for extension of time must be received in writing by the League or Region.
- c) If the Accredited Investigation Officer, after investigation of the allegation, is of the opinion that the Player, Official or Club in question may have been guilty of conduct unbecoming to a Player, an Official or Club or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute and that the allegation ought to be dealt with by the League Independent Tribunal as hereinafter provided, they may lodge with the League a Notice in writing setting out details of the allegation.
- d) If a Notice is lodged with the League under paragraph (c), the League administrator who appointed the investigator may provide the alleged offender/s the discretion to plead guilty and take the early guilty plea for the alleged offence as described Appendix 1 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook. If the offender is a player, and that player wishes to enter accept the early guilty plea offered by the League, the players club secretary must contact the League administrator no later than 5.00pm on the day following the release of the Accredited Investigation Officer's findings.

Such request shall be made in writing and delivered by email to the League Secretary/General Manager/ CEO. If the alleged offence falls outside the offences listed within the early guilty plea as detailed at Appendix 1 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook or either the Accredited Investigation Officer, player/s being investigated, the player/s allegedly offended against, the League or the President / Secretary of either club request that the matter proceeds to tribunal, by no later than 5.00pm on the day following the release of the Accredited Investigation Officer's findings, then no early guilty plea will be offered and the matter will be dealt with according to clause (e) of Rule 5.

Any charges resulting from an Investigation conducted by an AFL Victoria Accredited Investigations Officer must reference to Law 22.2.2 AFL Laws of Australian Football, or the relevant policy breach under Section 23 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook and the relevant specific charge alleged to have been committed by the person, subject of the investigation.

For the avoidance of doubt, where the matter is referred to a Tribunal, an early guilty plea cannot be offered under this Clause.

- e) If a Notice is lodged with the League under paragraph (c), and the League determines that it should be heard at Tribunal, the League Secretary shall fix a date, time and place for the hearing of the allegation before the League Independent Tribunal, **being a date not later than 9 days after lodgement of the Notice** and shall advise the Player, official or club in question, of those particulars and forward to the Player,

Official, or club, care of the Club Secretary in question a copy, with a copy also to be forwarded to the Club Secretary of the Notice lodged under paragraph (c).

Such notices shall be forwarded only to the charged player or official or club prior to the Hearing with such notice to be forwarded to the player and Club at least 48 Hours prior to the Hearing and the charged player or official or club shall be informed at the time as to whom it is proposed to call as witnesses.

Notices should include any other relevant information pertaining to the matter at hand.

- f) In any proceeding brought before a tribunal or Appeals Board under this rule the Accredited Investigation Officer may personally appear before it and lay the necessary charge or charges and act as the prosecuting officer for the League.
- g) If the League Independent Tribunal is of the opinion that the Player, Official or Club in question has engaged in unbecoming conduct or conduct which has or is likely to bring the game of football into disrepute, it may make such orders and give such directions in the matter as it thinks fit.

Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the League Independent Tribunal:–

- i) may impose a fine of such amount as it thinks fit on the Player, Official or club in question; or
 - ii) must suspend the Player, Official or Club in question for such matches as it thinks fit, if the Player, Official or Club is found guilty.
- h) In any hearing before an AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel the Accredited Investigations Officer will be the informant and witness for the league or Association but will usually not be the prosecuting advocate in the hearing.

6. AFFILIATED BODIES

An affiliate means any Club, League, Association or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of Matches which is affiliated with a Region or AFL Victoria.

6.1 Affiliation Fee

An affiliated Club, League, Association or body may be required to pay an affiliation fee including Insurance annually to AFL Victoria.

6.2 Clubs in Recess

Clubs in recess may be required to pay fees including Insurance to AFL Victoria.

After a period of two years in recess the Club in recess will be deemed to have disbanded unless, after an application from the Club, AFL Victoria Country extends the term.

7. TRIBUNALS

Each League shall, in accordance with its Statement of Rules/Constitution, Section 25 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook and this regulation, appoint from time to time persons to a disciplinary tribunal to be known as the League's Independent Tribunal.

All AFL Victoria Country affiliated Leagues and Regions shall adopt the Tribunal Provisions detailed at Section 25 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

7.1 Independent Tribunal Appointment

A League Independent Tribunal must, when hearing a matter, consist of 3 members, one of whom shall act as chairman.

7.2 Representation

No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor. For the purposes of an AFL Vic Country tribunal hearing an offended against player is a witness.

8. APPEALS

Regions may from time to time appoint persons to a panel to be known as the Region Appeal Committee in accordance with the following clauses and Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

8.1 Region Appeal Committee

8.1.1 Appointment and Members of Region Appeal Committee

Subject to the remaining provisions of Regulation 8.1, a Region Appeal Committee shall consist of the relevant Region Manager, AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager and another member as AFL Victoria sees fit. For the purposes of hearing and determining a matter, a Region Appeal Committee shall comprise 3 persons one of whom shall act as chairman.

8.1.2 Jurisdiction of Region Appeals Committee

The relevant Region Appeal Committee shall, in accordance with these Rules, hear and determine:

- a) any appeal by a player against a decision of either their current Club to refuse their application for a transfer in line with Section 3.5 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook;
- b) or any other matter referred by AFL Victoria Community Football Manager, that has been applied under AFL Victoria Country Rules.

8.1.3 Appeals Against Refused Transfers

Any appeal of a refusal of a player transfer will be conducted consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

8.1.3.1 Player May Appeal

- a) A player may appeal to their relevant Region Appeal Committee if:
 - i) they are not granted a transfer from their current Club to another Club within the same League;
 - ii) they are not granted a transfer from their current Club to another Club which plays in a League located within the same Region; or

- b) A player may appeal to the Region Appeal Committee of the Source Club if they are not granted a transfer from their current club to another club located in another AFL Victoria Country Region.
- c) Where a player lodges more than one transfer in which they seek a transfer to the same or a different Club, they may only appeal with respect to one decision to refuse their application for a transfer in each year.

8.1.3.2 Form of Appeal and Appeal Fee

An appeal by a Player under Regulation 8.1.3 must be brought by lodging with the Region Manager or their appointed deputy of the relevant Region, a duly completed Notice of Appeal in or substantially in the form prescribed found on the AFL Victoria website. The Notice of Appeal must be accompanied by fees as outlined in the Notice of Appeal form.

8.1.3.3 Timing of Appeal

Consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, a Notice of Appeal must be lodged with the Region Manager or their appointed deputy no later than 5.00pm on the day following the refusal of the transfer.

An appeal shall be considered by the Region Appeal Committee within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the notice of appeal by the relevant Region Manager, or such other period as the Region Appeal Committee may determine.

8.1.3.4 Convening Appeal and Timing for Hearing of Appeal

Upon receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the following shall apply:

- a) within 48 Hours of receiving the Notice of Appeal, the Region Manager or their appointed deputy shall provide a copy of that Notice to the player's current Club which has refused the player's application for a transfer or the League who has made the decision which is being appealed
- b) within 48 Hours of receiving the Notice of Appeal from the Region Manager or their appointed deputy, the current Club must advise the Region Manager or their appointed deputy in writing whether it intends to oppose the player's appeal
- c) if the current Club does intend to oppose the player's appeal, it must, at the same time as lodging the opposing notice, pay to AFL Victoria Country a sum as determined on the Notice of Appeal Form, which shall be dealt with as follows:
 - i) where the Region Appeal Committee dismisses an appeal made by a player/ club, the sum paid by the Club shall be refunded; or
 - ii) where the Region Appeal Committee upholds the player's appeal and determines that the Club's reason(s) for refusing the transfer did not have sufficient merit, it may determine in its absolute discretion, that all, or part of the sum not be refunded;
- d) If the current Club does not, within the prescribed time, lodge an opposing notice or pay the required amounts, the player's transfer must be granted by the relevant Region Manager without the Region Appeal Committee hearing the appeal.

- e) In that event, the current Club may be fined \$500 payable to the relevant Region within 10 days of the date of Notice of Appeal with all monies to be refunded to the appellants.
- f) if the current Club does, within the prescribed time, lodge an opposing notice and pay the required amounts, Regulation 8.1.3.5 shall apply.
- g) Prior to determining the appeal, the parties to the appeal (club requesting the transfer and the club opposing the transfer) shall, within the time specified by the Region Appeal Committee, lodge with the relevant Region Manager, or their appointed deputy of the relevant Region, written submissions which contain:–
 - i) any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the Transfer Application and the appeal; and
 - ii) any other matters which they desire to be taken into account by the Region Appeal Committee in determining the appeal.
- h) The relevant Region Manager shall as soon as practicable distribute the written submissions to each party and seek final submissions from each party which, in turn, will be distributed to the Region Appeals Committee.

8.1.3.5 Time and Notification for Appeal

- a) Upon receiving a notice of appeal and payment of the required amounts within the prescribed time, the Region Manager or their appointed deputy shall arrange to provide a decision on the outcome of the appeal within 14 days of receiving the notice of appeal, or as soon as practicable after that time.
- b) The Region Appeal Committee may vary the timing of submissions initially specified for the appeal and upon doing so, shall immediately provide all parties interested in the appeal written notice of any such variation.

8.1.4 Procedure and Evidence before a Region Appeal Committee

8.1.4.1 Application of this Regulation

Unless otherwise stated, the provisions contained in this Regulation 8.1.4 shall apply in respect of all hearings of a Region Appeal Committee.

8.1.4.2 Regulate Own Procedure

Subject to the further matters set out in this Regulation 8.1.4, a Region Appeal Committee may regulate any proceedings brought before it in such manner as it thinks fit.

8.1.4.3 Conduct of Region Appeal Committee

Region Appeal Committee hearings are determined by written submission – no attendance at such hearings is required.

In the event that an adjournment is sought by a charged person player, because of legal action, such person will be automatically ineligible to play or participate in any official match until such charges have been heard.

8.1.4.4 Specific Procedure for Player Transfer – Player declaration in Dispute

Where a player has lodged an appeal for a transfer and an issue before the Region Appeal Committee is the validity of a player declaration between the player and their current Club, the following procedure shall apply:

- a) The Region Appeal Committee shall adjourn the hearing of the matter for a period of 14 days, or such other period as determined by the Chairman of the Region Appeal Committee.
- b) Within 7 days of the adjournment, the player and the Club the player is seeking a transfer to shall provide written submissions to the Chairman regarding the player declaration in dispute.
- c) The Region Appeal Committee shall determine the validity of the player declaration based upon the written submissions provided by the parties. In undertaking that task, the Region Appeal Committee may obtain its own legal advice concerning the issues requiring determination.
- d) Where the Region Appeal Committee determines that the player declaration is valid and enforceable, it shall advise the parties in writing and the appeal shall stand dismissed.
- e) Where the Region Appeal Committee determines that the player declaration is invalid and unenforceable, the Region Appeal Committee shall advise the parties accordingly in writing, re-convene the further hearing of the appeal, and proceed to determine the appeal based on any other relevant matters put before it.
- f) The Region Appeal Committee:
 - i) shall consider and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner;
 - ii) is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit; and
 - iii) may grant or deny the transfer and make such orders and give such directions in such manner as it thinks fit.

8.1.4.5 No Reasons

A Region Appeal Committee is not obliged to give reasons for any decision made by it.

8.1.4.6 Representation

No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor.

8.2 AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel - Tribunal Decision or NCFPH Policy Breach

AFL Victoria Country Football Manager may from time to time appoint persons to a panel to be known as the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel in accordance with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook (NCFPH) and Regulation 8.2 of this handbook.

8.2.1 Members of the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel

In line with Section 26.2 (b) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board shall consist of: –

- a) a chair and a deputy chair, and
- b) a panel of not more than 5 who in the opinion of AFL Victoria Country Football Manager, possesses a knowledge of Australian Football and is suitable for appointment.

8.2.2 Notice of Appeal

An appeal under Regulation 8.2 shall be brought by lodging with AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department a duly completed “AFL Victoria Country Notice of Appeal” in or substantially in the form prescribed, accompanied by: –

- a) any documents initially provided to the relevant body whose decision is the subject of the appeal;
- b) payment or evidence of payment to AFL Victoria Country of the sum of \$5500 for Senior clubs/ organisations and for Junior clubs/organisations a sum of \$2750 for costs of the appeal, which sum shall be dealt with in accordance with section 26.4(d)&(e) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

8.2.3 Lodgement of Notice of Appeal

An AFL Victoria Country Notice of Appeal shall be lodged with the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department, which must be received by no later than 5.00pm on the day following the decision of the relevant body was made.

Only the charged person or organisation, subject to the decision of a League Independent Tribunal, may appeal to AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel in respect of a decision made by a League Independent Tribunal on one or more of the following grounds:

- i) the decision involved an error of law that had a material impact on the Tribunal’s decision;
- ii) the decision was so unreasonable that no Tribunal acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it;
- iii) the classification of the Reportable Offence or Policy Breach or other conduct (as applicable) was manifestly excessive or inadequate; or
- iv) that the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate.

8.2.4 Video Evidence

Where the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel is conducting a hearing into a reportable offence or other alleged conduct of a person and it considers that video evidence is capable of determining the reportable offence or the alleged conduct, the AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel may make a finding solely on the basis of that unaltered video evidence.

8.2.5 Representation

At any hearing before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel, a person or organisation, excluding umpires or witnesses may appear in person or appear with and be represented by an advocate.

No person shall be represented by an advocate who is a barrister or solicitor or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor, excepting Accredited Investigation Officers who are barristers or solicitors or qualified to practice as a barrister or solicitor.

8.2.6 Questions of Law and Fact

In the hearing and determination of an appeal, AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel shall decide all questions of law and fact and without limitation, shall determine the meaning of any words.

8.2.7 Costs

Parties to an AFL Victoria Country Appeal can apply for reasonable costs by contacting AFL Victoria Football Operations Department.

8.2.8 Abandon Appeal

- a) An appellant may abandon an appeal no later than 5.00pm three days prior to the time set down for the hearing by giving written notice to AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Department, in which case the payments made by the appellant under Rule 8.2.2 (b) shall be refunded.
- b) Where an appellant abandons the appeal after 5.00pm three days prior to the hearing or during the conduct of the appeal and AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board considers that the appeal did not have sufficient merit, AFL Victoria Country Appeal Board may determine in its absolute discretion that all or part of the payment made under Regulation 8.2.2(b) not be refunded.

8.2.9 Co-operation with AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel

- a) A person shall appear before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel if requested, unless AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel is satisfied that the person has a legitimate reason for not attending.
- b) Any person who appears before AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel shall:
 - (i) fully co-operate with AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel;
 - (ii) truthfully answer any questions asked;
 - (iii) upon request, provide any document in that person's possession or control which is relevant to the matter to be determined; and
 - (iv) not make any statement or act in a manner which is false or misleading or calculated to or which is likely to mislead.
- c) Where AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel considers that a person has contravened this Regulation 8.2.9(a) or (b), it may deal with the matter and impose sanctions upon the person as it in its absolute discretion deems fit.

8.2.10 Exhaust Internal Appeal

A person shall exercise their right of appeal under this Regulation 8.2 and have any appeal heard and determined by AFL Victoria Country Appeal Panel before commencing any proceedings or becoming a party to any proceedings in a court of law.

8.3 AFL National Age Dispensation Policy Appeals

The relevant Appeals Body for Country Leagues in relation to the AFL National Age

Dispensation Policy shall be to the Region Appeals Committee and administered consistent with Regulation 8.1 of this handbook.

9. VILIFICATION AND DISCRIMINATION

All Vilification and Discrimination matter shall be administered consistent with Section 10 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

10. ORDER OFF RULE

In accordance with Law 23 AFL Laws of Australian Football, to AFL Victoria Country require all affiliated Leagues to adhere to the following guidelines for the Order Off rule:

- a) A player who commits the following Laws of the Australian Football offences shall be reported and ordered off the ground for the remainder of the game and is able to be replaced after fifteen (15) minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game: –

22.2.2 (Laws of Australian Football):

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
 - (ii) kicking another person
 - (iii) kneeling another person
 - (vii) head butting or making contact to another person using the head
- (b) eye-gouging another person
- (c) stomping on another person
- (d) intentionally making contact with or striking an umpire
- (e) attempting strike an umpire
- (f) spitting on or at an umpire
 - (j) carelessly making contact with an umpire
- (cc) engaging in any other act of misconduct or serious misconduct

- b) A player who commits the following AFL Laws of Australian Football offences shall be reported and ordered from the ground for fifteen (15) minutes of actual match playing time: –

22.2.2 (AFL Laws of Australian Football):

- (a) intentionally or carelessly
 - (i) striking another person
 - (iv) charging an opponent
 - (v) engaging in rough conduct against an opponent.
 - (vi) bumping or making forceful contact to an opponent from front on when that player has their head down over the football
 - (ix) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact to the face of another person.
 - (x) scratching another person
 - (xi) tripping another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
- (g) behaving in an abuse, insulting, threatening or obscene manner towards or in relation to an umpire
- (h) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language towards or in relation to an umpire
- (k) disputing a decision of an umpire
- (l) spitting on or at another person
- (m) attempting to strike another person

- (n) attempting to kick another person
 - (w) use of an obscene gesture
- c) A player who commits the following AFL Laws of Australian Football offences, depending upon the severity of such offence, may be ordered from the ground for fifteen (15) minutes of actual match playing time. The player may also be reported.
- 22.2.2 (AFL Laws of Australian Rules Football):
- (o) attempting to trip another person whether by hand, arm, foot or leg
 - (p) making unreasonable or unnecessary contact with an injured player
 - (q) engaging in a melee
 - (r) instigating a melee
 - (s) wrestling another person
 - (t) pinching another person
 - (u) engaging in an act of staging
 - (v) using abusive, insulting, threatening or obscene language
 - (x) engaging in time wasting
 - (y) interfering with a player kicking for goal
 - (z) intentionally shaking, climbing or otherwise interfering with a goal or behind post
 - (aa) failing to leave the playing surface when directed to do so by a field umpire
 - (bb) wearing boots, jewellery and equipment prohibited under Law 9 of the AFL Laws of Australian Football
- d) Any player reported for a second offence listed in (b) and (c) shall be sent from the field for the remainder of the match and is able to be replaced after fifteen (15) minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game.
- e) For underage matches, field umpires may order a player off the ground for fifteen (15) minutes without reporting them.

Note: This would only apply when a player has not committed a reportable offence but has breached the law and given away a free kick in a deliberate or undisciplined manner or behaves in a manner detrimental to the image of the game.

Implementation

Only field umpires and emergency field umpires have the power to send players from the ground.

When ordering a player off, an umpire shall signal their intention by pointing to the interchange area with an outstretched arm and holding a coloured card above their head with the other.

A Red Card indicates the player is ordered off for the remainder of the match and can be replaced after fifteen (15) minutes of actual playing time. The player red carded can take no further part in the game.

A Yellow Card indicates the player is ordered off for fifteen (15) minutes of actual match playing time and cannot be replaced within that time.

A player ordered from the ground must leave the ground through the interchange area, report to the Interchange Steward or appropriate official on leaving the field and before returning.

In the event of a player failing or refusing to leave the field when ordered off, they shall be reported for misconduct. The player's captain or deputy shall be advised by the umpire that their team shall forfeit the match unless the player leaves the field immediately. If the player still refuses to leave the field, their team shall forfeit the match.

Boundary and goal umpires have the power to report however they do not have the power to order players from the ground, they will use their best endeavours to advise one of the field umpires, of their report at the next appropriate break in play and the field umpire will use their best endeavours, with the umpire making the report, to advise the player they have been reported and that player will be ordered from the ground.

For a player to be sent from the ground for the remainder of the match due to being reported twice (on two separate occasions) under Clauses (b) and (c) of the Order Off Rule that player must have been reported on both occasions by a field umpire or league appointed boundary or goal umpire.

11. REPORTABLE OFFENCES & TRIBUNAL

All AFL Victoria Country affiliated Leagues and Regions shall adopt the Reportable Offences and Tribunal Provisions detailed at Sections 23 and 25 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

12. FINALS ELIGIBILITY – COATES TALENT LEAGUE, VFL and VFLW PLAYERS

12.1 Coates Talent League Male and VFL

- a) Individual Leagues shall be required to establish player eligibility for finals; however,
 - i) For the purpose of finals qualification and player eligibility, the Coates Talent League Under 18 competition Home and Away matches shall be considered the equal of AFL Victoria Country senior competition matches and Coates Talent League Under 18 competition Home and Away games matches shall be considered matches of the players senior AFL Victoria Country team for the purpose of eligibility to play in AFL Victoria Country finals.
 - ii) For purposes of finals eligibility within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated league, a player who has played more than twelve (12) home and away matches for a club affiliated with the VFL competition in that season will not be eligible to play finals within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated competition.

12.2 Coates Talent League Female and VFLW

- (a) Individual Leagues shall be required to establish player eligibility for finals and
- (b) unless otherwise determined by the individual league prior to the season commencing, for the purpose of finals qualification and player eligibility, the Coates Talent League Home and Away matches shall not be considered the equal of AFL

Victoria Country open women competition matches and Coates Talent League matches shall not be considered matches of the players open women AFL Victoria Country team for the purpose of eligibility to play in AFL Victoria Country finals, however

- (c) for purposes of finals eligibility within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated league, a player who has played more than two thirds of home and away matches for a club affiliated with a VFLW competition in that season will not be eligible to play finals within an AFL Victoria Country affiliated competition.

13. COACHING ACCREDITATION

As specified in Section 5 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, all coaches and assistant coaches of AFL Victoria Country Clubs are required to obtain Foundation Level Accreditation, prior to their first match as coach or assistant coach in the relevant season.

If a coach is appointed without having obtained the necessary accreditation, Leagues shall:

- i) impose a \$1,000 fine (Senior) or \$500 fine (Junior) and
- ii) the loss of match points for the matches won by the team whilst the unaccredited coach continues to coach.

In the event of no match points being received the league must apply the above fines. Fines are applied once only (\$1,000 or \$500) and are not applicable to every match. In the instance where coaches are not accredited and commit to obtaining Coach Accreditation by an agreed date with the League, a bond for clubs shall apply of \$1,000 (Senior) and \$500 (Junior). Where a coach fails to obtain Coach Accreditation by the agreed date the bond paid by the club is forfeited and the relevant fines shall also apply.

14. OFFICIAL CLUB RUNNERS/ TRAINERS/WATER CARRIERS/ PLAYERS

14.1 Player Eligibility

No person who is a registered player or an official of any club of an open or junior age team, who is under disqualification or suspension by their home club or League, shall act as an official runner or water carrier in any competition match, or any other match in which an AFL Victoria Country affiliated club or League is participating.

14.2 Player

Any player listed on the teamsheet must be at the ground, dressed in football playing attire and ready to take the field if called upon.

14.3 Coaches

No coach or assistant coach of an AFL Victoria Country team shall act as a runner, trainer or water carrier in a match in which the team that they coach is participating.

14.4 Listing of Officials

All official runners, trainers and water carriers shall be listed on the official team sheet and for the purposes of interpretation of this regulation shall be deemed to be officials of the club for the match. All officials should be registered on the Competition Management platform.

14.5 Number of Trainers/Water Carriers

No team shall be permitted to have more than the combined total of six (6) trainers and water carriers.

14.6 Doctors

Registered doctors are not required to be registered as an official on the day or included on the official teamsheet.

14.7 Infringements

Any club that infringes this rule shall appear before the League's Independent Tribunal to determine the penalty. The penalty applicable for determination by the Independent Tribunal shall include the following:

- a) Substantial fine, and/or
- b) Loss of points for the match, and/or
- c) Such other penalties as determined appropriate by the Tribunal.

14.8 Duties

All official runners, trainers and water carriers are to be dressed in a uniform determined by the league.

The sole duty of the runner shall be to confer with the player or players of their club and to immediately leave the playing arena in accordance with bylaws of the local league.

The sole duty of a water carrier shall be to convey water to players and to immediately leave the playing arena in accordance with by-laws of local league.

The duty of a trainer shall be to render medical assistance and convey water as required.

The officiating field umpire may, upon infringement of this rule, order the runner, trainer or water carrier of the offending club from the arena for a period of fifteen (15) minutes. Any infringement of this rule or other infringement reported by an officiating umpire including a field umpire, boundary umpire, goal umpire and emergency umpire, shall be referred to the League's Independent Tribunal.

15. SERVICE AWARDS

15.1 Recognition of Service Medallion

Former Victorian Country Football League (VCFL) and current AFL Victoria Country affiliated regions, leagues, clubs and umpire groups may nominate suitable persons to be recipients of the Recognition of Service Medallion, where it is desired to acknowledge outstanding service. Conditions of the award are as follows.

The award is to be made to persons who have rendered outstanding service to former VCFL and current AFL Victoria Country leagues, clubs or umpire associations/groups.

The award is to recognise an administrator or volunteer's outstanding contribution to Australian Football with a former VCFL or current AFL Victoria Country affiliate, over an extended period of time. A playing or umpiring career is not necessarily considered when assessing a nominee's qualifying status.

Nominations of people to be the recipients of the award are to be furnished through the affiliated League to the Region Manager for presentation to AFL Victoria for approval. All nominations must be lodged with the AFL Victoria Country Football Manager by 31 August annually.

A record of the service rendered by the nominated person is to be forwarded with each application for issue of the medallion.

16. PERCENTAGE WHEN CLUB FORFEITS

Percentage calculation for forfeited matches –

- a) Where a team forfeits during the progress of a match; or
- b) Where a team fails to appear.
Competitions are to refer to AFL Laws of Australian Football Law 11.2.2 to manage the allocation of points and percentage from any forfeited matches.
- c) Where a match result is altered by protest or dispute.
The team winning the protest or dispute to be awarded full premiership list points and their points scored FOR in such match to be recorded as usual in the calculation of percentage. The offending team shall lose their points scored FOR in such match and as such the calculation of their percentage adjusted accordingly. Scores for the match are to be adjusted following that round of matches.

17. LEAGUES

17.1 Major Leagues

For the purposes of AFL Victoria Country permit regulations the following are classed as major leagues; Ballarat Football Netball League, Bendigo Football Netball League, Goulburn Valley League, Hampden Football Netball League, Mornington Peninsula Nepean Football League, North Central Football League, Ovens and Murray Football Netball League, Gippsland League, Sunraysia Football and Netball League, Wimmera Football Netball League, Murray Football League, Bellarine Football Netball League, Geelong Football Netball League, and the Central Murray Football Netball League.

17.2 District Leagues

All other affiliated Football bodies shall be known as the District Leagues.

17.3 Junior Leagues

All affiliated football bodies that provide for football competitions at under 16 and a half or lower age groups or as determined by the local Region only shall be known as the Junior Leagues.

18. UMPIRES

18.1 Registration

Field Umpires officiating at matches under the control of affiliated Leagues supplied by an affiliated League, Country Region or official umpiring association shall be registered with, and may be required to pay an annual registration fee to the Region. Those not supplied

from an official umpiring association body shall register with respective League under such conditions as are from time to time determined by the League. It shall be permissible for umpires so registered with the League to be appointed and officiate in an area other than that for which the Region Manager acts in AFL Victoria Country. The fees and expenses of AFL Victoria Country umpires are to be submitted annually to the AFL Victoria Football Operations Department for approval and adoption.

18.2 Approaches to Umpires

Only the team captain shall be permitted to speak to the Field Umpire during the progress of a match at intervals. Any player or official in breach of this rule may be reported by the Umpire and the matter referred to the League Independent Tribunal and if found guilty their Club shall incur the following maximum penalty:

1st offence	\$200.00
2nd offence	\$400.00
3rd or any further offences	\$800.00

19. DOMESTIC MATTERS

Subject to the provision herein applied, each League and Region shall have power to draw up rules not inconsistent with these Rules and provide for the management of its own domestic affairs. In the event of conflict between AFL Victoria Country Rules , and all amendments to its rules, AFL Victoria Country Rules take precedence and Region regulations will take precedence where conflicted with League rules.

20. INTERPRETATIONS OR RULINGS

20.1 Questions not Provided for

In the event of any question arising not provided for in these Rules, AFL Victoria shall have power to decide such question.

20.2 Decisions of AFL Victoria

All decisions arrived at by AFL Victoria shall be final. Where the question of interpretation or ruling is involved in connection with appeals, disputes, etc., it is desired that the League or the competent authority concerned obtain such interpretation or ruling on AFL Victoria Country Rules and/ or Regulations from, or through, the appropriate Region Manager or AFL Victoria.

20.3 Authority –Region Manager or Region

The Region Manager or Region may make decisions in that area providing that they are not in contradiction to the Rules, Regulations and Resolutions of AFL Victoria Country.

21. LICENSING

21.1 Team Uniforms

Each player in each team of each Club shall wear a uniform (including without limitation guernseys and shorts) that:

- a) complies with the minimum standards of quality and appearance and layout for uniforms as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time), in a manner and on a location on each item of the uniform as specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

21.2 Umpire Uniforms

Each Umpire of each Match shall wear a uniform (including without limitation guernseys and shorts) that:

- a) complies with the minimum standards of quality and appearance and layout for uniforms as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time), in a manner and on a location on each item of the uniform as specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

21.3 Footballs

Each Club and League shall ensure that the football used in any match:

- a) complies with the minimum standards of quality for footballs as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time; and
- b) features the official AFL Victoria Country Logo (as determined by AFL Victoria Country from time to time) in a manner and on a location on the match football as is specified by AFL Victoria Country from time to time.

21.4 Player Compliance

Each Club shall ensure that its players comply with this regulation.

21.5 Club Compliance

Each League shall ensure that any affiliated Clubs comply with this regulation.

21.6 Sanction

A sanction of up to \$50 for a player wearing an incorrect uniform in each senior grade match, up to a maximum of \$500 per team per match. A sanction of up to \$50 for any Umpire wearing an incorrect uniform in any Match. A sanction of up to \$50 where an incorrect football is used in a senior grade match. A sanction for non-compliance with this regulation by any other teams (including junior teams), Clubs or Leagues as determined by AFL Victoria Country on a case-by-case basis, upon the recommendation by AFL Victoria Country Football Manager or Region Manager. Any sanction shall be payable to AFL Victoria Country.

22. ANTI - DOPING POLICY

The Anti Doping Policy of the Australian Football League as detailed at Section 14 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook, shall apply to and be binding upon all Leagues, Associations and Regions affiliated with the AFL Victoria.

23. RISK MANAGEMENT

All Affiliated Leagues and Clubs are required to complete the Match Day checklist as detailed in the Marsh National Risk Protection Programme and available at <https://au.marsh.com/sport/afl/clubs.html>.

24. AFL NATIONAL FEMALE COMMUNITY FOOTBALL GUIDELINES

- a) AFL Victoria Country has adopted the AFL National Female Community Football Guidelines for junior and youth girls football competitions. Any junior and youth girls competitions affiliated to AFL Victoria Country leagues wishing to adopt bylaws not consistent with the AFL Female Football Match Guide must obtain approval from their local Region Manager.

25. CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

AFL Victoria is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people who participate in AFL/W activities, programs, services and/or use AFL/W facilities by fostering a culture where children and young people feel safe and welcome. Affiliated leagues and clubs must comply with the legislated Standards for Safeguarding Children and Young People as detailed in Section 11 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

26. VARIATION OF TIME

Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules, where any time limit is imposed for the doing of any act or thing or for any other purpose, the AFL Victoria Community Football Manager may in their absolute discretion extend or bring forward the time within which a person may do any act or thing under these Rules.

27. VARIATIONS TO LAWS OF AUSTRALIAN FOOTBALL

As provided under section 2.2 of the Laws of Australian Football, competitions affiliated with AFL Victoria country competition **shall not** apply the following Law in any matches.

- **Laws of Australian Football 13.1 (6/6/6 at Centre Bounce)**

STARTING POSITIONS

The following starting positions must be met within a reasonable time as set by the Controlling Body, before the field Umpire commences their approach to the Centre Circle to bounce or throw up the football to start a quarter or recommence play after a Goal has been scored:

- (a) six Players from each Team are permitted in each area defined by the Boundary Line and the Fifty Metre Arcs;
- (b) of these six Players for each area referenced in Law 13.1(a), at least one Player from each Team is positioned within the Goal Square.



**AFL VICTORIA COMMUNITY AFFILIATE
REGULATIONS**

MARCH 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

AFL Victoria provide these regulations to assist Affiliates in the development of the game. The regulations and policies are to be read in conjunction with any AFL Victoria Affiliation Agreement.

1.2 Application

These regulations apply to all Affiliates of AFL Victoria and their affiliated leagues and clubs and are to be read in conjunction with the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook and AFL Victoria Country Rules. Specifically, in relation to player, club or team movements, the introduction of new clubs or teams and the introduction or amendment of any underage competitions these regulations govern the said process.

1.3 Variation

AFL Victoria may, from time to time, alter these regulations at its absolute discretion.

2. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

A list of definitions and interpretations relevant to these regulations are listed in Section 1 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.

In addition, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

Affiliate means any league, association, or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of matches which is affiliated with AFL Victoria

Country Region - an organisation that is affiliated with AFL Victoria and lead football in Country Victoria.

Metropolitan League - an organisation that is affiliated with AFL Victoria and conducting football competitions in Metropolitan Victoria.

Destination Affiliate the league to which a player, team or club seeks to transfer to.

Source Affiliate the league from which a player, team or club seeks to transfer from.

3. PLAYER, CLUB AND TEAM TRANSFER REGULATIONS

3.1 Appeals

AFL Victoria will make determinations in relation to appeals that arise involving more than one Affiliate, and any decision of AFL Victoria shall be binding.

3.2 Conflicting Regulations

No Affiliate shall have in place rules or regulations that conflict with these regulations. In the event of such rules or regulations being inconsistent, in conflict with or designed to circumvent these AFL Victoria regulations, then AFL Victoria regulations shall bind Affiliates.

3.3 Player Registration, Transfer and Appeal Process

All player registrations and transfers shall be administered consistent with Section 3 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.

- a) Where a Player disputes a transfer refusal, that Player and/or their Destination Club must use best endeavors to resolve the dispute with the Source Club.

- b) Where a dispute cannot be resolved under Section 3.5(a) of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook, a Player and their Destination Club may appeal the transfer refusal by the Source Club provided that;
- i) An appeal involving a Club from an Affiliate Country Region and a club from a Metropolitan League, or clubs from two different Metropolitan Leagues, will be heard by the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel in accordance with Section 26 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.
 - ii) An appeal of a player transfer objection must be lodged with AFL Victoria no later than 5.00pm on the day following the relevant decision of a Club, League or Affiliate, following:
 - A. A duly completed Notice of Appeal; and
 - B. Payment of a fixed fee as determined by AFL Victoria (which will be dealt with in accordance with Sections 26.4(d) and 26.4(e) of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.
 - iii) At the hearing of an appeal, each party may be represented by an advocate provided that such advocate is not a person who is legally qualified, unless approved by the Chairman of the Appeals Panel.
 - iv) An appeal involving a Source Club and a Destination Club that are both affiliated with the same Metropolitan League will be heard by that Metropolitan League in accordance with that Leagues Appeal Process.
 - v) An appeal involving a Source Club and a Destination Club that are both affiliated with a Country Region will be heard in accordance with Clause 8 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules.

3.4 Coates Talent League / VFL / VFLW Players

The following Regulations relate to the movement of players between the Affiliate and the VFL, VFLW and Coates Talent League competitions.

3.4.1 Interchange Permit

Players desiring registration with the VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League competitions shall complete the appropriate Interchange Permit as required under the Interchange Agreement, approved under Section 3.7 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.

Upon lodgement of the permit with the AFL, the applicant may be provided a permit to play by the relevant competition manager.

3.4.2 Interchange from Community Club

The player retains registration with the community club and, in accordance with the VFL, VFLW and Coates Talent League Interchange Agreements, the VFL, VFLW and Coates Talent League may permit players to return to their Community Interchange Club when their services are not required by those leagues and their affiliated clubs.

A Player that is subject to an Interchange Permit with a VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League Club may not participate with their community club without the approval of their VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League Club, and may be deemed an ineligible player by that Community League should the required approval from their VFL, VFLW or Coates Talent League Club not be obtained.

4. ADMISSION AND TRANSFER OF CLUBS AND TEAMS

4.1 General

- a) AFL Victoria shall make such determinations and decisions in respect to Affiliates failing to comply with these Regulations as it deems fit, and the decision of AFL Victoria shall be final and binding on all Affiliates.
- b) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, as detailed in Clause 3 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules, Country Regions will manage the process for a Club or Team transfer, including an Appeal process, where that transfer relates to a Club or Team transferring within the same Country Region with any such process administered consistent with this Section 4 of these Regulations.
- c) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, as detailed in Clause 3 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules, Country Regions will manage the process for the establishment of a New Club or New Team, including an Appeal process with any such process administered consistent with this Section 4 of these Regulations.
- d) Affiliates shall apply to AFL Victoria having already ensured all approval processes and requirements relevant to all Clubs, Leagues and Regions (as applicable) have been met.

4.2 Establishment of New Clubs

- a) Affiliates intending to accept a New Club must notify AFL Victoria, consistent with Section 4.1 (as applicable for County Regions), of its intention to accept the new club not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm 1st December. In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the new club deadline of 5.00pm 1st December at their discretion.
- b) Notwithstanding Regulation 4.2 (a) above, Affiliates intending to accept a new club shall notify AFL Victoria in writing of its intention to accept a new club no later than 5.00pm on the day after the affiliate confirms its intention to accept such club. The new club may not participate in any league match until AFL Victoria approval has been granted.
- c) AFL Victoria may seek detail from other Affiliates that may be impacted by the establishment of the new club, who may appeal the decision of an Affiliate to accept a new club.
- d) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Section 6.1 of these regulations.

4.3 Transfer of Existing or Amalgamated Clubs

- a) A Destination Affiliate considering to accept the transfer of an existing or amalgamated club from another Affiliate shall notify AFL Victoria, consistent with Section 4.1, and the Source Affiliate in writing, by no later than 5.00pm on 31st October. The Destination affiliate will inform and liaise with the Source affiliate regarding any possible transfer.
- b) A Destination Affiliate intending to accept the transfer of an existing or amalgamated club from another Affiliate shall notify AFL Victoria of its intention to accept such a transfer in writing, not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm on 31st October.
- c) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive these club transfer deadlines at their discretion.

- d) Where a Source Affiliate wishes to appeal against a decision of the Destination Affiliate to intend to accept such a transfer under Section 4.3 (b) of this regulation, written notification is to be provided to AFL Victoria and the Destination Affiliate by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving advice from AFL Victoria of such intended transfer.
- e) Where a club or clubs seek to transfer from one Affiliate to another Affiliate, such transfer must be approved by AFL Victoria. In making such determination AFL Victoria will take into account, without limitation,
 - i) The geographic nature of Leagues
 - ii) League viability
 - iii) Community development; and
 - iv) Future growth of the Leagues concerned.
- f) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

4.4 Establishment of New Teams

- a) Any Affiliate intending to accept a newly established team, must advise AFL Victoria, consistent with Section 4.1 (as applicable for County Regions), not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm on 31st March.
- b) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the new Teams deadline of 5.00pm on 31st March at their discretion.
- c) Where all teams of a Club are currently Affiliated with the one League or Country Region, exemption may be granted by AFL Victoria on application to the requirements under this Section.
- d) Where another Affiliate appeals the intended establishment of the new team or teams under Section 4.4(a) of this Regulation, that Affiliate is to provide written notification to AFL Victoria by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving written advice from AFL Victoria.
- e) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

4.5 Transfer of Existing or Amalgamated Teams

- a) Any Affiliate intending to accept the transfer of an existing or amalgamated team from another Affiliate shall notify AFL Victoria consistent with Section 4, not before 1st August and by no later than 5.00pm on 31st October. The Destination affiliate will inform and liaise with the Source affiliate regarding any possible transfer,
- b) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the team transfer deadline of 31st October at their discretion.
- c) Where a Source Affiliate appeals a decision of the Destination Affiliate to intend to accept such a transfer under Section 4.5(a) of this Regulation, written notification is to be provided to AFL Victoria and the Destination Affiliate by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving written advice from AFL Victoria of such intended transfer.
- d) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

5. INTRODUCTION OR AMENDMENT OF ANY UNDERAGE COMPETITION

- a) AFL Victoria shall make such determinations and decisions in respect to Affiliates failing to comply with these Regulations as it deems fit, and the decision of AFL Victoria shall be final and binding on all Affiliates.
- b) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, consistent with Clause 3 of the AFL Victoria Country Rules, Country Regions will manage the process for any amendment to age groups or introduction of new age groups in competitions, including an Appeal process with any such process administered consistent with Section 6 of these AFL Victoria Community Affiliate regulations. .
- c) Affiliates must apply to AFL Victoria to amend or introduce new age groups in competitions. Applications must be received in writing by AFL Victoria not before 1st August and no later than 5.00pm on 31st October.
- d) In exceptional circumstances, the Head of AFL Victoria may waive the age group deadline of 5.00pm 31st October at their discretion.
- e) Where another Affiliate appeals the intended amendment to an existing age group qualification or introduction of new age group in competitions under Section 5(c) of this regulation, that Affiliate is to provide written notification to AFL Victoria by no later than 5.00pm on the day following receiving advice from AFL Victoria.
- f) AFL Victoria must approve any introduction of new or amendment of existing age group qualification for any competition for an Affiliate, following consultation and subject to any appeals being received from Affiliates.
- g) Any appeal process will be administered consistent with Clause 6.1 of these regulations.

6. APPEALS PROCESS

6.1 Appeals under Regulations 4 or 5

- a) Where an Affiliate appeals the:
 - i) Establishment of a new team
 - ii) Transfer of an existing team
 - iii) Establishment of a new club
 - iv) Transfer of a new club or
 - v) Introduction or Amendment of any Underage Competition ,the Head of AFL Victoria or nominee shall appoint three (3) members to the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel.
- b) Parties to the appeal process will be requested to provide AFL Victoria with a written submission which may contain:
 - i) Any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the applications and the appeal; and
 - ii) Any other matters that they desire to be considered by the AFL Victoria Appeal Panel.

- c) AFL Victoria shall, distribute the written submissions to the other parties concerned in the hearing, and provide all parties the opportunity to provide final submissions.
- d) Following provision of final submissions, the Appeal Panel make seek further detail from any party to the appeal and this further detail must be provided in writing and within the timeframe specified by the Appeal Panel
- e) The AFL Victoria Appeal Panel:
 - i) Shall consider and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner
 - ii) Is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts of record but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit
 - iii) May regulate the proceedings before it in such manner as it thinks fit
 - iv) Shall decide in relation to the appeal as soon as practicable
 - v) Shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision

6.2 Additional AFL Victoria Appeals

- a) Unless otherwise determined by AFL Victoria, appeals will be heard consistent with Section 26 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.
- b) For the avoidance of doubt, a party to a decision (as determined by AFL Victoria)
 - Made under clause 11.3 of the AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy
 - Made under clause 13 of a Metropolitan League or Region Commission's Player Payments Rules
 - Made under Section 23.3 (c) of the AFL National Community Policy Handbook; or
 - Any matter referred by the Head of AFL Victoria,

may Appeal to the Appeal Panel in respect of such a decision on one or more of the following grounds:

- i) Section 26.1(b)(i)(A) the decision was an error of law that had a material impact on the decision.
 - ii) Section 26.1(b)(i)(B) the decision was so unreasonable that no Controlling Body or Tribunal acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it.
 - iii) Section 26.1(b)(i)(D) the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate.
- c) Any appeal relevant to an Age Dispensation decision under Section 4 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook will be heard by the relevant Metropolitan League or Country Region consistent with their own Appeal Process.
 - d) The Head of AFL Victoria or nominee may from time to time convene an AFL Victoria Appeals Panel, comprising a Chairperson and a further two (2) persons to hear and determine the matter.
 - e) At the discretion of AFL Victoria, each party may, within the time specified by the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel, lodge with AFL Victoria written submissions which may contain:
 - i) Any facts, reasons and arguments concerning the appeal; and

- ii) Any other matters that they desire to be taken into account by the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel in determining the appeal.
- f) AFL Victoria may as soon as practical, distribute the written submissions to the other parties concerned in the appeal and provide all parties the opportunity to provide final submissions.
- g) Following provision of final submissions, the Appeal Panel may seek further detail from any party to the appeal and this further detail must be provided in writing and within the timeframe specified by the Appeal Panel .
- h) The AFL Victoria Appeals Panel:
 - i) Is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to courts record but may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it thinks fit;
 - ii) May confirm, reverse or modify the decision being appealed and make such decisions in such manner as it thinks fit; and
 - iii) Shall not be obliged to give reasons for its decision.

6.3 AFL Victoria Appeal Panel Nominations

Nominations from Affiliates for appointments to the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel are to be received by the AFL Victoria Community Football Operations Manager at any time in a given year.

AFL Victoria is to determine the appointment of members to the AFL Victoria Appeals Panel. The decision of AFL Victoria regarding appointments shall be final.

7. AFL VICTORIA POLICIES

Each Affiliate shall adopt policies as detailed in the:

- i) AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook
- ii) AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy
- iii) Metropolitan Leagues or Country Regions Player Payment Rules and Guidelines
- iv) AFL Victoria Country Rules as applicable to affiliated Country Regions and Leagues

AFL Victoria will provide the current AFL Victoria policies via the AFL Victoria website.

8. FINANCIAL REPORTING PROCEDURE

8.1 Annual Report

Within 7 days of an Affiliates Annual General Meeting, the Affiliate shall provide its Annual Report (including audited and detailed Financial Statements) to AFL Victoria.

8.2 Financial Year

Unless otherwise approved, the financial year of AFL Victoria and all Affiliates shall be 1st November to 31st October.

9. SPONSORSHIP

9.1 Sponsors

Where AFL Victoria has entered into a sponsorship arrangement on behalf of its Affiliates, the Affiliate shall support those sponsors in accordance with the contractual arrangements.

9.2 Protected Sponsors

From time to time AFL Victoria will nominate sponsors deemed to be “protected sponsors” notwithstanding they may not be involved with Affiliates.

The Affiliate acknowledges and agrees that:

- i) the AFL Victoria protected sponsors provide in part the financial resources to AFL Victoria to enable it to financially support the development of Australian Football; and
- ii) in order to maximise the financial benefits for AFL Victoria from such sponsorship, it will only enter into its own sponsorship arrangements with a person or business whose goods, services or operations compete with the goods or services supplied by or the operations of the AFL Victoria Protected Sponsors if it has first advised AFL Victoria of its intention to enter into such arrangement. AFL Victoria will provide advice to the Affiliate regarding implications of entering into such arrangement.

Protected sponsors will only be nominated after AFL Victoria makes every endeavour to ensure that such protected sponsors will not conflict with Affiliate arrangements.

9.3 Notice

AFL Victoria will give reasonable notice to Affiliates of protected and other sponsors.

10. COMMUNICATION BETWEEN AFL VICTORIA AND AFFILIATES

10.1 Affiliate Input

Prior to formulating any AFL Victoria policy, input will be sought from Affiliates.

10.2 Affiliate Contact Details

Each Affiliate must provide to AFL Victoria appropriate identity and contact details of its President and CEO/General Manager and changes must be notified to AFL Victoria within 10 days of such changes taking place.

11. REGULATION AND POLICY AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS

11.1 Regulation and Policy Review

AFL Victoria will from time to time review its policies and regulations and will provide Affiliates with an opportunity to provide input into any updates of AFL Victoria rules, regulations and policies.

11.2 Affiliate Submissions

Affiliates may make submissions to AFL Victoria in respect to current and/or potential future rules, regulations and policies.

Any written submissions for AFL Victoria’s consideration are to be forwarded to the Football Operations Manager of AFL Victoria by no later than 1st October in each year.



AFL VICTORIA PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM POLICY

AUGUST 2023



AFL VICTORIA PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM (PPS) POLICY

1. Objective of the Community Club Sustainability Program and PPS Policy

The Community Club Sustainability Program (CCSP) Advisory Panel believes that equalisation of community football competitions is vital for community football.

Even and fair competitions lead to interest, which leads to bigger crowds, which leads to stronger clubs and competitions. Even competitions allow supporters and club volunteers the chance to turn up on any given match day with the knowledge that the outcome of the game is uncertain and that their team is a chance of winning. This mindset motivates people to become and remain engaged with their community club and provides rewards and recognition to all those that assist in putting a team out on the field.

The philosophy of competition equalisation is accepted in sports all around the world. Professional sporting bodies have accepted practices such as drafts, salary caps, and the like in order to help competitions ensure competitiveness and club sustainability.

The objectives of the state PPS Policy are as follows, to:

1. support equalization of community football Competitions;
2. ensure teams fielded in the Competitions are strong and as equally matched as possible;
3. provide the best opportunities for players to develop and display their skills;
4. provide opportunities to compete at a community level within an orderly and fair system;
5. enable team spirit and public support;
6. encourage community and corporate sponsorships of Community Clubs;
7. reduce the inflationary nature of player payments to assist clubs survive financially and reduce financial burden/stress on Clubs;
8. promote player loyalty and junior development;
9. support the role volunteers undertake in managing their Clubs by;
 - minimising the need to fundraise for player payments
 - providing a more competitive environment on field, that encourages more volunteers to support at Club level
 - providing incentive to spend more time and effort in the development of football, a welcoming Club environment and growing the game within the local community.

This PPS Policy sets out a framework of rules and guiding principles in relation to a player points system which should be adopted by Community Clubs in order to achieve the above objectives.

If this policy is adopted by Metropolitan Leagues and Regions, they will need to amend their relevant by laws to include all relevant provisions under this PPS Policy.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **AFL** – Australian Football League.
- 2.2. **AFL Victoria** - means Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited ACN 147 664 579.
- 2.3. **CCSP Advisory Panel** – means the panel that includes AFL Victoria Staff Representatives, AFL Victoria Country Representatives and Metropolitan League C.E.O's and General Managers.
- 2.4. **Category** – means the player points category which determines the base allocation of the Player Points Allocation for a player.

- 2.5. **Community Club or 'Club'** – means an Australian football club which participates within a community football competition that does not include State Leagues (i.e., the VFL or Coates Talent League).
- 2.6. **Competition** – means an Australian football competition in which the Community Clubs participate in official fixtured matches.
- 2.7. **Competitive Football** – means any formally organised football competition conducted by a Metropolitan League or Region excluding AFL 9s, school football and women's competitions.
- 2.8. **First Home and Away Match** – means the first official competition match for the home and away season of a Competition.
- 2.9. **Competition Management System** – means the online competition management system implemented by football competitions across Victoria.
- 2.10. **Metropolitan League** - means the bodies affiliated to AFL Victoria to administer Australian Football in the metropolitan region of Victoria.
- 2.11. **Player membership details** – means a player's individual details provided for on the Competition Management System.
- 2.12. **Player Points Allocation** – means the total number of points allocated to an individual player in a Senior Team taking into consideration the Player Points Category that applies to each player and any additional points or deducted points in accordance with this PPS Policy.
- 2.13. **PPS Policy** - means this player points system policy as amended by AFL Victoria from time to time.
- 2.14. **Premier Competition** - means the Competitions outlined in clause 6.3 of this PPS Policy.
- 2.15. **Region** – means the bodies affiliated to AFL Victoria to administer Australian Football in the relevant region of Victoria.
- 2.16. **Reserves Competition** – means the Reserves, Club XVIII, Thirds and Veterans competitions within any league or division of a competition.
- 2.17. **SANFL** – means the South Australian National Football League.
- 2.18. **Season** – means Community Football season between 1 April and 30 September each year (or such other agreed dates).
- 2.19. **Season of Service** – means a Season where a player has played a minimum of five (5) senior or reserves games in one Season for a particular Community Club. A player who has completed a Season of Service is eligible for a reduction of one point should they play for the same Community Club in the following season(s) in accordance with this PPS Policy.
- 2.20. **Senior Competition** – means the senior or 1st grade Competition within any league or division of a Competition.
- 2.21. **Senior Team** – means the team of players that participate within a Community Club's senior or 1st grade football team.
- 2.22. **TSL** – means the Tasmanian State League.

- 2.23. Total Team Points** – means the total amount of points allocated to a specific Senior Team by the Metropolitan League or Region for each Season in accordance with this PPS Policy.
- 2.24. VFL** – means the Victorian Football League.
- 2.25. WAFL** – means the Western Australia Football League.

Interpretation:

A reference to:

“Aligned Junior Club” is where seniors and juniors exist under the same incorporated association, or where there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in place between standalone senior and junior clubs that is approved by a Metropolitan League or Region and the CCSP Advisory Panel. To be considered an ‘Aligned Junior Club’ an MoU ensure appropriate player pathways exist using the document detailed at Attachment 12.4 of this policy. Unless exceptional and compelling reasons are presented to and approved by the CCSP Advisory Panel, a Senior club may have only one MoU with any Junior Club and a Junior club may have only one MoU with any Senior Club.

“Transferred” refers to the formal transfer authorised under Section 3 - Player registration and transfers of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook.

“Unique local conditions” refers to the conditions, environment or circumstances which are unique to a Community Club or a region of Community Clubs which may give grounds for a reassessment of a Club’s Total Team Points as determined by the relevant Metropolitan League or Region.

Victorian affiliated Community Club means a Community Club affiliated to a Victorian based Metropolitan League or Region by way of an authorised licence or affiliation agreement.

3. Affiliated Metropolitan League/Region Responsibilities

Each Metropolitan League or Region affiliated to AFL Victoria:

Total Team Points

- 3.1.** acknowledge that the Total Team Points allocation will be capped at 46 points per Senior Team subject to the conditions of this clause 3.
- 3.2.** will consider all applications from Community Clubs for the allocation of additional Total Team Points in accordance with this PPS Policy (i.e., applications based on unique local circumstances under clause 4.5).
- 3.3.** may allocate additional points or apply deductions to Total Team Points to specific Community Clubs in accordance with this PPS Policy to manage unique local conditions and meet the needs of local Community Clubs and the relevant senior Competitions.
- 3.4.** may adopt By Law clauses to manage Metropolitan League or Region-specific scenarios where.
 - 3.4.1** the player pathway from junior to senior clubs' football in an area is otherwise restrictive and which they may align specific junior and senior clubs to create a player pathway.
 - 3.4.2** the AFL Victoria Player Points System Policy is silent and localised solutions to appropriately manage its intent and purpose is necessary.
 - 3.4.3** All By Laws clauses must be approved by AFL Victoria annually following endorsement by the CCSP Advisory Panel.
- 3.5.** acknowledge that any decision to exceed the 46 point Total Team Points cap must be approved by the CCSP Advisory Panel.
- 3.6.** will allocate the final figure for Total Team Points to each Senior Team for each Club affiliate (i.e. not reserves or underage Competitions) for the following Season and in accordance with PPS Policy, with all points allocations to be lodged with the CCSP Advisory Panel by 31st July each calendar year.
- 3.7.** subject to approval of Total Team Points via the CCSP Advisory Panel, Metropolitan Leagues and Regions must communicate the allocation of each Club's Total Team Points to each of their affiliate Clubs for the following Season in accordance with PPS Policy by 31st August in each calendar year (or such other date as determined by the CCSP Advisory Panel).

Player Points Allocation

- 3.8.** will liaise with Community Club's to ensure Player Point Allocations are entered via the Competition Management System prior to any player's first Senior Home and Away Match of each Season and may adopt a review process of the Player Point Allocations entered by the Community Club and amend any allocations as necessary. .
- 3.9.** as part of the Player Point Allocation process, Metropolitan Leagues and Regions may provide the opportunity for Clubs to seek a reassessment of any player's Player Point Allocation. Any reassessment against a Player Point Allocation should be made to the relevant Metropolitan League or Region no later than 5 days before the player's first Senior Home and Away Match of each Season.
- 3.10.** once the process in clauses 3.7 and 3.8 has been undertaken, any player's Player Point Allocation will be fixed for that Season unless the Metropolitan League or Region is of

the view that there are exceptional circumstances relevant to a player that warrant an amendment of the Player Point Allocation during the Season.

- 3.11 Country Regions may, under written agreement with the affiliated Country leagues, delegate authority regarding Total Team Point allocations (under clause 8.1 and 8.2), or Individual Player Point assessments (under clause 7.3). Any such delegation must include final endorsement by the relevant Region of any allocation or assessment made by the affiliated Country league.

AFL Victoria shall be required to endorse any such written agreement.

4. Affiliated Club Responsibilities

Each affiliate Community Club:

- 4.1. will determine each player's Player Points Allocation for its Senior Team. This determination may include any additions or deductions applicable to each player in accordance with this PPS Policy. See clauses 5, 6 and 7 and appendices 12.1 and 12.3 for applicable PPS table and flow chart to assist in this process.
- 4.2. will enter Player Points Allocations into each relevant player's membership details using the Competition Management System prior to the relevant Community Club's First Home and Away Match of each Season, or a player's first Senior Home and Away Match of each Season.
- 4.3. acknowledges that if a Community Club does not follow this procedure and decides to play a player in a match in a Senior Competition, who has not had their Player Points Allocation reviewed and entered into the Competition Management System, that Club will bear the risk of any subsequent enforcement penalty as determined by the relevant Metropolitan League or Region in accordance with this PPS Policy.
- 4.4. will ensure that on match days the Senior Team does not exceed that Club's Total Team Points. For the avoidance of doubt, Community Clubs may recruit above their allocated points in any given Season but must comply with the Total Team Points allocation on match days.
- 4.5. may make an application to its affiliate Metropolitan League or Region for the allocation of additional Total Team Points in accordance with this PPS Policy (i.e. for unique local circumstances). The application process is to be set down and communicated to affiliate Clubs by the relevant Metropolitan League or Region.

5. Player Points Categories

- 5.1. A player's Category and the subsequent Player Points Allocation will be determined by that player's playing history and achievements prior to registering with their current club and is structured in a way to promote player retention and loyalty.
- 5.2. Each player expected to play in the Senior Team of a Community Club will be allocated a Category and a Player Points Allocation as follows:
 - 5.2.1. Category 1 – Home Player – 1 Point
 - a) Player who has played 40 or more games over a minimum of 3 seasons * at the aligned junior club up to and including U17 Competition: or
 - b) Where the player pathway from junior to senior clubs' football in an area is otherwise restrictive, a Metropolitan League or Regions in country areas have adopted By Law clauses which align specific junior and senior clubs to create a player pathway. All By

Laws clauses must be approved by AFL Victoria following endorsement by the CCSP Advisory Panel.

- c) Player who has played a minimum of 5 games in each of any 5 consecutive seasons for the club or the aligned junior club up to and including Under 19's or
- d) A player who has played only at that Community Club or an aligned junior club, and for no other Community Club; or
- e) A player who has not played Competitive Football in the previous 36 months.

All MOU's and By Law clauses adopted by Metropolitan Leagues or Regions to ensure appropriate player pathways exist must be approved by AFL Victoria following endorsement by the CCSP Advisory Panel.

NOTE: Under the Category 1 definition, a player may be categorised as a 'home player' at more than one Community Club.

* Junior Players (up to and including U17 Competitions) - Recognition for 2020 and 2021 seasons

Where a Junior Player (up to and including U17 Competitions) is registered at a club during the 2019 season, and that player remains at the same club and played a minimum of 1 game in both the 2019 and 2021 seasons, that player may be allocated a full Home and Away season of games, to a maximum of 15 games, for each of the 2020 and 2021 seasons.

- 5.3.** If a player does not meet the Category 1 'home player' eligibility above, their points Category will be assessed based on the highest playing level achieved prior to the player joining the current club in the following Categories:

5.3.1. Category 6 – AFL Player – 6 Points

Player who has played a minimum of one AFL game in any of the current or previous three (3) Seasons.

5.3.2. Category 5 – State League Tier One – 5 Points

Player who has played a minimum 5 senior games of VFL, WAFL or SANFL in any of the current or previous three (3) seasons.

For example, a player *would not qualify* in this category for the 2024 Season if that player has played as follows in the previous three (3) Seasons:

Season 2023 – 4 games
Season 2022 – 3 games
Season 2021 – 2 games

However, a player *would* qualify in this category for the 2024 Season if that player had played as follows in the previous three (3) Seasons:

Season 2023 – 0 games
Season 2022 – 6 games
Season 2021 – 2 games; or

Season 2023 – 5 games
Season 2022 – 0 games
Season 2021 – 0 games.

NOTE: where a Category refers to "a minimum of 5 games in any of the previous 3 Seasons", the above calculation example will apply.

5.3.3. Category 4 – Coates Talent League and State League Tier Two. – 4 Points

- a) Coates Talent League player - who has played a minimum 5 Coates Talent League games in any of the current or previous three (3) Seasons; or
- b) State League Tier Two player – who has played a minimum of 5 senior games in any of the current or previous three (3) seasons at TSL level.

5.3.4. Category 3 – Senior Community Player and Transferred Junior Player – 3 Points

- a) Senior Community player – who has played the same number or more senior games than reserves games in total, over the current and previous three (3) Seasons at community football level. This also includes:
 - A player from any of the interstate community league Competitions including the Northern Territory Football League
- b) Transferred Junior – a player who was transferred from an U19's (or younger) Competition and who does not meet Category 1 eligibility.

5.3.5. Category 2 – Development Community Player – 2 Points

A player who has played more reserves games than senior games in total, over the current and previous three (3) Seasons at community football level.

- 5.4. A Community Club that has a player that does not meet any of the above player Categories will need to apply to their affiliate Metropolitan League or Region to determine the appropriate Player Points Allocation. In determining the Player Points Allocation, the Metropolitan League or Region will have regard to all relevant factors so as not to unreasonably restrict the player's movement between Community Clubs or a player's opportunity to play football at a Club of his choice.
- 5.5. For the purposes of a Player Points Allocation, a playing coach or playing assistant coach is classified as a player and will be assessed under the above Categories.
- 5.6. A player playing on an Interchange Agreement as detailed at Section 3 - Player registration and transfers, section 3.7 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook (i.e. a permit player) will be assessed on the same basis as transferred players.

6. Additional player point allocations:

- 6.1. Clauses 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5 do not apply where a player is classified as a Category 1 Home Player
- 6.2. If a player transfers to a Community Club and will be competing against their immediate former Community Club, (except Category 2 - Development Community Players) an additional one point penalty will apply.
- 6.3. Subject to prior approval by the CCSP Advisory Panel, a Metropolitan League or Region may apply an additional two points (instead of one point under clause 6.1) as required by the unique local conditions in order to meet an objective of this PPS Policy. This two point addition is a discretionary rule and it is the responsibility of the Metropolitan League or Region to communicate to its affiliate Clubs if implemented. For the avoidance of doubt, the one point addition is not discretionary.
- 6.4. If a player transfers from a Community Club located in a Premier Competition to a Community Club in a non-premier competition an additional one point penalty will apply. This clause does not apply to Category 3 – Transferred Junior Player, or if the player is transferring from a Premier Competition but has already met the definition of a State League Category 5 or Coates Talent League Category 4 player due to playing on a permit at the higher level.

Premier Community Football Competitions include:

- Eastern Football League Premier Division
- Essendon District Football League Premier Division
- Northern Football Netball League Division One
- Southern Football Netball League Division One
- Victorian Amateur Football Association Premier Division
- Western Region Football League Division One
- Ballarat Football Netball League
- Bendigo Football Netball League
- Geelong Football Netball League
- Gippsland Football League
- Goulburn Valley League
- Hampden Football Netball League
- Murray Football League
- Ovens and Murray Football Netball League
- Mornington Peninsula Football Netball League – Division One
- Outer East – Premier Division
- Any other Competition as determined by CSSP Advisory Panel from time to time.

6.5. Where a player has registered at three (3) or more different Community Clubs in three (3) seasons, one additional point will be applied to that player's Player Points Allocation. In determining the 3 season's timeframe, clubs shall assess the current or upcoming season as the first season along with the previous two (2) seasons, as detailed in the example below.

Club A – 2024 season
 Club B – 2023 season
 Club C – 2022 season

For the avoidance of doubt, player movements under a permit arrangement e.g., to a State League, Coates Talent League, NTL club or under local interchange agreements, where their home club is classified as a Victorian affiliated Community Club, will not be penalised under this clause.

6.6. A Community Club may make an application for a re-assessment under clause 7.3 to its affiliate Metropolitan League or Region in relation to a player's additional point allocation.

7. Deductions and Amendments to player points allocation:

7.1. Once a player's Player Points Allocation has been determined, a reduction of one point will apply for each 'Season of Service' to that player's Community Club (minimum 5 senior or reserves games per Season*), even if not in consecutive years, until the player reaches not less than 1 point. (This is the minimum number of points a player can have). For the avoidance of doubt, if a player is eligible for underage football at his Club, they must play at least 5 Senior Team games to meet the criteria for a Season of Service point reduction.

*Where a Leagues Home & Away Rounds in 2021 have been cancelled, the following scale shall be used to calculate a season of service deduction for an 18 Round season:

- 18 H&A Rounds 5 games to receive a season of service deduction for 2021 season.
- 15-17 H&A Round Season 4 games to receive a season of service deduction for 2021 season
- 14 or less H&A Round Season 3 games to receive a season of service deduction for 2021 season.

7.2. Where a player qualifies in more than one Category based on their playing history in the current Season or any of the previous 3 Seasons, the Category with the highest points will apply, hence the use of the flow chart in appendix 12.3. (Category 1 - Home Players are excluded).

- 7.3. Metropolitan Leagues and Regions may, acting reasonably, reassess an individual player's Player Points Allocation where it is deemed inappropriate based on playing history and circumstances. In addition, Community Clubs may make an application detailing relevant evidence regarding the reassessment of a player to its relevant Metropolitan League or Region. The application for reassessment may be based upon the following:
- (a) The age of the player, especially if the player is looking to play at a higher level.
 - (b) The injury history of the player
 - (c) The recent playing history of the player
 - (d) The living, schooling and work arrangements of the player; or
 - (e) Any other relevant consideration.

Meeting one of the above criteria may not, on its own, provide for a reduction in a player's point allocation with the application to substantiate that the point allocation is inappropriate based on the Players playing history and achievements.

- 7.4. A League on behalf of an affiliated club, may also make an application to receive a points reduction to a player's Player Points Allocation in relation to a player transitioning into or out of a Club aligned with a school or tertiary institution. Such application must be provided to the CCSP Advisory Panel for consideration and approval or disapproval.
- 7.5. Subject to the considerations which the Metropolitan League or Region should take into account under clause 7.3, the determination of an application for reassessment will be at the discretion of the relevant Metropolitan League or Region.
- 7.6. Should a player be recruited from a Victorian affiliate Community Club which participates in a community Competition which is not affiliated with AFL Victoria or has not adopted this AFL Victoria PPS Policy, that player will have a value of one point to a Community Club which has adopted the PPS Policy. Metropolitan Leagues and Regions, at their discretion may review this one point allocation particularly where the playing history of that player includes prior participation in Competitions that have adopted this PPS Policy.

Note: Metropolitan Leagues and Regions should communicate to their members which Leagues have adopted the Policy by 30th September each year.

8. Total Team Points

- 8.1. Metropolitan Leagues and Regions will undertake their own process of Total Team Points allocations and will be responsible for determining Total Team Points for their affiliate Senior Competitions and Clubs. As stated under clause 3.4. Total Team Points should only exceed 46 points and for legitimate circumstances necessary to achieve the evenness and equalisations objectives of this PPS Policy. Any alterations to a Community Club's Total Team Points cap for any other reason must be prior approved by the CCSP Advisory Panel.
- 8.2. In order to determine team variances to a Senior Competitions Total Team Points' cap, Metropolitan Leagues and Regions should adopt the following guiding principles regarding the additional allocation or reduction of Total Team Points to a Community Club:
- 8.2.1. Additional total team points may be allocated to a Community Club which is located in a region with a low population base.
 - 8.2.2. Additional total team points may be allocated if a Community Club did not qualify for finals in previous seasons or has been promoted from previous seasons.
 - 8.2.3. Reduction of total team points may be applied when a club has achieved multiple premierships and/or sustained success over previous seasons.
 - 8.2.4. Additional total team points may be allocated if a Community Club endures significant hardship, lack of success, is coming out of recess, or is a recently merged or restructured entity.
 - 8.2.5. Additional total team points may be allocated where a Community Club has no U18, U19 or younger underage sides and is not capable of developing a junior program

due to reasons outside of its control, or if a Community Club is aligned with a university and the team is based around players coming and going over a 3-4 year period.

- 8.3. For each match, a Club must ensure that the Total Team Points allocation is calculated based on the maximum number of players allowed to participate in a match for that Competition and this should be consistent for each match within a Season, within each Competition. For example, if the maximum number of players on match days for the Competition is 22 players, a Club cannot submit a team list of 21 players to meet the Total Team Points cap. For the avoidance of doubt, a Club must list the maximum number of players allowed on its team sheet in calculating its Total Team Points. For exceptional circumstances (i.e., not having enough players to field a full Senior Team) the matter should be referred to the Metropolitan League or Region for review and direction.

9. Implementation

- 9.1. Metropolitan Leagues and Regions should adopt this PPS Policy by no later than 30 September. Metropolitan Leagues and Regions must advise in writing to the CCSP Advisory Panel of its intention to implement the PPS Policy prior to this date.
- 9.2. Metropolitan Leagues and Regions are free to publicise Total Team Points to affiliate Clubs for the following year at their own discretion once approved by the CCSP Advisory Panel.

10. Enforcement

- 10.1. Given Player Points Allocations will be managed via the Competition Management System, if correct procedure is applied, with Players Points Allocation entered into the system prior to the start of the Season, it is envisaged there will be minimal issues in the management of the Player Points Allocations. Errors are less likely given that the Competition Management System will not permit a club to complete a Senior Team into an electronic team sheet that has a combined Total Team Points allocation of more than that Club's permitted point's cap.
- 10.2. Should any Club make a false or incorrect declaration regarding Player Points Allocations, the Club may be penalised by the Metropolitan League or Region in line with the penalties set out in clause 10.3.
- 10.3. Penalties may include (without limitation):
 - (a) Club fines
 - (b) Relegation (when in a divisional competition)
 - (c) Loss of premiership points – current season and in the future
 - (d) Suspension from finals – current season and in the future
 - (e) Player / Official suspensions – for those players/ officials that provide false information to the Club.
 - (f) Any other penalty determined by the Metropolitan League or Region or the CCSP Advisory Panel from time to time.

In applying any enforcements provisions in relation to any breach of the PPS Policy, Metropolitan Leagues and Region shall take into consideration whether the breach was assessed as:

- Unintentional - where a club had not been provided with accurate information.
- Interpretive - where a club had applied the policy in a manner than was the policy was not intended.
- Intentional - where a clear breach had occurred with little or no regard to the requirements of the policy.

11. Appeal and Review

- 11.1.** Where a Community Club is of the view that one of their registered player's Player Points Allocation is deemed inappropriate under this PPS Policy following a reassessment conducted under clause 7.3 of this policy, any appeal against that Player Points Allocation must be heard by that Metropolitan League or Region under their own appeals process.
- 11.2.** Where a Club is of the view that its own Total Team Points is deemed inappropriate following a reassessment under Clause 8.2 of this Policy, any appeal against that Total Team Points allocation must be heard by that Metropolitan League or Region under their own appeals process.

A party to a decision (as determined by AFL Victoria) may appeal a decision to apply an enforcement provision under this PPS Policy against that Club. An appeal, to a panel appointed by AFL Victoria, shall be lodged with the AFL Victoria Football Operations Manager by no later than 5 pm on the day following the decision and administered consistent with the Appeal provisions contained at Clause 26 of the AFL National Community Football Policy Handbook with any appeal process will be administered by written submission from relevant parties to the appeal with no hearing.

- 11.3.** For the avoidance of doubt a party may appeal in respect of such a decision on one or more of the following grounds:
 - i) Section 26.1(b)(i)(A) the decision was an error of law that had a material impact on the decision.
 - ii) Section 26.1(b)(i)(B) the decision was so unreasonable that no Controlling Body or Tribunal acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it;
 - iii) Section 26.1(b)(i)(D) the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate.
- 11.4.** The CCSP Advisory Panel will review the PPS Policy throughout each Season and amendments and variations may be made by the CCSP Advisory Panel from time to time.

12. Appendices

12.1. Player Points Categories Tables

PLAYER POINTS SYSTEM – CATAGORIES AND DEFINITIONS			
Category 6	6 points	AFL Player	Played at least one AFL game in any of the current or previous 3 seasons.
Category 5	5 points	State League Tier 1 - VFL, WAFL, SANFL	Played at least 5 senior games of VFL, WAFL or SANFL in any of the current or previous 3 seasons
Category 4	4 points	Coates Talent League	Played at least 5 Coates Talent League games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons
		State League Tier 2 - TASFL	Played at least 5 senior games in any of the current or previous 3 seasons
Category 3	3 points	Senior Community Player	Played the same or more senior than reserves games in total over the current and previous 3 seasons. Also includes Interstate Community Leagues including NTLF.
		Transferred Junior	Player recruited from an U19's or younger competition and does not meet the Category 1 home club definition
Category 2	2 points	Development Community Player	Played more reserves games than senior games in total, over the current and previous three (3) Seasons at community football level
Category 1	1 point	Home Player	Played 40 or more games over a minimum 3 seasons * (See Clause 5.2.1 for 2020 and 2021 seasons) at that club or aligned junior club up to and including U17 competitions
			Where the player pathway from junior to senior clubs' football in an area is otherwise restrictive, a Metropolitan League or Regions in country areas have adopted By Law clauses which align specific junior and senior clubs to create a player pathway. All By Laws clauses must be approved by AFL Victoria following endorsement by the CCSP Advisory Panel.
			Player who has played a minimum of 5 games in each of the 5 consecutive seasons for the club or the aligned junior club up to and including Under 19's
			Player who has only played at that club or aligned junior club.
			Player who hasn't played Competitive football in the previous 36 months.

Note: For any player that does not meet any of the above categories will need to apply to the affiliated Metropolitan League / Region who will determine the appropriate categories and points

Additional Penalty Player Points	Additional 1 point	If transferring from another community club and will be competing against their immediate former club (does not include Category 2 Development Community Player) Metropolitan Leagues and Regions may increase this to an additional 2 penalty points subject to approval by AFL Victoria.
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	Additional 1 point	Is transferring from a club located in a premier competition to a club in a non-premier competition (does not apply to Category 3 – Transferred Junior Player, Category 5 – State League or Category 4 –Coates Talent League player)
	Additional 1 point	If registered at three (3) or more different Community Clubs in the current or previous two (2) seasons. Does not include players moving on permit (e.g.: VFL, Coates Talent League, NTFL or Local Interchange Agreement) as detailed in clause 6.4.
Deductions for Player Points	Deduct 1 point	For each season of service to the club (minimum 5 senior or reserves games per season), even if not in consecutive years, until the player reaches 1 point Note: if the player is eligible for underage football at that club, it must play 5 senior games to meet the criteria for a year of service. * See clause 7.1 for 2020 and 2021 season
Note: Metropolitan Leagues and Region may reassess an individual players points classification where it is deemed inappropriate based on playing history		
Note: Where a player qualifies in more than one category based on their playing history in the previous 3 seasons, the category with the highest points will apply, hence the use of the flow chart. (Home players are excluded).		

Definition of Junior Aligned Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where seniors and juniors exist under the same constitution, or Where there is a memorandum of understanding in place between standalone senior and junior clubs that is approved by a Metropolitan League or Region and AFL Victoria or Where the player pathway from junior to senior clubs' football in an area is otherwise restrictive, a Metropolitan League or Regions in country areas have adopted By Law clauses which align specific junior and senior clubs to create a player pathway. <p>All MOU's and By Law clauses must be approved by Metropolitan Leagues or Regions in country areas to ensure appropriate player pathways exist and approved by AFL Victoria following endorsement by the CCSP Advisory Panel.</p>																				
Premier Community Competitions * Note: this includes Development Community recruited from these competitions.	<table> <tr> <td>Eastern FNL Premier Division</td> <td>Ballarat FNL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Essendon D.F.L Premier Div.</td> <td>Bendigo FNL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Northern FNL Division 1</td> <td>Geelong FNL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Southern F.N.L Division1</td> <td>Gippsland FL</td> </tr> <tr> <td>VAFA Premier Division</td> <td>Goulburn Valley L</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Western Region F.L Division 1</td> <td>Hampden FNL</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Murray FL</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Ovens & Murray FNL</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Mornington Peninsula FNL – Division 1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Outer East Premier Division</td> </tr> </table>	Eastern FNL Premier Division	Ballarat FNL	Essendon D.F.L Premier Div.	Bendigo FNL	Northern FNL Division 1	Geelong FNL	Southern F.N.L Division1	Gippsland FL	VAFA Premier Division	Goulburn Valley L	Western Region F.L Division 1	Hampden FNL		Murray FL		Ovens & Murray FNL		Mornington Peninsula FNL – Division 1		Outer East Premier Division
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	Outer East Premier Division																				

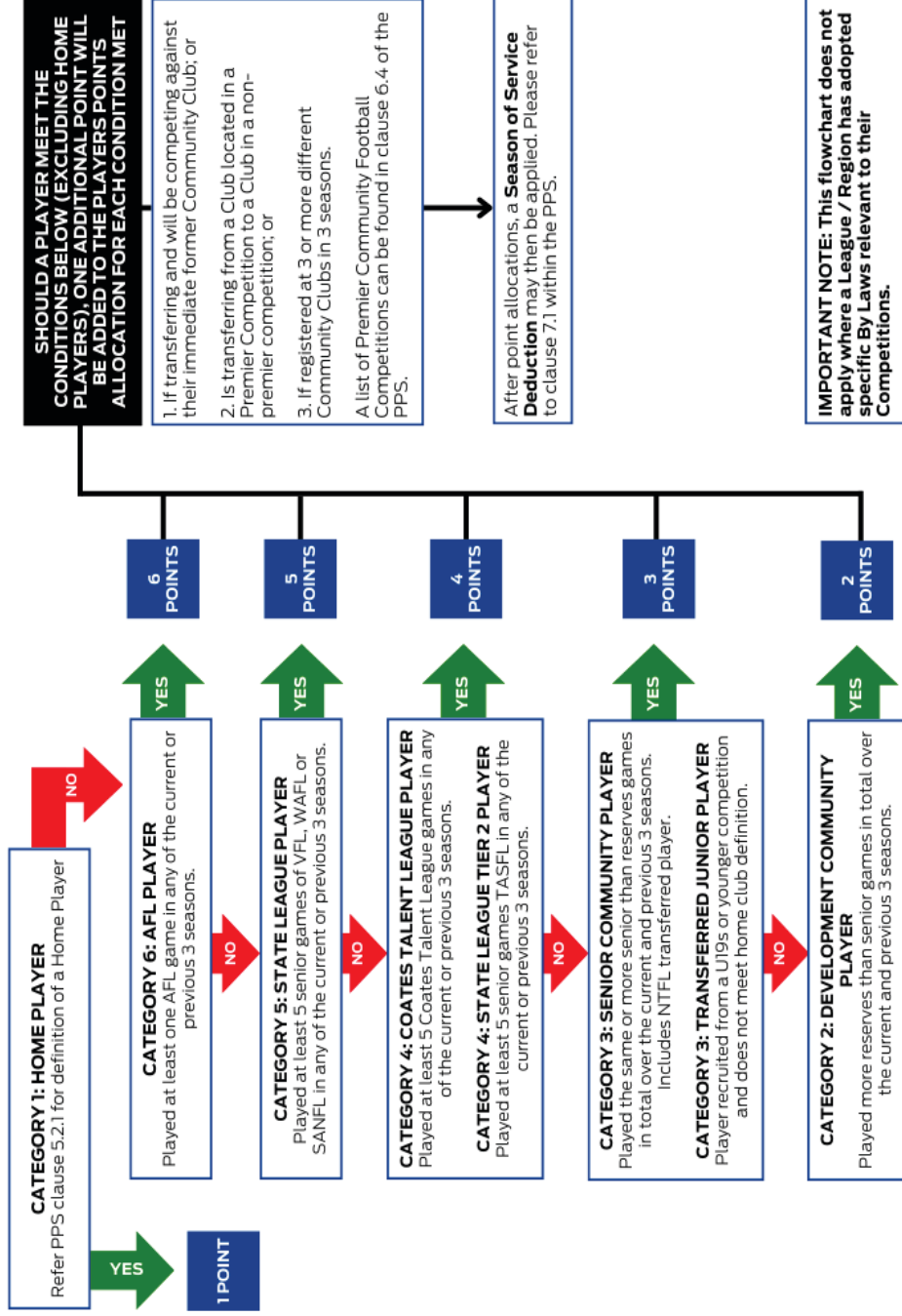
12.2. Total Team Points Allocation Tables

Metropolitan Leagues and Regions may choose to adopt any of these types of clauses below based upon unique local conditions when allocating total team points;

Total Team Points Allowances / Reductions Consistent with clause 8.2	Small population base	Additional points to team allocation where the club is located in a region with a low population base
	Ladder Position	Additional points to team allocation if team did not qualify for finals in previous season or has been promoted from previous season
		Reduction in points to team allocation for multiple premierships and/or sustained success over previous seasons.
		Additional points to team allocation where a club endures significant hardship, lack of success, is coming out of recess or is a recently merged or restructured entity.
	Junior Pathway	Additional points to team allocation where a club has no U18/19 or younger underage sides aligned (MOU in place) to it, and not capable of developing a junior program due to reasons outside of its control, or if a club is aligned with a university and the team is based around players coming a going over a 3-4 year period.

12.3 – Player Points Assessment Flowchart

To assist in allocating points to players, the flow chart has been developed to assess players based on their playing history prior to registering with their current Community Club.



12.4 - Senior / Junior club Memorandum of Understanding



**SENIOR / JUNIOR CLUB ALIGNMENT
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is made on the ____ day of ____ 20__.

BETWEEN _____ FOOTBALL CLUB.
("Senior Club")

AND _____ FOOTBALL CLUB.
("Junior Club")
(the Parties)

The Senior Club is an affiliated Senior member of the _____ Football League.

The Junior Club is an affiliated Junior member of the _____ Football League.

1. Background

- A. Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited (**AFL Victoria**) has implemented a Player Points System Policy (**PPS Policy**) to support community football club sustainability, equalisation of community football competitions and to promote junior development (**Objectives**).
- B. The Junior Club party to this Memorandum of Understanding (**MOU**) will be recognised as an "**Aligned Junior Club**" in accordance with the PPS Policy.
- C. An Aligned Junior Club player is eligible for Player Point Allocation categorisation in accordance with the PPS Policy as amended by AFL Victoria from time to time.
- D. The Parties agree to comply with the terms and conditions set out in this MOU and the Objectives of the PPS Policy.
- E. Each Party will cooperate to maximize the opportunities for junior players to move to senior football through the Senior Club's pathway competition (e.g. Under 19/ Under 18). This may include permit arrangements approved by the affiliated governing bodies where players are still eligible to play junior football.

2. Commencement of Agreement

The Parties agree that this MOU shall commence from dd/mm/yyyy, and following signing by relevant Clubs, Regions, Metropolitan Leagues and AFL Victoria as applicable.

Please note that any Junior games played prior to this date with the Junior club detailed in this MoU will not be included in assessing if a junior player meets the requirements of the Home Player category.

3. Amendment

This MoU may not be varied except by a written instrument duly executed on behalf of each Party.

4. No Partnership, No Agency

Each of the Parties shall, in all other respects, remain independent of each other and nothing in this MoU shall be construed as creating a relationship of partnership, principal and agent or of trustee and beneficiary.

The Parties acknowledge that words and definitions defined in the PPS Policy shall bear the same meaning in this MOU and to the extent of any inconsistency between this MoU and the PPS Policy, the PPS Policy shall take priority.

SIGNED for an on behalf of _____ **Football Club (Senior Club)**

..... President Name

..... Signature/...../..... Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of _____ **Football Club (Junior Club)**

..... President Name

..... Signature/...../..... Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of **Metropolitan League/ Region (of the Senior Club)**

..... C.E.O / Region Managers name

..... Signature/...../..... Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of **Metropolitan League/ Region (of the Junior Club, if different to where Senior Club is affiliated)**

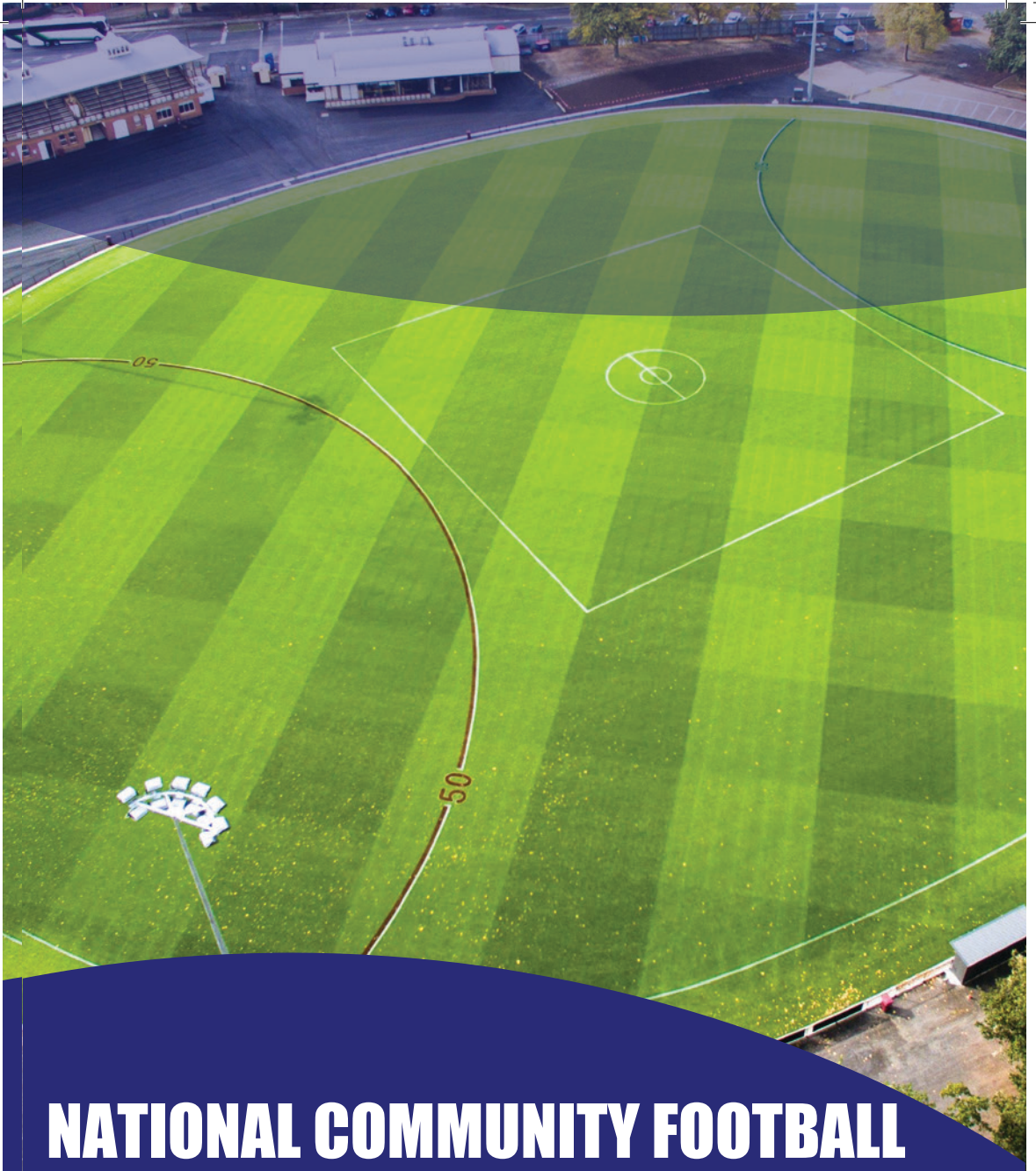
..... C.E.O / Region Managers name

..... Signature/...../..... Date of signing

SIGNED for an on behalf of **AFL Victoria**

..... Football Operations Manager name

..... Signature/...../..... Date of signing



NATIONAL COMMUNITY FOOTBALL POLICY HANDBOOK

MARCH 2024

 TOYOTA 
CLUBHELP

PURPOSE

The National Community Football Policy Handbook aims to:

- A. make it easier for leagues, clubs, volunteers and other stakeholders to administer Australian Football at the State and community level;
- B. provide a framework for key organisational requirements in relation to Australian Football at the State and community level;
- C. address appropriate standards of behaviour and the prevention of discrimination and harassment in Australian Football at the State and community level; and
- D. encourage that the game of Australian Football is played in a fair and good-spirited manner.

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PART A – GENERAL

1. Definitions and Interpretation

1.1 Definitions

In this Policy Handbook:

Accreditation (or **Accredited**) means:

- (a) in respect of a Coach, registration and accreditation (including re-accreditation) of a Person via Coach.AFL and otherwise in accordance with Section [5](#); and
- (b) in respect of an Umpire, registration and/or accreditation (including re-accreditation) of a Person via OfficialsHQ and otherwise in accordance with Section [6](#).

Australian Football has the meaning given to that term in the Laws of the Game.

AFL means Australian Football League (ACN 004 122 211).

AFL Affiliate means any league, association or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of Matches which is affiliated to the AFL, including a State Football Body.

AFL Club means a Club competing in an AFL/AFLW Competition.

AFL National Dispensation Application Form means an AFL National Dispensation Application Form in the form set out in [Appendix 6](#) or such other form prescribed by the Controlling Body from time to time.

AFL NSW/ACT means AFL (NSW/ACT) Commission Ltd (ACN 086 839 385).

AFL NT means AFL (Northern Territory) Limited (ACN 097 620 525).

AFL Queensland means AFL (Queensland) Limited (ACN 090 629 342).

AFL Tasmania means Football Tasmania Limited (ACN 085 213 350).

AFL Victoria means Australian Football League (Victoria) Limited (ACN 147 664 579).

AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel means the panel established by the AFL in accordance with Section [10.2](#) from time to time.

AFL/AFLW Competition means the AFL's elite level national men's and women's Competitions (as the context dictates).

AFL/AFLW Listed Player means a Player listed with an AFL Club on their primary or rookie list.

Anti-Doping Code means the AFL Anti-Doping Code adopted by the AFL which regulates the use and administration of drugs by Players competing in the Competitions conducted by a Controlling Body or such other code or policy adopted by a Controlling Body which has been approved by the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority.

Appeal Board means an appeal board established by a Controlling Body in accordance with Section [26.2](#).

Appendix means an appendix to this Policy Handbook.

Appellant means an appellant under Section [26.1\(b\)](#) and, where applicable, includes an Appellant's representative.

Auditory Offence means a Reportable Offence specified in Table 7 of [Appendix 1](#) which may be graded by a Controlling Body to determine an appropriate base sanction for that Reportable Offence.

Certificate means a written statement from a physician or other medically qualified health care provider which attests to the result of a medical examination of a patient and can serve as evidence of a health condition including a Disability.

Child Abuse includes all forms of physical abuse, emotional or psychological abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect or negligent treatment, grooming, commercial (e.g. for financial gain) exploitation, harassing behaviour, such as bullying or other exploitation of a Child or Young Person and includes any actions that results in actual or potential Harm to a Child or Young Person. Child abuse can be a single incident, but usually takes place over time.

Children and Young People means a person under the age of eighteen years. Child or Young Person shall mean a single person falling within the definition of Children and Young People.

Citation Notice means a citation notice in the form set out in [Appendix 6](#).

Classifiable Offence means a Reportable Offence specified in [Table 1](#) of [Appendix 1](#), which may be graded by a Controlling Body to determine an appropriate base sanction for that Reportable Offence.

Club means a club fielding a team in a Competition, including a Destination Club or Source Club.

Club Officer means a president, chairperson, vice president, vice chairperson, general manager, chief executive officer, football manager, Coach, board or committee member of a Club or any other servant or agent, whether formally appointed or not, who makes or participates in the decision making that affects the whole, or a substantial part, of the business or operations of a Club.

Coach means a senior coach, reserves coach, assistant coach, volunteer coach or any other Person holding, or seeking to hold, coaching responsibilities at a Club or Controlling Body who is Accredited (or required to be Accredited) in accordance with Section [4](#).

Coach.AFL means the AFL's online coaching platform which incorporates the Accreditation portal for Coaches and a library of online training and other resources available to all Coaches.

Competition means any Australian Football competition conducted by a Controlling Body, including AFL/AFLW Competitions and any Tier 1 Competition or Tier 2 Competition.

Competition Management Platform means PlayHQ.

Conduct means a Person's conduct in relation to a Reportable Offence, which will be assessed in accordance with [Appendix 1](#) and may be graded as "Intentional" or "Careless" for a Classifiable Offence or "Threatening", "High-level Abusive, Obscene or Insulting" or "Low-level Abusive, Obscene or Insulting" for an Auditory Offence.

Contact means the level of contact in relation to a Reportable Offence, which will be assessed in accordance with [Appendix 1](#) and may be graded as "High/Groin/Chest" or "Body".

Contingency means any contingency related to or in any way connected with a Match.

Contravening Person has the meaning given to that term in Section [10.3\(a\)\(i\)](#).

Controlling Body means:

- (a) the AFL;
- (b) an AFL Affiliate;
- (c) any league, association or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of Matches of Australian Football which is affiliated to an AFL Affiliate;
- (d) any league, association or body responsible for the organisation and conduct of Matches of Australian Football, which has determined to adopt and enforce this Policy Handbook or any part of this Policy Handbook.

Declared Player means a Player who has entered into a current, valid Standard Player Declaration with a Club.

Deregistration means removal of the registration or Accreditation of a Player or Football Official (**Deregistered** has the same meaning).

Deregistration Warning means the deregistration warning template set out in [Appendix 6](#).

Destination Club means the Club to which a Player is Transferring.

Destination Controlling Body means the Controlling Body to which a Player is Transferring (or Football Official is transferring).

Direct Tribunal Offence means a Reportable Offence specified in Section [4](#) of [Appendix 1](#), which is referred directly to the Tribunal for determination without grading.

Disability means a disability as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (Cth) or in any similar state-based legislation applicable to a particular Controlling Body including those disabilities listed in [Appendix 4](#).

Disciplinary Officer means a person appointed by a Controlling Body in accordance with Section [24](#).

Disciplinary History means the recorded history of any charges laid and sanctions imposed for Reportable Offence and Policy Breaches under Part E (Disciplinary) of this Policy Handbook in respect of a Person.

Early Guilty Plea means an early guilty plea submitted by a Person in relation to:

- (a) a Reportable Offence in accordance with Section [22.4](#); or
- (b) a Policy Breach in accordance with Section [23.5](#).

Executive Officer means a chief executive officer or head of a Controlling Body.

Football Official means a Club Officer, Disciplinary Officer, Umpire, Umpire escort or coach, Coach, trainer, team manager, interchange steward, water carrier, timekeeper, scoreboard attendant, runner, employee of a Club or any other Match official.

Game Permit means a permit as defined under Section [3.7\(b\)\(i\)](#) (otherwise known as a 'Type 1 permit' and previously known as a 'Match-Day Permit').

Harm means any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a Child's or Young Person's physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.

Impact means the impact of Conduct in relation to a Reportable Offence, which will be assessed in accordance with [Appendix 1](#) and may be graded as "Low", "Medium", "High" or "Severe".

Incident Referral Form means an incident referral form in relation to an alleged Reportable Offence in the form set out in [Appendix 6](#) or such other form prescribed by the relevant Controlling Body from time to time.

Interchange Agreement means an agreement entered into between two or more Controlling Bodies allowing Players to participate in Matches between those Controlling Bodies under a Permit.

Laws of the Game means the Laws of Australian Football as administered and controlled by the AFL and set out at <https://play.afl/learning-resource/laws-game>.

Low-level Offence means a low-level Reportable Offence specified in Clause [5](#) of [Appendix 1](#), which does not require grading.

Match means any Australian Football match played in a Competition.

Match Review Officer means a Match Review Panel comprising one Person.

Match Review Panel means a match review panel appointed pursuant to Section [22.2\(b\)\(i\)](#).

Medical Specialist means a doctor who has completed advanced education and clinical training in a specified area of medicine and includes a Paediatrician, Sports Physician or Controlling Body approved general medical practitioner.

Notice of Appeal means a notice of appeal in relation to an appeal under Section [26.3](#) in the form set out in [Appendix 6](#) or such other form prescribed by the relevant Controlling Body from time to time.

Notice of Breach means a notice of breach in relation to an alleged Policy Breach in the form set out in [Appendix 6](#) or such other form prescribed by the relevant Controlling Body from time to time.

Notice of Charge means a notice of charge in relation to an alleged Reportable Offence in the form set out in [Appendix 6](#) or such other form prescribed by the relevant Controlling Body from time to time.

Notice of Complaint means a notice of complaint in the form set out in [Appendix 6](#) or such other form prescribed by the Controlling Body from time to time.

OfficialsHQ means the AFL's online umpire management platform which incorporates the Accreditation portal for Umpires and a library of online training and other resources available to Umpires.

Paediatrician means a medical practitioner who specialises in medical care and treatment for children and babies.

Permit means a Season Permit or Game Permit.

Permit Committee means a committee appointed under Section [3.10](#).

Person means a Club (where applicable), Football Official, Player, Club member, parent or guardian of a Player, spectator of a Match or any other person reasonably connected to Australian Football and within the purview of this Policy Handbook.

Physical Size Considerations means, in respect of a Player:

- (a) a body mass index (i.e. weight (in kilograms) divided by height (in metres squared)) below the 5th percentile for that Player's age; or
- (b) a height below the 5th percentile for that Player's age,

as measured by an appropriately qualified General Practitioner or Medical Specialist.

Player includes a player registered to play Australian Football for a Club and/or participate in a Competition, including a Declared Player or Underage Player.

PlayHQ means the AFL's online competition management system currently operated by PlayHQ designed to assist Controlling Bodies with the management of their competitions and membership data.

Policy Breach means a breach of any Section of this Policy Handbook (other than a breach constituting a Reportable Offence).

Protective Equipment has the meaning described in Law 9.1 in the Laws of the Game and will be categorised as Class 1 Protective Equipment, Class 2 Protective Equipment or Class 3 Protective Equipment as specified in [Appendix 5](#).

Receiver means the person to whom an Auditory Offence was directed which will be assessed in accordance with [Appendix 1](#) and may be graded as "Umpire" or "Another Person".

Reportable Offence means any reportable offence identified in the Laws of Australian Football, including the reportable offences specified in [Appendix 1](#).

SANFL means South Australian National Football League Incorporated (ABN 59 518 757 737).

Season Permit means a permit as defined under Section [3.7\(b\)\(ii\)](#) (otherwise known as a 'Type 2 permit' and previously known as a 'Local Interchange Permit').

Serious Criminal Offence means criminal offence falling within the scope of the list of offences set out in [Appendix 3](#).

Source Club means the Club from which a Player is Transferring, being the Club with which the Player is registered.

Source Controlling Body means the Controlling Body from which a Player is Transferring (or Football Official is transferring).

Sports Physician means a medical practitioner who specialises in the treatment of injuries resulting from athletic activities.

Standard Player Declaration means a standard player declaration:

- (a) in the form attached at [Appendix 6](#); or
- (b) in such other form as approved for use by a State Football Body or the AFL,

which sets out the details of a Player's arrangement to play for a Club.

State Football Body means each of the following AFL Affiliates:

- (a) AFL NSW/ACT;
- (b) AFL NT;
- (c) AFL Queensland;
- (d) AFL Tasmania;
- (e) AFL Victoria;
- (f) SANFL; and
- (g) WAFC.

Tier 1 Club means a Club competing in a Tier 1 Competition.

Tier 1 Competition means each of the following Competitions (male and female, as applicable):

- (a) Victorian Football League senior Competitions conducted by AFL Victoria;
- (b) Coates League under 18s Competitions conducted by AFL Victoria;
- (c) Tasmanian State League senior, reserves and under 18s Competitions conducted by AFL Tasmania;
- (d) SANFL senior, reserves and under 18s Competitions conducted by SANFL; and
- (e) West Australian Football League senior, reserves and under 18s Competitions conducted by WAFC.

Tier 2 Club means a Club competing in a Tier 2 Competition.

Tier 2 Competition means any Competition other than a Tier 1 Competition or an AFL/AFLW Competition.

Transfer means the movement of a Player from one Club to another Club in accordance with Section [3](#) (**Transferring** and **Transferred** have the same meaning).

Transfer Request means a request to Transfer a Player which has been initiated in accordance with Section [3.3\(a\)\(i\)](#).

Tribunal means a tribunal established by a Controlling Body in accordance with Section [25.2](#).

Umpire includes a registered field, boundary, goal or emergency umpire.

Underage Player means a Player under eighteen (18) years of age as of 31 December in the year prior to that Player's applicable playing year.

Volume means the loudness and exposure of Conduct in relation to an Auditory Offence, which will be assessed in accordance with [Appendix 1](#) and may be graded as "Low", "Medium" or "Loud".

WAFC means West Australian Football Commission Incorporated (ABN 51 167 923 136).

1.2 Interpretation

In the interpretation of this Policy Handbook, unless there is something in the subject or context inconsistent therewith:

- (a) words importing the singular will be deemed to include the plural and vice versa;
- (b) words importing persons will be deemed to include all bodies and associations, incorporated or unincorporated and vice versa;
- (c) headings are included for convenience only and will not affect the interpretation of this Policy Handbook;
- (d) "including" and similar words are not words of limitation;
- (e) a reference to a business day means any day, other than a Saturday or Sunday, or a public holiday;
- (f) words, terms and phrases not otherwise defined in this Policy Handbook will be given their ordinary meaning;
- (g) **[Guidance notes]** throughout the Policy Handbook are for guidance only and not operative terms of the Policy Handbook; and
- (h) this Policy Handbook includes this Policy Handbook as amended, varied, supplemented or replaced from time to time and any Appendix, schedule, attachment, annexure or exhibit to this Policy Handbook or that document.

1.3 Amendment

The AFL may from time to time amend this Policy Handbook as it, in its absolute discretion, deems fit.

1.4 General

Any matter of any kind whatsoever not dealt with or provided for in this Handbook may be dealt in such a manner as the AFL determines.

2. Application

2.1 Laws of the Game

The Laws of the Game are adopted as part of this Policy Handbook and its terms are deemed terms of this Policy Handbook.

2.2 Governing body

The AFL is recognised by Sport Australia as the governing body responsible for the management and development of Australian Football in Australia. The AFL recognises the legislative and regulatory mandate of Sport Australia to develop sport and sporting excellence in Australia and to increase participation, including through the provision of funding, in accordance with the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989* (Cth). Wherever reasonably practicable, the AFL adopts the guidelines, governance, accountability and transparency mechanisms promulgated by Sport Australia.

As part of the AFL's recognition as the governing body responsible for the management and development of Australian Football, the AFL is committed to being accountable at the national level for providing all Persons with technically and ethically sound sport programs, policies and services. This Policy Handbook has been prepared having regard to that commitment and is formally endorsed by the AFL.

2.3 Responsibility of Controlling Body

A Controlling Body must:

- (a) adopt, implement and comply with this Policy Handbook;
- (b) subject to Section [2.4](#), make such amendments to its constitution, rules, regulations and by-laws as may be necessary to ensure the enforceability of this Policy Handbook;
- (c) use best endeavours to make this Policy Handbook available to each Person involved with or related to the Controlling Body and educate such Persons about this Policy Handbook and the consequences for breaches of this Policy Handbook;
- (d) promote and model appropriate standards of conduct at all times and in accordance with this Policy Handbook;
- (e) if required under this Policy Handbook, promptly deal with any breaches of this Policy Handbook or complaints made under this Policy Handbook;
- (f) monitor and adopt updates to this Policy Handbook as notified by the AFL from time to time.

2.4 Transition period

It is acknowledged that there may be a period of transition following the implementation of this Policy Handbook, where there may be inconsistencies between this Policy Handbook

and a Controlling Body's constitution, rules, regulations and by-laws (**Local Rules**). While a Controlling Body is to use all reasonable endeavours to amend its Local Rules to ensure the enforceability of this Policy Handbook, to the extent of any inconsistency between this Policy Handbook and a Controlling Body's Local Rules, the Controlling Body's Local Rules will apply until 31 December 2024, or such later time as determined by the AFL.

2.5 AFL national policies, regulations and guidelines superseded

- (a) This Policy Handbook supersedes the following AFL national policies, regulations and guidelines:
- (i) Complaint and Investigation Guidelines dated June 2013;
 - (ii) Member Protection Policy dated June 2013;
 - (iii) National Age Dispensation Policy dated October 2018;
 - (iv) National Child Protection Policy dated March 2015;
 - (v) National Extreme Weather Policy dated June 2013;
 - (vi) National Gambling Policy dated June 2013;
 - (vii) National Coaching Accreditation Policy dated November 2018;
 - (viii) National Player and Official Deregistration Policy dated July 2021;
 - (ix) National Player Registration and Transfer Regulations dated March 2022;
 - (x) National Vilification & Discrimination Policy dated February 2013;
 - (xi) National Sexuality & Pregnancy Guidelines dated February 2013;
 - (xii) National Social Media Engagement Policy dated June 2013;
 - (xiii) National Injury Management Policy dated April 2019;
 - (xiv) State and Territory Disciplinary Committee Guidelines dated 2021; and
 - (xv) State and Territory Tribunal Guidelines dated 2021,
- (Superseded Policies, Regulations and Guidelines).**
- (b) The Superseded Policies, Regulations and Guidelines have no further force or effect.
- (c) All AFL issued policies, regulations and guidelines other than the Superseded Policies, Regulations and Guidelines in effect at the date of this Policy Handbook, some of which are incorporated by reference in this Policy handbook, remain in full force and effect unless determined otherwise by the AFL.

PART B – ELIGIBILITY & REGISTRATION

What is the purpose of Part B?

- This Part sets out how someone can get involved in Australian Football as a Player, Coach or Umpire.
- Section 3 governs the registration and transfer of Players within Australian Football and aims to ensure the movement of Players is fair, transparent and consistent.
- Section 4 provides for the dispensation of a Player to participate in a Competition below their applicable age group where a disability and/or physical size considerations exist. A Player who wishes to apply for dispensation may make an application in accordance with Section 4.
- The national framework for the accreditation of Coaches and Umpires of Australian Football is set out in Sections 5 and 6. The framework is focused on improving Coach and Umpire education and Player safety at all levels of Australian Football and forms part of the AFL's commitment to creating a fun and safe environment for every Person to participate in Australian Football.
- The AFL is committed to providing a physiologically and psychologically safe environment for all participants and Section 7, which deals with the deregistration of Players and Football Officials, provides a risk management framework and policy basis for the AFL and community football stakeholders to support that objective.

The points above are for background only and are not operative terms of this Policy Handbook.

3. Player registration, transfers and permits

3.1 Player eligibility

(a) Ineligibility

A Player who is:

- (i) unregistered; or
- (ii) registered based on false or misleading information,

will be ineligible to play for a Club and/or participate in a Competition.

(b) Age group eligibility

- (i) To participate in a Competition, a Player must be seven years of age by the following dates in the applicable playing year in each respective State and Territory:
 - (A) 1 January – Tasmania;
 - (B) 30 April – South Australia, Victoria;
 - (C) 30 June – Northern Territory, Queensland, Western Australia; and
 - (D) 31 July – Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales.

- (ii) Subject to Section 3.1(b)(iii), a Player's age eligibility to participate in a Competition age group is as per the following table:

Age Group	Minimum age to participate in age group (age as at 31 December in the year prior to the applicable playing year)	Age turning in the applicable playing year
Under 8	7 - subject to Section 3.1(b)(i)	7 or 8 - subject to Section 3.1(b)(i)
Under 9	7	7, 8 or 9 - subject to Section 3.1(b)(i)
Under 10	7	8, 9 or 10
Under 11	8	9, 10 or 11
Under 12	9	10, 11 or 12
Under 13	10	11, 12 or 13
Under 14	11	12, 13 or 14
Under 15	12	13, 14 or 15
Under 16	13	14, 15 or 16
Under 17	14	15, 16 or 17
Under 18	15	16, 17 or 18
Under 19	16	17, 18 or 19
Seniors	16	17 or older

- (iii) A Controlling Body may permit a Player to participate in a higher age group than that specified in the table above where it determines that there are exceptional and compelling circumstances that warrant such permission being granted. *[Guidance note: In assessing whether there are exceptional and compelling circumstances, a Controlling Body must have regard to the Player's football development interests including their physical capacity, experience, skill level and social maturity.]*
- (iv) A Player who is 14 years of age or older as at 31 December in the year prior to their applicable playing year must play in a Competition age group that accords to their gender except where:
- (A) approved under the AFL Gender Diversity Policy Community Football (refer to section 8 (Gender Diversity)); or
 - (B) a State Football Body determines, in its absolute discretion, that there are exceptional and compelling circumstances that warrant otherwise, provided that the AFL Gender Diversity Policy Community Football does not apply.
- (v) For the avoidance of doubt, mixed Competition age groups are only permitted up to and including Under 14.
- (vi) Upon request by a Controlling Body from time to time, a Player must provide evidence or confirmation of a Player's age from time to time.

[Guidance note: For example, if a Player is 11 years of age as at 31 December 2023 then that Player's Competition age group for the 2024 calendar year will be Under 12s (assuming single age groups).]

(c) **Playing in multiple Competitions**

Unless otherwise specified in this Policy Handbook, a Player who is 14 years of age or older as at 31 December in the year prior to their applicable playing year must not participate in both a boys Competition and a girls Competition at the same time or interchangeably.

[Guidance note: This Section prevents a Player who has reached 14 years of age from participating in a boys Competition and a girls Competition at the same time or switching back and forth.]

3.2 Player Registration

- (a) A Player must be registered via the Competition Management Platform to play Australian Football for a Club and/or participate in a Competition.
- (b) A Player may only register under one name and must not submit multiple concurrent registrations. Clubs must monitor compliance with this Section [3.2\(b\)](#) and where a Club becomes aware of an issue under this Section [3.2\(b\)](#) they must immediately notify the relevant Controlling Body.
- (c) Each Player registration must be submitted electronically via the Competition Management Platform by the Player or, where the Player is an Underage Player, by that Player's parent or legal guardian.
- (d) For a Player registration to be active, the Club must accept the Player registration via the Competition Management Platform.
- (e) Unless otherwise specified in this Policy Handbook, the Player registration period in respect of each season commences on 1 November.

3.3 Transfer Request

(a) Initiating a Transfer Request

- (i) Subject to Section [3.3\(a\)\(ii\)](#), a Transfer may be initiated by:
 - (A) a Player; or
 - (B) where a Player is an Underage Player, that Player's parent or legal guardian; or
 - (C) a Destination Club with the Player's consent,

submitting a Transfer Request electronically via the Competition Management Platform.
- (ii) A Transfer must not be initiated in respect of a Player who is subject to a Permit.
- (iii) Once a Transfer Request is submitted under Section [3.3\(a\)\(i\)](#), notification of the Transfer Request will be automatically sent via the Competition Management Platform to the Source Club.

(b) Transfer Request Window

- (i) Subject to Sections [3.3\(b\)\(ii\)](#) and [3.3\(b\)\(iii\)](#), a Transfer Request must be submitted between:
 - (A) 12:01am (AEDT) on 1 November and 11:59pm (AEDT) on 30 November during the calendar year preceding the relevant season;
or

- (B) 12:01am (AEDT) on 1 February and 11:59pm (AEST) on 30 June during the calendar year of the relevant season,

(the **Transfer Periods**).

- (ii) A State Football Body may permit an intrastate Transfer Request, or the relevant State Football Bodies may jointly permit an interstate Transfer Request, outside of the Transfer Periods where:
 - (A) exceptional and compelling circumstances apply to the Transfer Request; or
 - (B) the '24-month rule' set out in Section [3.5\(c\)](#) applies to the Transfer Request.
- (iii) The Transfer Periods are not applicable to the following Competitions conducted by AFL NT (and any other Competitions notified by AFLNT from time to time):
 - (A) Northern Territory Football League;
 - (B) Tiwi Islands Football League;
 - (C) Lajamanu Football League;
 - (D) Maningrida Football League.
- (c) **Source Club to approve or refuse Transfer Request**
 - (i) A Source Club may, within six (6) calendar days from notification of a Transfer Request under Section [3.3\(a\)\(iii\)](#), either
 - (A) approve the Transfer Request; or
 - (B) refuse the Transfer Request under one or more of the grounds specified in Section [3.5\(b\)](#).
- (d) **Transfer Request withdrawal**
 - (i) A Player wishing to withdraw their Transfer Request must do so in writing to the Source Controlling Body within six (6) calendar days from notification of the Transfer Request under Section [3.3\(a\)\(iii\)](#).
 - (ii) For the avoidance of doubt, if a Transfer Request is approved by the Source Club before the Player lodges a transfer withdrawal under Section [3.3\(d\)\(i\)](#), the Player is not eligible for a transfer withdrawal.
- (e) **Suspended Players**
 - (i) A suspended Player may Transfer to a Destination Club (**First Transfer**) but must not play a Match with that Destination Club until the Player has served their suspension and may not subsequently Transfer (i.e. a second consecutive transfer) to a further Destination Club until at least twenty eight (28) days after completion of the First Transfer.

- (ii) A suspended Player seeking a Transfer from a winter Competition to a summer Competition and vice versa will be subject to Law 22.4.4 of the Laws of the Game.

3.4 Transfer approval

(a) How Transfer is approved

- (i) If a Source Club fails to either approve or refuse a Transfer Request in accordance with Section [3.3\(c\)](#), the Transfer will be approved automatically in the Competition Management Platform following the expiry of the prescribed period of six (6) calendar days.
- (ii) Subject to Section [3.3\(d\)](#), if a Transfer Request is approved under Section [3.3\(c\)](#) or [3.4\(a\)\(i\)](#):
 - (A) notification of such approval will be automatically sent via the Competition Management Platform to the Source Controlling Body; and
 - (B) if applicable, notification of such approval together with the playing history of the Player (including their Disciplinary History) will be automatically sent via the Competition Management Platform to the Destination Controlling Body; and
 - (C) notification of such approval will be automatically sent via the Competition Management Platform to the Destination Club and the Destination Club must either approve or refuse the Transfer Request.
- (iii) If a Transfer Request is approved under Section [3.4\(a\)\(ii\)\(C\)](#), the Player will be “pending” in the Competition Management Platform and ineligible to be entered on a team sheet and play for the Destination Club until the Player or, where the Player is an Underage Player, that Player’s parent or legal guardian completes the Player’s registration to the Destination Club via the Competition Management Platform after which the Player will be “active” in the Competition Management Platform and eligible to be entered on a team sheet and play for the Destination Club.

(b) Transfer Request completed incorrectly

If a Transfer Request is submitted and/or approved incorrectly, the relevant Controlling Body may deal with the Transfer Request in any manner it reasonably determines.

3.5 Transfer refusal

(a) How Transfer is refused

If a Source Club refuses a Transfer Request under Section [3.3\(c\)](#):

- (i) the Transfer will be refused in the Competition Management Platform; and
- (ii) a Person or Destination Club may not submit a further Transfer Request unless the dispute has been resolved in accordance with Section [3.5](#).

(b) Grounds for refusal

- (i) Subject to Sections [3.5\(b\)\(ii\)](#) and [3.5\(c\)](#), a Source Club may refuse a Transfer Request where it can substantiate that the Player:
 - (A) is a Declared Player whose current player arrangement requires the Player to continue to play for the Source Club (as substantiated in accordance with Section [3.5\(b\)\(iii\)](#)); or
 - (B) is financially indebted to the Source Club as evidenced by proper financial records; or
 - (C) is in possession of Source Club property (for example, Source Club jumper or Source Club equipment) that must be returned; or
 - (D) wishes to withdraw their Transfer Request in accordance with Section [3.3\(d\)](#).

For the avoidance of doubt a Source Club may only refuse a Transfer Request on grounds set out in Section [3.5\(b\)\(i\)](#).

- (ii) Where a Source Club refuses a Transfer Request on grounds specified in Section [3.5\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) or [3.5\(b\)\(i\)\(C\)](#) in respect of a Player, those grounds will not be valid grounds for that Source Club to refuse a Transfer Request for that Player once 24 months has elapsed since the date of the initial refusal of Transfer Request. *[Guidance note: This Section is distinct from the '24-month rule' set out in Section [3.5\(c\)](#).]*
- (iii) Upon request by its affiliate Controlling Body, a Source Club refusing to Transfer a Player must provide evidence (for example, written documentation acknowledged by both parties) in order to substantiate the refusal within four (4) calendar days of such request. Failure to provide such evidence may result in the Controlling Body approving the Transfer Request upon resubmission of the Transfer Request by the Player or, where the Player is an Underage Player, that Player's parent or guardian.
- (iv) A Destination Club may refuse a Transfer Request initiated under Section [3.3\(a\)\(i\)\(A\)](#) or [3.3\(a\)\(i\)\(B\)](#).

(c) 24-month rule

- (i) Subject to Section [3.5\(c\)\(ii\)](#), a Player who has not played a Match for a period of 24 months or greater may submit a Transfer Request in accordance with Section [3.3\(a\)](#) at any time and that Player's Source Club may not refuse the Transfer Request under any circumstances.

[Guidance note: A Player in these circumstances cannot register at a new Club without following the Transfer process. The Player is still required to submit a Transfer Request, even though it cannot be declined.]

- (ii) A Transfer Request for a Player who has not played a Match for period of 24 months or greater may be refused by that Player's Source Club under Section [3.5\(b\)](#) if that Player has had an approved Transfer Request within the previous 24 months.

(d) Appealing a Transfer refusal

- (i) Where a Player disputes a Transfer refusal, that Player and/or their Destination Club must use best endeavours to resolve the dispute with the Source Club.
- (ii) Where a dispute cannot be resolved under Section [3.5\(d\)\(i\)](#), a Player and their Destination Club may appeal the Transfer refusal by the Source Club provided that:
 - (A) an appeal involving Clubs affiliated with the same Controlling Body will be heard by that Controlling Body's Appeal Board in accordance with Section [26](#);
 - (B) an appeal involving Clubs from two different Controlling Bodies located within the same State will be heard by the relevant State Football Body's Appeal Board in accordance with Section [26](#); and
 - (C) an appeal involving Clubs from two different Controlling Bodies not located within the same State will be referred to the Permit Committee for resolution in accordance with Section [3.11](#).

3.6 Transfer fee

Without limiting any applicable player payment or transfer rules enacted by a Controlling Body in respect of a Competition, no Club or Controlling Body may directly or indirectly receive or pay any transfer fee or any other consideration in respect of a Transfer.

3.7 Player Permits

(a) Interchange Agreement

- (i) A Controlling Body may enter into an Interchange Agreement with another Controlling Body in respect of the movement of Players between:
 - (A) Tier 2 Competitions with the approval of the relevant State Football Body;
 - (B) a Tier 1 Competition and Tier 2 Competition;
 - (C) Tier 1 Competitions;
 - (D) a Tier 1 Competition and AFL/AFLW Competition,
 provided that any Interchange Agreement must be in place by 30 June in the applicable playing year.
- (ii) A copy of an Interchange Agreement entered into under Section [3.7\(a\)\(i\)\(A\)](#) must be lodged with the relevant State Football Body within ten (10) calendar days of its execution for approval by the relevant State Football Body.
- (iii) An Interchange Agreement will be for an indefinite term unless otherwise specified in the Interchange Agreement and may be terminated:
 - (A) by a party to the Interchange Agreement giving notice to the other party to the Interchange Agreement at any time: or

- (B) in respect of an Interchange Agreement entered into under Section [3.7\(a\)\(i\)\(A\)](#), by the relevant State Football Body giving notice to each party to the Interchange Agreement at any time.

(b) Permits

- (i) A Game Permit is a Permit which:
 - (A) allows a Player to play a single Match for a Club (other than their Source Club); and
 - (B) does not require Source Club approval via the Competition Management Platform.
- (ii) A Season Permit is a Permit which:
 - (A) allows a Player to play more than a single Match for a Club (other than their Source Club); and
 - (B) requires Source Club approval via the Competition Management Platform.
- (iii) If a Source Club fails to either approve or refuse a Season Permit in accordance with Section [3.7\(b\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#), the Season Permit will be approved automatically in the Competition Management Platform following the expiry of the prescribed period of six (6) calendar days.
- (iv) Permits are to be applied and managed in accordance with the respective State Football Body rules, regulations or by-laws and it is the responsibility of the relevant Controlling Body to monitor the application and management of Permits.
- (v) Other than pursuant to Section [3.7\(c\)](#), a Permit may not be granted unless there is an Interchange Agreement in place between the relevant Controlling Bodies.
- (vi) Any Player granted a Season Permit will remain registered with their Source Club for the term of the Season Permit.

(c) Seasons Permits (and Northern Territory Football League)

- (i) A Player may Transfer to or from the Northern Territory Football League under a Season Permit using the Competition Management Platform.
- (ii) Season Permits are valid for one (1) season only. Players wishing to continue on a Season Permit basis will be required to complete a new Competition Management Platform application for each subsequent season.
- (iii) Where a Tier 1 Club recruits a Player on a Season Permit, the Tier 1 Competition shall be responsible for ensuring that the Player participates with the Club for one (1) season only.
- (iv) Where a Player has played under a Season Permit and has not played or made themselves available for selection for their Source Club for more than five (5) home and away Matches for a period of twenty-four (24) months, the

Player must lodge a Transfer Request through the Competition Management Platform for any subsequent Transfer.

- (v) Where a Player is drafted as an AFL/AFLW Listed Player during the period of the Season Permit, they shall be regarded as having been recruited from the Source Club of the Controlling Body granting the Season Permit.

3.8 Player declaration

- (a) Where a Club and Player wish to, or are required to, enter into an arrangement in relation to the Player's participation at the Club, the parties must use a Standard Player Declaration.
- (b) A Club must provide a copy of each Player's current Standard Player Declaration upon request by a State Football Body.
- (c) Each Club and Player must ensure all player payments required to be made pursuant to any Standard Playing Declaration are made in accordance with:
 - (i) any applicable player payment rules; and
 - (ii) all applicable State and Commonwealth laws.
- (d) In respect of a Standard Player Declaration, the following provisions apply:
 - (i) a Player must be at least 18 years old to sign a Standard Player Declaration (where a Player is an Underage Player, the Standard Player Declaration must be signed by a parent or guardian);
 - (ii) for a Standard Player Declaration to be valid both the Club and Player (or where the Player is an Underage Player, that Player's parent or guardian) must sign the Standard Player Declaration;
 - (iii) subject to Section [3.8\(d\)\(iv\)](#), a Standard Player Declaration will expire on 31 October each year;
 - (iv) a Standard Player Declaration that is:
 - (A) expressed to be valid for more than one year will expire on 31 October in the final year of the Standard Player Declaration; and
 - (B) executed between a Club in the Northern Territory Football League Competition and Player will expire on 31 March in the final year of the Standard Player Declaration; and
 - (v) a Standard Player Declaration will remain effective until the expiration or earlier termination of the Standard Player Declaration. For the avoidance of doubt, a Club and Player may agree to an early release of the Player from a Standard Player Declaration.
- (e) A Tier 1 Club or AFL/AFLW Competition Standard Player Declaration will take precedence over a Tier 2 Club Standard Player Declaration should the relevant Player wish to participate in a Tier 1 Competition or AFL/AFLW Competition, provided that where a Tier 1 Club or AFL/AFLW Competition Standard Player Declaration expires or is validly terminated within the term of the Tier 2 Club

Standard Player Declaration the relevant Player will be bound by the Tier 2 Club Standard Player Declaration until expiration or earlier termination.

- (f) If there is any dispute concerning this Section [3.8](#), including between a Player and Tier 1 Club or Tier 1 Competition as to whether that Player is a Declared Player, that dispute may be referred to the Permit Committee for determination.
- (g) A Tier 1 Club Declared Player must not play with a Tier 2 Club in a Match unless:
 - (i) that Player's Standard Player Declaration is validly terminated; or
 - (ii) that Player does so pursuant to the rules of the relevant Tier 1 Competition; or
 - (iii) that Player does so under a Permit or Interchange Agreement.

If a Player breaches Section [3.8\(g\)](#), that Player and the relevant Tier 2 Club may be dealt with in such manner as the relevant Controlling Body determines

3.9 Underage Players

- (a) An Underage Player who resides and is registered in one State may not be registered with a Club in a Tier 1 Competition in another State without the prior approval of the Permit Committee.
- (b) In granting any approval under Section [3.9\(a\)](#), the Permit Committee may consider the following factors (without limitation):
 - (i) whether the Underage Player has transferred interstate with their family;
 - (ii) whether the Underage Player has undergone a bona fide transfer of employment to another State;
 - (iii) whether the Underage Player has enrolled in a tertiary education course in another State;
 - (iv) whether the AFL's Head of Talent Pathways and National Diversity Talent Manager (or equivalent) support the move in the interests of developing the Underage Player's football career.

3.10 Permit Committee

- (a) The AFL may, from time to time, appoint a Permit Committee comprising at least three (3) members who in the opinion of the AFL possess sufficient knowledge of Australian Football and are sufficiently qualified to competently perform the role of Permit Committee member.
- (b) The Permit Committee may, upon receipt of a bond amount of \$550.00 (including GST) (or such other amount determined by the Permit Committee) from each Club, consider and determine an appeal involving Clubs from two different States referred to the Permit Committee in accordance with Section [3.5\(d\)\(ii\)\(C\)](#) and the following provisions will apply:
 - (i) the parties will be required to provide brief written submissions to the Permit Committee in respect of matter; and

- (ii) 50% of the bond amount will be refunded to each Club (or such other amount determined by the Permit Committee) unless the Permit Committee considers that the appellant Club's appeal or the defendant Club's defence (as applicable) is vexatious or frivolous in which case the whole bond amount paid by the Club whose appeal or defence is considered vexatious or frivolous may be forfeited.
- (c) The Permit Committee may:
- (i) mediate disputes that arise between State Football Bodies in respect of the application and interpretation of this Section [3](#) and provide final judgment as appropriate;
 - (ii) consider and determine interstate Transfer Requests in relation to Underage Players under Section [3.9](#);
 - (iii) consider and determine matters raised under Sections [3.8](#) and [3.9](#); or
 - (iv) deal with any other matters as determined by the AFL.
- (d) To refer a matter to the Permit Committee under Sections [3.10\(b\)](#) and [3.10\(c\)](#), the relevant party must provide written notice to the AFL (via the AFL Community Football Operations Manager).
- (e) The Permit Committee may:
- (i) exercise its powers under Section [3.10\(c\)](#) in any manner it reasonably determines; and
 - (ii) levy a fee for the administration of matters under Section [3.10\(b\)](#) (with the fee amount to be determined by the Permit Committee).

3.11 False or misleading information

- (a) If a Player submits false or misleading information or intentionally fails to disclose information during the registration process under Section [3.2](#) or in relation to any Transfer Request under Section [3.3](#) or to a Permit Committee under Section [3.10\(b\)\(i\)](#), that Player:
- (i) will be deemed to have also breached Section [9.2\(a\)](#) of this Policy Handbook; and
 - (ii) notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy Handbook, may be dealt with in such manner as the Controlling Body determines including a retrospective determination that the Player was ineligible for Matches in which they participated.
- (b) In addition to any sanction imposed or determination made by the Controlling Body in respect of a Player under Section [3.11\(a\)](#), the Controlling Body may impose a sanction on that Player's Club, except where the Club satisfies the Controlling Body that the Player engaged in the relevant conduct without the knowledge of the Club.

3.12 General provisions

- (a) **Power of AFL and State Football Body**

The AFL or a State Football Body may override any rule or other mechanism of a Club or other Controlling Body relating to the registration, transfer or permit of Players where the AFL or State Football Body (as applicable) determines (acting reasonably) that the relevant rule or other mechanism is inconsistent with this Policy Handbook.

(b) State Football Body responsible

Where a Tier 1 Competition is separately constituted the Controlling Body to which the Tier 1 Competition is affiliated will be responsible for ensuring that the Tier 1 Competition observes and complies with this Section [3](#).

(c) Team in another Tier 1 Competition

Where a Club or team located in one State (**State A**) competes in a Tier 1 Competition based and administered in another State, the Players of the Club or team located in State A will be considered Players from State A.

(d) State affiliation – Tier 2 Competitions

A Controlling Body administering a Tier 2 Competition with two thirds or more of its Clubs domiciled in a State shall be required to affiliate with the State Football Body recognised by the AFL as responsible for the State concerned.

(e) Transfer of Player to an AFL Competition

- (i) A Player will be automatically registered to an AFL Club upon becoming an AFL/AFLW Listed Player.
- (ii) Should a Player be listed as an AFL/AFLW Listed Player by an AFL Club located in a State different to that Player's Tier 1 Club, the Player may play with a Tier 1 Club in that State (i.e. the new State).
- (iii) A Player delisted by an AFL Club who returns to play for a Club in the Tier 1 Competition from which the Player was drafted will be bound by any applicable transfer and registration rules of that Tier 1 Competition.
- (iv) Where a Player is delisted as an AFL/AFLW Listed Player and becomes an AFL/AFLW Listed Player of another AFL Club for the following AFL/AFLW Competition season that Player shall be regarded as having continuous AFL/AFLW Competition registration.

(f) Non-use of Competition Management Platform

Where a Controlling Body does not use the Competition Management Platform, this Section [3](#) will not apply.

4. Age dispensation

4.1 Application process

- (a) A Player may apply for dispensation to play in a Competition age group below their applicable age group on the basis of a Disability or for Physical Size Considerations by submitting an application in accordance with Section [4.1\(b\)](#).

- (b) An application for dispensation under Section [4.1\(a\)](#) must be:
 - (i) in the form of the AFL National Dispensation Application Form or such other form prescribed by the relevant Controlling Body;
 - (ii) submitted via the Player's Club to the Controlling Body;
 - (iii) supported by written consent from the Player's parent or guardian where the player is an Underage Player; and
 - (iv) supported by a Certificate from a Medical Specialist appropriately qualified in an area of practice directly related to the dispensation being sought. Such Certificate, to be completed within three months prior to submission of the application, must state the clinical rationale for the dispensation being sought and have regard to all relevant matters pertaining to the Player including:
 - (A) the Player's Disability; and/or
 - (B) the Player's Physical Size Considerations; and
 - (C) the qualifications of the Medical Specialist providing the Certificate.
- (c) In relation to an application for dispensation on the basis of a Disability, a Medical Specialist may, in their supporting Certificate, recommend that dispensation be approved for two seasons.
- (d) Following its assessment of an application for dispensation, the Controlling Body may:
 - (i) approve the application;
 - (ii) refuse the application; or
 - (iii) request additional information from the Player or Club and, following its assessment of such additional information, either approve or refuse the application.

4.2 Relevant factors in assessing application

In assessing an application for dispensation, a Controlling Body will have regard to the following factors:

- (a) the effect of the Player's Disability or Physical Size Considerations on their capacity to effectively participate in Australian Football, in particular, their capacity to participate against the oldest Players in their age group as prescribed under Section [3.1\(b\)\(ii\)](#);
- (b) the supporting Certificate provided under Section [4.1\(b\)](#) and any recommendation under Section [4.1\(c\)](#);
- (c) what reasonable adjustments have been considered, attempted or undertaken to facilitate the Player remaining in their eligible age group, and any reasons why those adjustments have been unsuccessful or not implemented;

- (d) how it is proposed that the grant of age dispensation will support the Player to overcome any barriers to their effective participation in Australian Football arising from their Disability or Physical Size Considerations;
- (e) the availability of other assistance to the Player to enable them to effectively participate in Australian Football;
- (f) the safety and welfare of the Player and those Players they will be participating with and against; and
- (g) any other relevant factors as determined by the Controlling Body.

4.3 Effect of approved application

- (a) A Player who has received dispensation approval (**Permitted Player**) will be allocated to a Competition age group below their applicable age group. Unless medical advice recommends otherwise or exceptional and compelling circumstances apply, a Permitted Player will be allocated to the next lowest Competition age group.
- (b) If, following receipt of dispensation approval, a Permitted Player plays in a Competition age group other than the Competition age group originally approved, the dispensation approval will be automatically withdrawn.
- (c) A dispensation approval applies for the season in which the dispensation approval is granted unless the Controlling Body endorses a recommendation under Section [4.1\(c\)](#) in which case the dispensation approval will apply for the season in which the dispensation approval is granted and the following season (i.e. two seasons).
- (d) A Controlling Body may, acting reasonably, revoke a dispensation approval at any time provided that the reasons for such revocation are provided to the Permitted Player.

4.4 Appeal

A decision by a Controlling Body under Section [4.1\(c\)](#) may be appealed in accordance with Section [26](#).

5. Coach accreditation

5.1 General

- (a) A Person must be Accredited to coach Australian Football at a Club or Controlling Body.
- (b) A Club or Controlling Body may only appoint a Person as a Coach if that Person is Accredited.
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, the AFL does not represent that a Person who has obtained Accreditation is a fit and proper person to be appointed as a Coach. Without limiting the foregoing:
 - (i) it is a matter for the Club or Controlling Body appointing a Coach to satisfy itself that a Person is a fit and proper person to be appointed as a Coach;

- (ii) the function of the Accreditation process is primarily to ensure that all Coaches satisfactorily complete the required educational modules for their Accreditation level;
- (iii) as part of the Accreditation process a Person may be required to submit a National Police Check to the AFL.

5.2 Accreditation process

(a) Process

- (i) To apply for Accreditation as a Coach, a Person (**Applicant**) must:
 - (A) register on Coach.AFL;
 - (B) accurately and honestly complete the relevant Accreditation application form(s) via Coach.AFL;
 - (C) complete:
 - (1) the relevant training applicable for Foundation Accreditation, Level 2 Accreditation or Level 3 Accreditation (as applicable); and/or
 - (2) the relevant update or refresher training (as applicable); and
 - (D) hold a current working with children check (or equivalent) or otherwise meet the working with children requirements in their State or Territory.
- (ii) Following completion of the Accreditation process set out in Section [5.2\(a\)\(i\)](#) by an Applicant, the AFL may:
 - (A) grant Accreditation to the Applicant with no further requirements; or
 - (B) grant provisional Accreditation to the Applicant and request additional information from the Applicant including a current National Police Check; or
 - (C) deal with the matter in such other manner as the AFL sees fit.

(b) Additional information requested by AFL

- (i) Upon receipt of a request for additional information by the AFL under Section [5.2\(a\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#), the Applicant must provide such requested information to the AFL as soon as practicable for assessment.
- (ii) Following its assessment of the information provided, the AFL may revoke or confirm the Applicant's Accreditation at its absolute discretion.
- (iii) If the information (including any National Police Check) provided discloses that the Applicant has been convicted of, or is charged with, a Serious Criminal Offence, that Applicant's Accreditation may be revoked.
- (iv) A decision by the AFL under this Section [5.2\(b\)](#) will be notified to the Applicant confidentially and as soon as reasonably practicable.

5.3 Review of determination regarding Accreditation

(a) Review right

- (i) Where a Person is not granted Accreditation or has their Accreditation revoked under Section [5.2](#) that Person may, within 14 calendar days of such decision, by written application have that determination reviewed by the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) within a reasonable period of receipt of such written application.
- (ii) A written application under Section [5.3\(a\)\(i\)](#):
 - (A) must be submitted by email to coachregistrar@afl.com.au;
 - (B) must set out why the Person considers the relevant determination to be incorrect; and
 - (C) may include any further information the Person considers relevant.
- (iii) In reviewing a written application submitted in accordance with 5.3(a)(ii), the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) may have regard to any matter they consider relevant including but not limited to:
 - (A) the nature of any information provided under Section [5.2](#);
 - (B) the time elapsed since the date of any charge(s) or conviction(s) disclosed in any information provided under Section [5.2](#);
 - (C) any evidence of a Person's:
 - (1) good standing in the community, especially since the date of any charge(s) or conviction(s) disclosed in information provided under Section [5.2](#); and
 - (2) positive behavioural remediation, especially since the date of any charge(s) or conviction(s) in information provided under Section [5.2](#).
- (iv) Following its review of the written application, the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) may confirm, reverse or modify the original determination.

(b) Appeal right

- (i) A Person the subject of a determination under Section [5.3\(a\)\(iv\)](#) may appeal that determination to a panel comprising at least two (2) members appointed by the AFL Executive General Manager Game Development (or their nominee(s)) on one or more of the following grounds:
 - (A) the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) failed to have regard to relevant matters or had regard to irrelevant matters;

- (B) the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) was affected by a conflict of interest; or
 - (C) the determination, or any part of the process undertaken, was inconsistent with Section [5](#) or any relevant laws.
- (ii) Any such appeal must be submitted by email to coachregistrar@afl.com.au within seven (7) calendar days of a determination under Section [5.3\(a\)\(iv\)](#).
 - (iii) A Person may not produce fresh evidence at an appeal under this Section [5.3\(b\)](#) without leave of the panel.
 - (iv) A determination of the panel is final and subject only to any rights of appeal provided by law.

(c) **Accreditation status**

The AFL will endeavour to note each Person's Accreditation status on their Coach.AFL account, including any relevant details about that Person's Accreditation history (including any review and appeal history).

5.4 Coach citations

- (a) Where a Coach is suspended under Part E (Disciplinary) of this Policy Handbook, the AFL or relevant State Football Body (in consultation with the AFL) may issue a Citation Notice to that Coach in addition to the original suspension.
- (b) Following the issue of a Citation Notice to a Coach, the AFL will record that Citation Notice on the Coach's disciplinary record in the Competition Management Platform.

[Guidance note: Refer to Section [7](#). If a Coach receives three Citation Notices, then that Coach may lose their Accreditation in accordance with Section [7](#).]

6. Umpire accreditation

6.1 General

- (a) A Person must be Accredited to umpire a Match unless otherwise permitted by a Controlling Body in accordance with that Controlling Body's rules and regulations.
- (b) A Club or Controlling Body may only appoint a Person as an Umpire if that Person is Accredited unless otherwise permitted by the Club or Controlling Body in accordance with the Controlling Body's rules and regulations.
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, the AFL does not represent that a Person who has obtained Accreditation is a fit and proper person to be appointed as an Umpire. Without limiting the foregoing:
 - (i) it is a matter for the Club or Controlling Body appointing an Umpire to satisfy itself that a Person is a fit and proper person to be appointed as an Umpire;
 - (ii) the function of the Accreditation process is primarily to ensure that all Umpires satisfactorily complete the required educational modules for Accreditation;

- (iii) as part of the Accreditation process a Person may be required to submit a National Police Check to the AFL.

6.2 Accreditation process

(a) Process

- (i) To apply for Accreditation as an Umpire, a Person (**Applicant**) must:
 - (A) register on OfficialsHQ;
 - (B) accurately and honestly complete the relevant Accreditation application form(s) via OfficialsHQ;
 - (C) if applicable, complete:
 - (1) the relevant training applicable for Accreditation; and/or
 - (2) the relevant update or refresher training (as applicable); and
 - (D) hold a current working with children check (or equivalent) or otherwise meet the working with children requirements in their State or Territory.
- (ii) Following completion of the Accreditation process set out in Section [6.2\(a\)\(i\)](#) by an Applicant, the AFL may:
 - (A) grant Accreditation to the Applicant with no further requirements; or
 - (B) grant provisional Accreditation to the Applicant and request further information from the Applicant including a current National Police Check; or
 - (C) deal with the matter in such other manner as the AFL sees fit.

(b) Further information requested by AFL

- (i) Upon receipt of a request for further information by the AFL under Section [6.2\(a\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#), the Applicant must provide such requested information to the AFL as soon as practicable for assessment.
- (ii) Following an assessment of the information provided, the AFL may revoke or confirm the Applicant's Accreditation at its absolute discretion.
- (iii) If the information (including any National Police Check) provided discloses that the Applicant has been convicted of, or is charged with, a Serious Criminal Offence that Applicant's Accreditation may be revoked.
- (iv) A decision by the AFL under this Section [6.2\(b\)](#) will be notified to the Applicant confidentially and as soon as reasonably practicable.

6.3 Review of determination regarding Accreditation

(a) Review right

- (i) Where a Person is not granted Accreditation under Section [6.2](#) that Person may by written application have that determination reviewed by the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) within a reasonable period of receipt of such written application.
 - (ii) A written application under Section [6.3\(a\)\(i\)](#):
 - (A) must be submitted by email to umpire.afl@afl.com.au;
 - (B) must set out why the Person considers the relevant determination to be incorrect; and
 - (C) may include any further information the Person considers relevant.
 - (iii) In reviewing a written application submitted in accordance with [6.3\(a\)\(ii\)](#), the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) may have regard to any matter they consider relevant including but not limited to:
 - (A) the nature of any information provided under Section [6.2](#);
 - (B) the time elapsed since the date of any charge(s) or conviction(s) disclosed in any information provided under Section [6.2](#);
 - (C) any evidence of a Person's:
 - (1) good standing in the community, especially since the date of any charge(s) or conviction(s) disclosed in information provided under Section [6.2](#); and
 - (2) positive behavioural remediation, especially since the date of any charge(s) or conviction(s) in information provided under Section [6.2](#).
 - (iv) Following its review of the written application, the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) may confirm, reverse or modify the original determination.
- (b) **Appeal right**
- (i) A Person the subject of a determination under Section [6.3\(a\)\(iv\)](#) may appeal that determination to the AFL Executive General Manager of Game Development (or their nominee) on one or more of the following grounds:
 - (A) the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) failed to have regard to relevant matters or had regard to irrelevant matters;
 - (B) the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee) was affected by a conflict of interest; or
 - (C) the determination, or any part of the process undertaken, was inconsistent with Section [6](#) or any relevant laws.

- (ii) Any such appeal must be submitted by email to umpire.afl@afl.com.au within seven (7) days of a determination under Section [6.3\(a\)\(iv\)](#).
- (iii) A Person may not produce fresh evidence at an appeal under this Section [6.3\(b\)](#) without leave of the AFL Executive General Manager of Game Development (or their nominee).
- (iv) A determination of the AFL Executive General Manager of Game Development (or their nominee) is final and subject only to any rights of appeal provided by law.

(c) **Accreditation status**

The AFL will endeavour to note each Person's Accreditation status on their OfficialsHQ account, including any relevant details about that Person's Accreditation history and any review and appeal history.

7. Deregistration

7.1 Disciplinary History

- (a) The Disciplinary History of a Player or Football Official will apply in respect of all Competitions. For the avoidance of doubt, all Players and Football Officials moving from one Club and/or Controlling Body to another do so on the basis that their Disciplinary History will continue to apply and will not be erased or amended.
- (b) During the Transfer process under Section [3.4\(a\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#), the Disciplinary History of a Player will be automatically sent to the Destination Controlling Body via the Competition Management Platform.
- (c) Where a Football Official transfers to or registers with a Controlling Body, the following will apply:
 - (i) the Source Controlling Body (if applicable) will use reasonable endeavours to disclose that Football Official's Disciplinary History to the Destination Controlling Body; and
 - (ii) upon request by a Destination Controlling Body, the Source Controlling Body (if applicable) will provide that Person's Disciplinary History to the Destination Controlling Body.
- (d) Club imposed penalties will not be included on the Disciplinary History of a Person.

7.2 Criteria for Deregistration – Reportable Offences

- (a) **Suspension threshold**
 - (i) Subject to Section [7.6\(b\)](#), a Player or Football Official shall be automatically Deregistered and not allowed further registration with any Club or Controlling Body if the Player or Football Official has been suspended for a total of sixteen (16) matches (or greater) as a Player and/or Football Official (including during an AFL/AFLW Competition career, subject to Section [7.2\(c\)](#)) as a result of Reportable Offences (**Reportable Offences Suspension Threshold**).

- (ii) For the avoidance of doubt:
 - (A) a Player or Football Official may apply for re-registration in accordance with Section [7.8](#);
 - (B) the Reportable Offences Suspension Threshold relates to suspensions imposed as a result of Reportable Offences; and
 - (C) any suspension or sanction imposed on a Player or Football Official in relation to a Policy Breach will not count in relation to the Reportable Offences Suspension Threshold.

(b) Suspensions attained once 16 years or older apply

Only suspensions, sanctions and Citation Notices relating to Reportable Offences or Policy Breaches committed by a Player or Football Official after attaining the age of 16 years will count for the purposes of this Section [7](#).

(c) AFL/AFLW Competition Career

Any suspension served by a Player or Football Official during their AFL/AFLW Competition career shall carry over and apply to Tier 1 and Tier 2 Competitions except that the total suspension period shall be reduced by 25% for the purposes of this Section [7](#) (to the decimal point).

[Guidance note: For example, if a Player is suspended for six (6) matches whilst playing in the AFL/AFLW Competition, only four and one half (4.5) matches shall carry over for the purposes of this Section [7](#). For the avoidance of doubt, the 25% discount will not apply to any suspension imposed on an AFL/AFLW Listed Player for a Reportable Offence committed while playing outside of the AFL/AFLW Competition.]

7.3 Criteria for Deregistration – serious or cumulative sanctions

- (a) In addition to any sanction imposed on a Player or Football Official under Part E (Disciplinary) of this Policy Handbook, the AFL or relevant State Football Body may determine to Deregister that Player or Football Official if the AFL or relevant State Football Body (in consultation with the AFL) is satisfied that the Policy Breach or Reportable Offence and sanction imposed, when assessed together with the factors in Section [7.3\(c\)](#), warrants Deregistration.
- (b) If the AFL or relevant State Football Body establishes that a Player or Football Official has contravened the rules of a sport other than Australian Football (**Contravention**) and is reasonably satisfied that such Contravention warrants deregistration when assessed together with the factors in Section [7.3\(c\)](#), then the AFL, or relevant State Football Body with the prior approval of the AFL, may determine to Deregister that Player or Football Official.
- (c) In making a determination under Section [7.3\(a\)](#) and [7.3\(b\)](#), the AFL or relevant State Football Body (as applicable) will have regard to the following factors:
 - (i) the nature and seriousness of the Policy Breach, Reportable Offence or Contravention;
 - (ii) the Disciplinary History of the Player or Football Official;
 - (iii) the health and safety of other Persons; and

- (iv) any other matter considered relevant by the AFL or relevant State Football Body.

7.4 Criteria for Deregistration – Coach citations

- (a) Without limiting Section [7.2](#), [7.3](#) or [7.5](#), where a Coach is issued with three Citation Notices the AFL may determine to Deregister that Coach. *[Guidance note: Refer to Section [5.4](#).]*
- (b) For the avoidance of doubt, a Coach may be Deregistered under Section [7.2](#), [7.3](#), [7.4](#) or [7.5](#).

7.5 Criteria for Deregistration – Serious Criminal Offence by Coach or Umpire

- (a) If the AFL becomes aware of information regarding a Coach or Umpire which the AFL reasonably considers gives rise to an inference that the Coach or Umpire may have committed a Serious Criminal Offence, then the AFL may request additional information (including a current National Police Check) or clarification from the Coach or Umpire.
- (b) If:
 - (i) a Coach or Umpire does not within a reasonable period comply with a request by the AFL under Section [7.5\(a\)](#); or
 - (ii) following its assessment of the information or clarification provided under Section [7.5\(a\)](#) or the provision of verified information from the police, the AFL is satisfied that a Coach or Umpire has committed a Serious Criminal Offence,

then the AFL may Deregister that Coach or Umpire.

- (c) In making a determination under Section [7.5\(b\)](#), the AFL will have regard to the following factors:
 - (i) the nature of the Serious Criminal Offence;
 - (ii) the Disciplinary History of the Coach or Umpire, including in respect of Reportable Offences and any Policy Breaches committed by the Coach or Umpire;
 - (iii) the health and safety of other Persons; and
 - (iv) any other matter considered relevant by the AFL or relevant State Football Body.

7.6 Deregistration – general provisions

(a) Effect of Deregistration

- (i) If a Player or Football Official is Deregistered that Player or Football Official cannot:
 - (A) register to play Australian Football for a Club or participate in a Competition; or

- (B) officiate or act as a Football Official for a Club or Competition; or
 - (C) be entered on a team sheet.
- (ii) For the avoidance of doubt:
- (A) if a Player is Deregistered, that Player will also be prohibited from being a Football Official in any Competition; and
 - (B) if a Football Official is Deregistered, that Football Official will also be prohibited from being a Player in any Competition.

(b) **First Offence**

Should a Player or Football Official receive a sixteen (16) match (or greater) suspension as a “first offence” it shall be at the discretion of the AFL or relevant State Football Body (in consultation with any other relevant Controlling Body) as to whether or not that Player or Football Official will be Deregistered following suspension.

7.7 Notice of Deregistration

(a) **Deregistration Warning – Reportable Offences only**

Where a Player or Football Official has served a total of ten (10) matches of suspensions as a Player or Football Official in respect of Reportable Offences, the relevant Controlling Body will use reasonable endeavours to notify the Player or Football Official and their Club in writing that the Player or Football Official faces the risk of Deregistration should the Player or Football Official incur further suspensions resulting in that Player or Football Official meeting the Reportable Offences Suspension Threshold (**Deregistration Warning**). A Deregistration Warning should be in the form of the Deregistration Warning Template or such other form approved by the Controlling Body.

(b) **Controlling Body obligations**

- (i) The relevant Controlling Body will provide written notification of a Deregistration under Section [7.2](#) to the Player or Football Official and their Club and the relevant State Football Body (if applicable). *[Guidance note: Where Deregistration occurs due to Reportable Offences, the local league will usually be the “relevant Controlling Body” for the purposes of this Section. In which case, the local league must notify the relevant State Football Body of the Deregistration.]*
- (ii) The AFL or relevant State Football Body (as applicable) will provide written notification of a Deregistration under Section [7.3](#), [7.4](#) or [7.5](#) to the Player or Football Official and their Club and any other relevant Controlling Body.
- (iii) A central database of all Deregistered Players and Football Officials will be maintained by the AFL and State Football Bodies via the Competition Management Platform.

(c) **Club obligations**

- (i) Each Club will at all times strive to ensure its Players and Football Officials do not risk Deregistration and implement measures (such as anger management training) to achieve this objective.

- (ii) Upon receipt of a Deregistration Warning or written notification of a Deregistration under Section [7.7\(b\)](#), a Club must use its best endeavours to confirm that its Player or Football Official has received such notice and promptly acknowledge to the relevant Controlling Body the steps taken by the Club to obtain this confirmation.
- (d) **Commencement of Deregistration**
- (i) A Deregistration under Section [7.2](#) will commence on the date on which the most recent suspension of the Player or Football Official ends (being the suspension which resulted in that Player or Football Official being Deregistered).
 - (ii) A Deregistration under Section [7.3](#), [7.4](#) or [7.5](#) will commence on the date of notification of Deregistration by the AFL or State Football Body in accordance with Section [7.7\(b\)\(ii\)](#).
 - (iii) A Player or Football Official will be categorised as deregistered in the Competition Management Platform (as distinct from Deregistration as defined in this Policy) at the time that the Player or Football Official receives a sanction which results in Deregistration.
- (e) The failure of a Controlling Body to issue a notice to a Player or Football Official and their Club in accordance with Section [7.7\(a\)](#) or [7.7\(b\)\(i\)](#), or the failure of a Club to provide notice to a Player or Football Official in accordance with Section [7.7\(c\)\(ii\)](#), does not invalidate the deregistration of that Player or Football Official.

7.8 Application for re-registration

- (a) Subject to Sections [7.8\(e\)](#) and [7.8\(f\)](#), a Deregistered Player or Football Official may, by written application to the relevant State Football Body in the form prescribed by that State Football Body, apply for re-registration no less than 12 calendar months after the date on which their Deregistration commenced (**Re-Registration Application**). The relevant State Football Body may levy a fee for the administration of a Re-Registration Application.
- (b) Following receipt of a Re-Registration Application, the relevant State Football Body will convene a panel of at least three members (**Re-Registration Panel**) and arrange a hearing of the Re-Registration Panel to consider the Re-Registration Application (**Re-Registration Hearing**).
- (c) The Re-Registration Panel must comprise of persons who in the opinion of the State Football Body possess sufficient knowledge of Australian Football and are sufficiently qualified to competently perform the role of Re-Registration Panel member.
- (d) In respect of a Re-Registration Hearing, the following provisions apply:
 - (i) a Re-Registration Hearing will be heard at the date, time and place/forum notified by the State Football Body;
 - (ii) prior to the Re-Registration Hearing, the relevant Controlling Body will provide the Re-Registration Panel with a list of the suspension(s) of the Deregistered Player or Football Official, the grounds for those suspension(s)

- (i.e. the relevant Reportable Offence or Policy Breach) and any other relevant details regarding the deregistration of the Player or Football Official;
- (iii) the Deregistered Player or Football Official, their Club and the relevant Controlling Body may make brief submissions to the Re-Registration Panel regarding the Re-Registration Application;
 - (iv) the Re-Registration Panel may either approve or reject a Re-Registration Application provided that the Re-Registration Panel must not approve a Player's or Football Official's Re-Registration Application unless the panel is reasonably satisfied that:
 - (A) the Player or Football Official is genuinely rehabilitated and committed to ongoing rehabilitation; and
 - (B) the Player or Football Official is unlikely to re-offend; and
 - (C) the Player or Football Official does not pose an unacceptable risk to other Persons;
 - (v) the Re-Registration Panel must not approve a conditional re-registration in respect of a Player or Football Official (for example, allow re-registration as a particular kind of Football Official);
 - (vi) the Re-Registration Panel:
 - (A) may regulate any Re-Registration Hearing in such manner as the Re-Registration Panel determines; and
 - (B) is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to a court of law and may inform itself as to any matter in such manner as it determines; and
 - (vii) the decision of the Re-Registration Panel shall be final and binding.
- (e) A Player or Football Official may only submit one (1) Re-Registration Application per 12 month period.
 - (f) If a State Football Body considers that exceptional and compelling circumstances exist which may reasonably justify a Re-Registration Panel considering a Re-Registration Application prior to the end of the 12-month period specified in Section [7.8\(a\)](#), then the State Football Body may, with the prior approval of the AFL General Manager Game Development Investment and Community Football (or their nominee), waive a portion of that 12-month period and arrange an early Re-Registration Hearing.
 - (g) If a Player or Football Official is re-registered and subsequently receives a suspension as a result of a Reportable Offence or Policy Breach:
 - (i) where that Player or Football Official was previously Deregistered under Section [7.2](#), [7.3](#) or [7.4](#), the Player or Football Official will be permanently Deregistered from participating in any Competition as a Player or Football Official with no further right of appeal or right to apply for re-registration;
 - (ii) where that Player or Football Official was previously deregistered under Section [7.5](#), the State Football Body (in consultation with the AFL), may

determine to permanently Deregister the Player or Football Official or grant continued conditional registration.

[Guidance note: Under Section [7.8\(g\)\(ii\)](#), permanent Deregistration will not occur automatically and it will be at the discretion of the State Controlling Body, in consultation with the AFL, whether the Player or Football Official is permanently Deregistered.]

- (h) For the avoidance of doubt:
 - (i) a Re-Registration Hearing is an application for re-registration only and is not a review or appeal of any previous sanctions;
 - (ii) there is no review or appeal process in relation to a Deregistration.

8. Gender diversity (participation of transgender and non-binary people)

The [AFL Gender Diversity Policy Community Football](#) (as amended from time to time) is adopted as part of this Policy Handbook and its terms are deemed terms of this Policy Handbook.

PART C – MEMBER PROTECTION & INTEGRITY

Member protection statement

The AFL regards violence, discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and abuse in any form, including online, as unacceptable. The AFL believes that all people have the right to work, play and socialise in an environment which is safe and inclusive. In other words, our members (i.e. participants in Australian Football) have the right to be protected from unacceptable conduct whilst participating in our sport.

Any complaints of inappropriate behaviour will be treated seriously and sensitively and, if required under this Policy Handbook, investigated thoroughly. Best endeavours will be used to ensure that persons affected by a complaint are not victimised in any way.

What is the purpose of Part C?

- Part C aims to promote ethical and informed decision-making and responsible behaviours within Australian Football and records the AFL's commitment to upholding the rights of its participants to be treated with respect and dignity and to be safe and protected from all forms of discrimination and abuse within Australian Football.
- Part C sets out standards of behaviour that the AFL requires of all individuals associated with Australian Football.
- The general responsibilities and expectations of each Person, Club and Controlling Body are clearly defined in Section 9 while vilification and discrimination, safeguarding children and young people, social media, gambling, respect and responsibility and anti-doping matters are also dealt with under Part C.

The points above are for background only and are not operative terms of this Policy Handbook.

9. Member protection

9.1 Responsibility of a Person

A Person must:

- (a) make themselves aware of this Policy Handbook and its contents;
- (b) comply with this Policy Handbook and any rules, regulations, by-laws, emergency protocols and policies formally approved and/or adopted by the AFL from time to time, including without limitation, the Laws of the Game;
- (c) respect the spirit of fair play;
- (d) be ethical, fair, honest and respectful in all their dealings with other people;
- (e) contribute to a safe sporting environment and respectful culture which is accepting of individual differences;
- (f) prioritise the safety and welfare of children;
- (g) recognise the essential role that Umpires and other Football Officials play in Australian Football;

- (h) display and foster respect for Umpires and other Football Officials;
- (i) comply with all relevant laws including anti-discrimination and child protection laws;
- (j) comply with any direction given or investigative or disciplinary measure or procedure imposed in accordance with this Policy Handbook;
- (k) where applicable, consent to any screening requirements set out in this Policy Handbook including in relation to national police checks or working with children checks; and
- (l) comply with a sanction imposed after a finding that the Person has committed a Reportable Offence or breached this Policy Handbook.

9.2 General code of conduct

A Person or, where applicable, a Controlling Body must not:

- (a) engage in conduct which brings, or is likely to bring, the interests of Australian Football or the Controlling Body into disrepute;
- (b) act in a manner which is, or is likely to be, prejudicial to the interests of Australian Football or the Controlling Body;
- (c) commit a Serious Criminal Offence;
- (d) directly or indirectly harass or bully (including cyber bully) any person;
- (e) make or post inappropriate, offensive or discriminatory comments in public (including via Social Media) about another person or Controlling Body;
- (f) victimise another person for making a complaint under this Policy Handbook;
- (g) engage in a sexually inappropriate relationship with a person that the Person coaches, supervises, or has influence, authority or power over;
- (h) verbally or physically abuse, threaten, assault or engage in violence with another person, intimidate another person or create a hostile environment;
- (i) disclose to a person or organisation any information related to Australian Football that is of a private, confidential or privileged nature without the required consent; and
- (j) make a complaint under this Policy Handbook that the Person or Controlling Body knows to be untrue, vexatious, malicious or improper.

9.3 Coach code of conduct

In addition to the obligations under Sections [9.1](#) and [9.2](#), a Coach must:

- (a) be Accredited;
- (b) be reasonable in the demands made on the time commitments of Players, having regard to their health and well-being;

- (c) be considerate of the varying maturity and levels of ability of Players when designing practice schedules and practice activities;
- (d) if coaching Junior Players, use best endeavours to ensure that Players gain equal playing time in Matches and that every Player plays a minimum of 50% playing time;
- (e) always monitor and ensure the health and safety of Players;
- (f) seek and follow the advice of appropriately qualified health specialists in relation to the participation of injured or ill Players provided that, where such advice is that a Player is fit to play but that advice is inconsistent with any restrictions in this Policy Handbook on the participation of injured or ill Players, the restrictions in this Policy Handbook must be complied with;
- (g) keep up to date with the principles of coaching including skill development and requirements of Accreditation;
- (h) display and foster appropriate sporting behaviour, including using best endeavours to procure that Players comply with their obligations under this Policy Handbook;
- (i) display and foster respect for Football Officials, opponents, parents and spectators; and
- (j) ensure that Players are involved in a positive environment where skill learning and development are priorities.

9.4 Additional responsibilities of a Club

In addition to its obligations under Sections [9.1](#) and [9.2](#), a Club (including Club Football Officials) must:

- (a) provide a culturally safe and inclusive Club environment for all Persons; and
- (b) use its best endeavours to procure compliance by its Football Officials, Players, members and supporters with any sanctions imposed under Part E of this Policy Handbook.

10. Vilification and discrimination (Peek Rule)

10.1 Prohibited conduct

No Person shall act towards or speak to any other person in a manner, or engage in any other conduct which threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person or group of persons on any basis, including but not limited to, a person's race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

10.2 AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel

(a) Appointment by AFL

The AFL may, from time to time, appoint persons to the AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel.

(b) Qualifications of panel members

The AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel will consist of a panel of persons who:

- (i) meet the Tribunal qualification requirements specified in Section [Qualifications of Tribunal members](#); and
- (ii) in the opinion of the AFL:
 - (A) have demonstrated knowledge and skills in the resolution of vilification and discrimination matters;
 - (B) possess sufficient knowledge of Australian Football; and
 - (C) are sufficiently qualified to competently perform the role of AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel member.
- (c) **Function**

The function of the AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel is to provide expert assistance to the AFL and other Controlling Bodies in respect of the conciliation process under Section [10](#).

- (d) **Levy of fee**

A Controlling Body may levy a fee for the administration of a conciliation under Section [10](#) including the involvement of the AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel (with the fee amount to be determined by the Controlling Body).

10.3 Preliminary conciliation process

- (a) Where Section [23.2\(a\)\(i\)](#) or [23.2\(c\)\(i\)](#) applies in relation to an alleged breach of Section [10.1](#), the AFL or Controlling Body (as applicable) must as soon as practicable:
 - (i) inform the person alleged to have breached Section [10.1](#) (**Contravening Person**) of the alleged breach and provide that person with an opportunity to respond to the complaint;
 - (ii) use reasonable measures to establish the facts of the alleged Policy Breach.

[Guidance note: Sections [23.2\(h\)](#) (Cooperation with an investigation) and [23.2\(i\)](#) (Investigations involving minors) apply to any investigation undertaken by the AFL or Controlling Body in establishing the facts of the alleged Policy Breach.]

- (b) If, following completion of the steps in Section [10.3\(a\)](#), the AFL or Controlling Body (as applicable) is reasonably satisfied that a breach of Section [10.1](#) may have occurred, it will arrange for the complaint to be conciliated and take all steps necessary for the complaint to be conciliated.
- (c) The AFL or Controlling Body will determine the arrangements for the conciliation, including appointment of a conciliator and the date, time and place/forum (e.g. in person or virtually).
- (d) Where a Controlling Body (other than the AFL) arranges to hold a conciliation, it must inform the AFL prior to the conciliation and, in consultation with the AFL, appoint a conciliator. The relevant Controlling Body may, by written notice, request the assistance of an AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel member to conduct

the conciliation and the AFL may, subject to the availability of the AFL Vilification and Discrimination Panel, arrange for that requested assistance.

- (e) Persons entitled to attend a conciliation are as follows:
- (i) person(s) vilified;
 - (ii) the Contravening Person;
 - (iii) other person(s) directly involved in the complaint whom in the reasonable opinion of the AFL or Controlling Body ought to attend the conciliation;
 - (iv) where the alleged breach of Section [10.1](#) was not about or did not directly impact a specific person or persons (e.g. the prohibited conduct vilified a group of persons generally without specifying any individual), a representative of that group may attend the conciliation at the invitation of the AFL or Controlling Body for the purpose of providing a victim impact statement and more generally to provide the perspectives of that group of vilified persons in the conduct of the conciliation;
 - (v) an employee of the AFL and/or the Controlling Body directly involved in the conduct of the conciliation;
 - (vi) conciliator; and
 - (vii) where a Person involved in a conciliation is under the age of eighteen (18) years:
 - (A) a Club Officer (who must not be a parent or guardian of the Person) must attend to assist and support the Person; and
 - (B) a parent or guardian of the Person may attend a conciliation in support of the Person.
- (f) All conciliation participants are permitted and encouraged to have a support person present at the conciliation. Support persons will not be advocates or actively participate in the conciliation.
- (g) All conciliation participants are discouraged from having a legal practitioner as their support person or in any other capacity in conciliation.

10.4 Agreed outcomes at conciliation

- (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy Handbook, the conciliation participants will be at liberty to consider and agree to any outcome or sanction including but not limited to any of the following (or a combination of them):
- (i) suspension of a Contravening Person from playing and/or officiating in Matches at any level;
 - (ii) if reasonably practicable, attendance at or participation in a community service program by the Contravening Person;
 - (iii) completion of relevant education by a Contravening Person;
 - (iv) the provision of a public apology or apologies by a Contravening Person.

- (b) For the avoidance of doubt:
 - (i) the person(s) vilified, the Contravening Person and the AFL or Controlling Body must all agree to any outcome or sanction;
 - (ii) the conciliation participants may not agree to any outcome that binds or sanctions any Person that is not a conciliation participant;
 - (iii) the effect of any suspension agreed under Section [10.4\(a\)\(i\)](#) will be the same as a suspension under Part E (Disciplinary).
- (c) In their consideration of agreed outcomes and sanctions, the conciliation participants should have regard to the following:
 - (i) the nature of the Policy Breach and all the circumstances in which it was undertaken including the setting (e.g. during the course of a Match, during the course of an official or unofficial Club activity, in a public place, in a private setting);
 - (ii) the extent to which the Policy Breach caused offence or hurt to the vilified person or others (e.g. was it undertaken in an aggressive or threatening way, did it offend or hurt a large number of people);
 - (iii) whether there have been previous instances of Policy Breaches by the Contravening Person;
 - (iv) whether the Contravening Person has received any relevant training and education.

10.5 Confidentiality and public statement

- (a) Subject to Section [10.5\(b\)](#):
 - (i) the particulars of a complaint and the conciliation shall at all times remain confidential; and
 - (ii) a person shall not publicly comment on or disseminate to any person information concerning a complaint or conciliation at any time prior to, during or after the conciliation.
- (b) Where a complaint is resolved by conciliation, any public statement (including any apology) made concerning the complaint and its resolution shall be agreed upon by the parties.

10.6 Unsuccessful conciliation

Where the AFL or Controlling Body (as applicable) is of the opinion that the matter has not been resolved by conciliation, the AFL or Controlling Body must:

- (a) complete a Notice of Breach and issue it to the Contravening Person and the Contravening Person's Club;
- (b) provide the person(s) vilified and that person's Club (if applicable) with a copy of the Notice of Breach; and

- (c) proceed to deal with the matter under Section [23.5](#) (Early Guilty Plea – Policy Breach),

unless the AFL or Controlling Body (with the approval of the AFL) determines that exceptional and compelling circumstances apply such that:

- (d) the matter should be referred directly to the Tribunal, in which case the matter will proceed directly to the Tribunal to be determined under Section [25](#) and the Contravening Person may not enter an Early Guilty Plea; or
- (e) the matter should not proceed to a Notice of Breach or be referred directly to the Tribunal, in which case the matter will be closed.

[Guidance note: Where a matter is being managed by a Controlling Body, the Controlling Body must seek the approval of the AFL if it considers that exceptional and compelling circumstances apply].

11. Safeguarding Children and Young People

11.1 AFL commitment to safeguarding Children and Young People

All Children and Young People, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to protection from Child Abuse. The AFL is committed to promoting and protecting the safety and wellbeing of all Children and Young People.

11.2 Controlling Body commitment to safeguarding Children and Young People

- (a) To support the AFL's commitment under Section [11.1](#), each Controlling Body will commit to the following:
 - (i) the Controlling Body will have zero tolerance for Child Abuse;
 - (ii) the Controlling Body will seek to provide an environment in which all Children and Young People feel supported and respected;
 - (iii) the Controlling Body will recognise the particular needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People, LGBTIQ+ Children and Young People, Children and Young People from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and Children and Young People with a disability and will implement culturally appropriate practices and procedures to address those needs;
 - (iv) the Controlling Body will consider the opinions of Children and Young People and use their opinions to inform the development of policies and procedures in relation to the protection of Children and Young People;
 - (v) the Controlling Body will engage with Children and Young People and their parents/guardians about safeguarding practices and help empower them to speak up when they see or hear something that makes them feel unsafe and ensure that relevant information and resources are accessible to them; and
 - (vi) in the event a concern or allegation is raised in relation to Child Abuse or any other inappropriate behaviour towards a Child or Young Person that has occurred while a Child or Young Person is under the Controlling Body's care,

the Controlling Body will ensure it is treated seriously, in a culturally sensitive manner and fully investigated in accordance with this Policy Handbook and any other related policies or procedures and relevant legislation.

- (b) Each Controlling Body and Club must ensure that it complies with all statutory requirements in respect of safeguarding Children and Young People, including ensuring all relevant Persons who work with Children and Young People have complied with their working with children obligations applicable to their State or Territory.

11.3 Behavioural standards

- (a) A Person must:
 - (i) treat all Children and Young People with respect;
 - (ii) wherever possible ensure that another adult is present when working near or with Children and Young People;
 - (iii) use disciplinary strategies that are fair, respectful and appropriate to the developmental stage of the Children or Young People involved;
 - (iv) wherever possible ensure that all email, text messages and other forms of communication sent to a Child or Young Person are copied to their parent/guardian;
 - (v) ensure that approval has been obtained from a Child or Young Person and their parent/guardian prior to any photograph or film being taken of a Child or Young Person;
 - (vi) ensure that any photograph or film taken of a Child or Young Person is taken in circumstances that are directly relevant to the Child's or Young Person's participation in a Controlling Body program and the Child or Young Person is appropriately dressed and posed;
 - (vii) immediately report any concern for the safety or wellbeing of a Child or Young Person, or a suspected breach of this Section [11](#), in accordance with this Policy Handbook.
- (b) A Person must in the course of their employment or engagement by a Controlling Body:
 - (i) ensure that all Children and Young People are appropriately supervised while participating in a Controlling Body program while respecting the privacy of Children and Young People;
 - (ii) limit all interactions with Children and Young People to the confines of official duties;
 - (iii) use best endeavours to complete a risk assessment for any Controlling Body program that involves Children or Young People prior to carrying out that Controlling Body program;
 - (iv) immediately disclose any charges or convictions affecting their suitability to engage with Children and Young People to Controlling Body senior management.

11.4 Prohibited conduct

- (a) A Person must not:
 - (i) engage in any form of sexual behaviour with or in the presence of Children or Young People;
 - (ii) engage in any other form of behaviour that may reasonably be considered to be Child Abuse;
 - (iii) initiate unnecessary physical contact with a Child or Young Person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do themselves;
 - (iv) take disciplinary action involving physical punishment or any other form of treatment that could reasonably be considered as degrading, cruel, frightening or humiliating;
 - (v) use language or behaviour towards Children or Young People that is inappropriate, harassment, abusive, sexually provocative, intended to humiliate or culturally inappropriate;
 - (vi) consume alcohol, drugs or tobacco when working with any Children or Young People; or
 - (vii) use a computer, mobile phone, video camera, camera or Social Media to exploit or harass Children or Young People, or access child exploitation material.
- (b) A Person must not in the course of their employment or engagement by a Controlling Body:
 - (i) give a gift to a Child or Young Person engaged in a Controlling Body program, activity or service without the permission of Controlling Body senior management and the Child's or Young Person's parent/guardian;
 - (ii) transport any Children or Young People without the permission of Controlling Body senior management and the Child's or Young Person's parent/guardian;
 - (iii) arrange contact, including online contact, with Children or Young People outside of the Controlling Body's programs, activities or services.

11.5 Reporting procedures

- (a) If a Person believes that a Child or Young Person is in imminent risk of Harm or immediate danger, that Person must report the situation directly –o the police - CALL '000'.
- (b) If a person (including a Person (as defined) or member of the public) believes that a Person has committed a breach of Section [11](#), that person must:
 - (i) contact the relevant Controlling Body immediately; and
 - (ii) as soon as practicable, submit a written complaint to the AFL under Section [23.1\(a\)](#).

- (c) When a Controlling Body is notified by a reporting person of an alleged breach of Section 11, the Controlling Body must use best endeavours to ensure the reporting person submits a written complaint to the AFL under Section [23.1\(a\)](#) and support the reporting person to do so.
- (d) For the avoidance of doubt, once a written complaint is received by the AFL under Section [23.1\(a\)](#) it will then be processed under the applicable provisions of Part E (Disciplinary), including an assessment of the written complaint under Section [23.2\(a\)](#).

12. Social Media

12.1 AFL commitment to online safety

The AFL has signed the [Online Safety Statement of Commitment](#) alongside 23 other major sporting organisations from around Australia to actively support the work of the Commonwealth Government eSafety Commissioner to help keep all Australians, from grassroots to professional athletes, team members and officials, safe online.

12.2 What is Social Media?

Social Media includes:

- (a) external and internal social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Bebo, LinkedIn, MySite, WhatsApp, Tinder and Yammer);
- (b) video and photo sharing websites (e.g. Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, Flickr, YouTube, Periscope);
- (c) micro-blogging sites (e.g. X);
- (d) weblogs, including corporate or personal blogs, or blogs hosted by traditional media publications (e.g. 'comments' or 'your say' features on newspaper websites);
- (e) forums and discussion boards (e.g. Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups);
- (f) online encyclopaedias (e.g. Wikipedia);
- (g) instant messaging (including SMS);
- (h) podcasting; and
- (i) any other website or application that enables users to create and share content or participate in social networking.

12.3 AFL statement on Social Media

- (a) It is important to understand that content posted on Social Media can have serious ramifications for the Person involved, the AFL and other Controlling Bodies, their people, commercial partners or other related organisations and individuals. Comments may be mistakenly attributed to the AFL or other Controlling Body in some circumstances. It is therefore important that a Person always think twice before posting.

- (b) Before using Social Media, the AFL encourages all Persons to ask themselves the following questions:
 - (i) Am I revealing any sensitive or confidential information?
 - (ii) Would I want my Club, Coach, team, family or friends to see this?
 - (iii) Will I regret my actions?
 - (iv) Could this negatively impact the reputation of the AFL, other Controlling Body or a Club?
 - (v) Could this be seen as inappropriate, discriminatory, defamatory or in breach of any laws?

12.4 Behavioural standards on Social Media

When using Social Media, a Person must:

- (a) respect the privacy of others;
- (b) ensure that content published is factually accurate;
- (c) be polite and respectful with others; and
- (d) adhere to the terms of use of the relevant Social Media, as well as copyright, privacy, defamation, contempt of court, discrimination, harassment and other applicable laws.

12.5 Prohibited conduct on Social Media

When using Social Media, a Person must not:

- (a) post or engage with (e.g. like, comment on, share, forward) material that is offensive, obscene, disparaging, defamatory, threatening, harassment, bullying, discriminatory, homophobic, hateful, racist, sexist, infringes copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;
- (b) talk negatively about a Controlling Body, its employees, its competitors, corporate partners, broadcast partners, sponsors, or customers/fans or any other related organisation;
- (c) represent a personal view as that of a Controlling Body;
- (d) bring a Controlling Body's brand and reputation into disrepute;
- (e) post or release any Controlling Body information or material (including images or video) prior to its official launch or announcement by the Controlling Body in the public domain;
- (f) plagiarise or breach copyright of another person;
- (g) access, download or transmit any kind of sexually explicit material (including child pornography), violent and/or graphic images (without medical purpose);

- (h) access, download or transmit information on the use and construction of weapons, explosives and/or other tools of violence or terrorism;
- (i) breach the reasonable expectation of privacy of a person; or
- (j) access to the computing resources of a Controlling Body without the prior consent of the Controlling Body.

12.6 Official Social Media engagement

Before engaging in Social Media as a representative of a Controlling Body, a Person must be formally authorised to do so by the relevant Controlling Body.

13. Gambling and match fixing

13.1 Corrupt conduct

A Person must not contrive or attempt to contrive the result of a Match or Contingency or any aspect of a Match or Contingency in exchange for a bribe, benefit or reward.

13.2 No gambling

- (a) Subject to Section [13.2\(b\)](#), a Player or Football Official must:
 - (i) not bet or wager on a Contingency;
 - (ii) ensure that no other person has access to their betting accounts which would enable such person to bet on any Contingency;
 - (iii) not have an interest in any bet or wager on a Contingency or have someone else place a bet or wager on their behalf;
 - (iv) not facilitate or assist the making of a bet or wager on a Contingency; or
 - (v) not without the prior permission of the relevant Controlling Body, encourage, induce, advertise or promote betting on a Contingency.
- (b) Section [13.2\(a\)](#) does not apply where a Player or Football Official has no direct or indirect connection with the relevant Contingency. *[Guidance note: For example, a Player or Football Official who is 18 years or older may bet on an AFL or AFLW Match where that Player or Football Official participates in a Tier 2 Competition and otherwise has no indirect or direct connection with the AFL or AFLW Match.]*
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, Section [13.2\(b\)](#) does not permit a Person associated with a Club to engage in conduct under Section [13.2\(a\)](#) in respect of a Contingency relating to the relevant Controlling Body which does not involve their Club.

13.3 Insider information

A Player or Football Official must not disclose or provide any information, advice or opinion to any person about the teams playing in any Match (including but not limited to, the actual or likely composition of the team, player injuries, the form of players and tactics), unless the Person can establish to the satisfaction of the Football Body that:

- (a) such information, advice or opinion was already in the public domain or given in a bona fide media interview; or

- (b) the information, advice or opinion was not provided in any of the following circumstances:
 - (i) for the purpose of betting or wagering by any person on a Contingency;
 - (ii) negligently without regard to whether it would be used for betting or wagering by any person on a Contingency;
 - (iii) for consideration or reward.

13.4 Performance on merits

A Player or Football Official must at all times perform on their merits and must not induce or encourage any other Player or Football Official not to perform on their merits, in any Match or in relation to any aspect of a Match for any reason whatsoever.

13.5 Notification

Any Person who is contacted by another person, corporation or entity requesting to engage in conduct which may be prohibited by Section [13](#) must, within 24 hours of such contact, advise the relevant Controlling Body.

14. Anti-doping

The [Australian Football Anti-Doping Code](#) (as amended from time to time) is adopted as part of this Policy Handbook and its terms are deemed terms of this Policy Handbook.

PART D – HEALTH & SAFETY

What is the purpose of Part D?

- Part D aims to promote a healthy and safe environment within Australian Football. It sets out requirements around injury management, the use of protective equipment and key considerations for Player health and safety including concussion management, managing extreme weather, the importance of ensuring protection from the sun and ultraviolet (UV) light, playing whilst pregnant or post-partum and managing active bleeding.

15. Injury management

15.1 AFL statement on injury management

- (a) The AFL expects that Matches at all levels are played in a safe environment. To ensure the prevention of, and prompt attention to, injuries in Australian Football, it is important that adequate and timely first aid is delivered. Sports trainers and first aid providers play a key role in player preparation and safety at all levels.
- (b) It is important that sports trainers and first aid providers are trained in the first aid needs relevant to Australian Football at the level at which they are involved.
- (c) A sports trainer or first aid provider involved with a Club should have a clear understanding of the role and importance of emergency and injury management in Australian Football and injury prevention.
- (d) A sports trainer or first aid provider must understand the AFL Community Concussion Guidelines.

15.2 Minimum requirements for matches and training

- (a) Unless otherwise notified by the AFL, each Controlling Body and Club must ensure that at each Match or training session:
 - (i) at least one Sports Trainer or First Aid Provider with Appropriate Minimum Qualifications (see Section [15.3](#)) for the relevant level of Australian Football is in attendance;
 - (ii) a first aid kit and adequate sport-specific rescue/transport equipment (e.g. stretcher) are available; and
 - (iii) there is marked venue access for emergency vehicles.
- (b) Where the minimum requirements specified in Section [15.2\(a\)](#) are not met, the Match or training session may be postponed, rescheduled or cancelled and must not commence until such time as the minimum requirements are met.
- (c) In addition to the minimum requirements, the AFL strongly recommends that at each Match and training session:
 - (i) each Club has access to an automated external defibrillator (AED); and
 - (ii) each Sports Trainer or First Aid Provider in attendance is easily identifiable (e.g. by wearing a vest or armband).

15.3 Appropriate Minimum Qualifications

- (a) Unless otherwise notified by the AFL, for the purposes of this Policy Handbook, **Appropriate Minimum Qualifications** means the minimum qualifications set out in the following Table:

Level	Tier 1 Competition (e.g. State League)	All Other Competitions
Recommended	AFL Level 2 Sports Trainer or Qualified Medical Professional	AFL Level 1 or Level 2 Sports Trainer or Qualified Medical Professional
Minimum	AFL Level 1 Sports Trainer or Qualified Medical Professional	AFL First Aider or Qualified Medical Professional

- (b) The terms specified in Table 1 have the following meanings:

- (i) **AFL First Aider** means a person who has:

- (A) obtained a nationally accredited first aid and CPR qualification which is current and up-to-date and includes assessed competencies HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid) and HLTAID009 (Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation); and
- (B) has completed the AFL First Aid and Concussion Management online module within the previous 12 months.

[Guidance note: HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid) remains valid for 3 years after completion. HLTAID009 Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation remains valid for 1 year (and must be renewed annually).]

- (ii) **Level 2 Sports Trainer** means a person who has:

- (A) completed a Controlling Body-approved Level 2 Sports Trainer Course which is current and up to date; and
- (B) has completed the AFL First Aid and Concussion Management online module within the previous 12 months.

[Guidance note: HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid) and HLTAID009 Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation are both prerequisites for a Level 2 Sports Trainer Course. HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid) remains valid for 3 years after completion. HLTAID009 Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation remains valid for 1 year (and must be renewed annually).]

- (iii) **Level 1 Sports Trainer** means a person who has:

- (A) completed a Controlling Body-approved Level 1 Sports Trainer Course which is current and up to date; and
- (B) has completed the AFL First Aid and Concussion Management online module within the previous 12 months.

[Guidance note: HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid) and HLTAID009 Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation are both prerequisites for a Level 1 Sports Trainer Course. HLTAID011 (Provide First Aid) remains valid for 3 years after completion. HLTAID009 Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation remains valid for 1 year (and must be renewed annually).]

- (iv) **Qualified Medical Professional (QMP)** means a person who:

- (A) is a qualified and AHPRA registered medical practitioner, paramedic, physiotherapist, or nurse with appropriate first aid competencies (including or equivalent to HLTAID00311 (Provide First Aid) and HLTAID009 (Provide Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation)); and
 - (B) has completed the AFL First Aid and Concussion Management online module within the previous 12 months.
- (c) A Sports Trainer or First Aid Provider must hold a current working with children check (or equivalent) or otherwise meet the working with children requirements in their State or Territory.

15.4 Registration of Sports Trainers or First Aid Providers

- (a) To register as a Sports Trainer or First Aid Provider, a person must complete registration on PlayHQ by accurately and honestly completing the relevant registration form.
- (b) Following completion of the registration process set out in 15.4(a), the AFL may, based on the information provided, request additional information from the applicant including a current National Police Check.
- (c) If information (including any National Police Check) provided to the AFL discloses that a Sports Trainer or First Aid Provider has been convicted of, or is charged with, a Serious Criminal Offence the AFL may revoke that Person's registration and notify that person's Club.

16. Protective equipment

16.1 Laws of the Game

- (a) Law 9 of the Laws of the Game regulates the management and use of Protective Equipment in Australian Football.
- (b) Section [16](#) is supplementary to Law 9 of the Laws of the Game and aims to assist Controlling Bodies to apply Law 9 of the Laws of the Game and regulate the use of Protective Equipment.

16.2 Categories of Protective Equipment

- (a) Protective Equipment will be categorised as follows:
 - (i) Category 1 Protective Equipment;
 - (ii) Category 2 Protective Equipment; and
 - (iii) Category 3 Protective Equipment.
- (b) The three categories of Protective Equipment are defined in [Appendix 5](#).

16.3 Using Protective Equipment

- (a) During a Match, a Player may use:

- (i) Category 1 Protective Equipment: no prior notification, inspection or approval is required;
 - (ii) Category 2 Protective Equipment: inspection of Class 2 Protective Equipment by relevant Controlling Body required prior to the relevant Match;
 - (iii) Category 3 Protective Equipment: prior approval of the relevant Controlling Body required in accordance with Section [16.3\(b\)](#).
- (b) A Controlling Body may only grant approval under Section [16.3\(a\)\(iii\)](#) following a physical inspection of the Class 3 Protective Equipment. To assist a Controlling Body with its assessment, Players are encouraged to provide medical certification from a Qualified Medical Practitioner which outlines the clinical need for the Class 3 Protective Equipment and confirms that it does not pose any unreasonable safety risk to the Player or others.
- (c) Any approval granted in respect of Category 3 Protective Equipment may be withdrawn by the relevant Controlling Body at any time.

16.4 Prohibited protective equipment

Equipment with any of the following characteristics will not be classified as Protective Equipment and must not be approved by a Controlling Body:

- (a) equipment made with metal;
- (b) equipment with an exposed hinge;
- (c) equipment with an exposed point, strap or edge;
- (d) equipment with sharp edges;
- (e) equipment made with hard plastic (other than Thermoplastic where there is sufficient exterior padding).

16.5 Mouthguards

- (a) Mouthguards have a definite role in preventing injuries to the teeth and face and for this reason they are strongly recommended at all levels of football. Mouthguards should be worn for all Matches and contact training sessions.
- (b) Dentally fitted laminated mouthguards offer the best protection and should be used by all Players.

16.6 Spectacles

Players who wish to wear spectacles during Matches and training sessions should wear spectacles with plastic frames and plastic lenses. A band must also hold the spectacles on securely.

17. Extreme weather

17.1 AFL statement on extreme weather

Environmental factors may affect the playing of Australian Football. On some occasions, extreme weather conditions (for example, heat, humidity, lightning) may lead to postponement or cancellation of matches, or other the implementation of other measures to ensure the safety of Players and Football Officials. This Section sets out the approach that each Controlling Body must adopt when assessing extreme weather conditions.

17.2 Extreme heat

(a) Effects of extreme heat

Heat stress can impair the wellbeing of Players and Football Officials (for example, dizziness, headaches, collapse and illness). In extreme cases, heat stroke can develop which may be life threatening. Preventing and managing heat stress and injury will ensure safe performance and may improve Player recovery. To prevent and manage heat stress, careful planning and preparation is required in accordance with this Section.

(b) Controlling Body responsibility

(i) A Controlling Body must:

- (A)** assess the heat stress risk by regularly reviewing weather information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology; and
- (B)** use reasonable endeavours to monitor the implementation of heat stress management strategies by Clubs and Players.

(ii) Where there is a risk of heat stress, a Controlling Body must use reasonable endeavours to schedule Matches:

- (A)** to avoid extremes of heat;
- (B)** allow for increased rest and recovery breaks; and
- (C)** at venues equipped with cooling facilities (for example, cool room (where possible), fans, shade, air conditioning and emergency medical facilities).

(iii) In addition, a Controlling Body may undertake the following measures to mitigate heat stress:

- (A)** increase the number of water carriers to run fluids at Matches;
- (B)** increase the length of intervals to enable teams to leave the field for the shade of the rooms at each break;
- (C)** reduce length of quarters;
- (D)** postpone or reschedule Matches.

(c) Club responsibility

- (i) A Club must monitor environmental factors such as extreme heat in respect of Matches and any training sessions administered by the Club. The Club should assess the heat stress risk by regularly reviewing information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology. Heat stress management strategies should also be implemented at all Matches and training sessions.
- (ii) A Club must use reasonable endeavours to:
 - (A) coordinate training times to avoid extreme heat conditions;
 - (B) use cooling aids during Matches and training sessions such as ice vests, water spray bottles, cold or iced towels, misting fans (in changerooms and on interchange bench) and shade including portable shade structures;
 - (C) provide heat permeable apparel to Players;
 - (D) report incidents of heat stress illness to the relevant Controlling Body;
 - (E) ensure a Club Football Official is available to monitor and manage Players for heat stress issues as they arise during a Match;
 - (F) provide adequate fluids (water and/or sport drinks) in appropriate bottles; and
 - (G) ensure trainers are fit enough to access as many players as possible during the game.

(d) **Player responsibility**

A Player must ensure that the impact of environmental factors such as extreme heat is not exacerbated by their own conduct and take measures to:

- (i) use cooling strategies before, during and after matches (for example, cool shower, ice towels or vest on neck and torso)
- (ii) ensure adequate fluid intake prior to and during Matches (500-700mls per quarter);
- (iii) monitor hydration;
- (iv) notify Club Football Officials when affected by heat or when performance is noticeably affected;
- (v) use cooling strategies before, during and after Matches;
- (vi) not play in the heat with an existing illness; and
- (vii) apply sun protection factor 30+ sunscreen at least 30 minutes before exposure to the sun.

17.3 Lightning

- (a) **AS1768-2007**

- (i) A Controlling Body must use best endeavours to comply with AS1768-2007, entitled The Lightning Protection Standard, published on 10 January 2007 (**Lightning Standard**).
 - (ii) While the Lightning Standard will not necessarily prevent damage or personal injury due to lightning, it will reduce the probability of such damage or injury occurring.
- (b) 30/30 Safety Guideline
- (i) In the absence of specific information from a weather radar, lightning location system or specialised warning device then the relevant Controlling Body and Club(s) must refer to the 30/30 Safety Guideline.
 - (ii) The 30/30 Safety Guideline specifies that where lightning is considered to be a possible or actual threat to a Match or training session the following procedures and considerations apply:
 - (A) The observation of approaching storm clouds, the first flash of lightning or clap of thunder, no matter how far away should heighten lightning awareness. The level of risk depends on one's location (direction and distance) relative to the storm cell and the direction in which the storm system is traveling.
 - (B) A simple method of determining the distance to the storm cell is to measure the time elapsed from when the lightning flash is observed and when the associated clap of thunder is heard.
 - (C) Light travels faster than sound. Assuming that the light from the flash reaches the observer instantaneously, and knowing that sound takes approximately three (3) seconds to travel one (1) kilometre, the distance can be determined by using the following rule:

distance (in km) = time from observing the flash to hearing thunder (in 3 seconds).
 - (D) It is important to remember that lightning may be obscured by clouds so it must be assumed that when thunder is heard, lightning is in the vicinity. In such cases, careful judgment must be used to determine whether a threat exists.
 - (E) The accepted "safe" distance from lightning is greater than 10km. This means that as the time interval between observing the flash and hearing the thunder approaches 30 seconds, all those in exposed areas should be seeking or already inside safe shelters. A storm cell with lightning activity within 10km constitutes a threat.
 - (F) It is recommended that people wait a minimum of 30 minutes after the last sighting of lightning or sound of thunder. This figure is based on the observation that the typical storm moves at about 40km/h. Thus, waiting 30 minutes allows the thunderstorm to be about 20km away, minimising the likelihood of a nearby lightning strike.

- (G) It is important to emphasise that blue skies and lack of rainfall are not adequate reasons to breach the 30 minute minimum return-to-activity rule.

(c) **General lightning safety guideline**

(i) Prior to Match Day

A Controlling Body must assess the thunderstorm activity and lightning risk to Matches and training sessions by regularly reviewing weather information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology.

(ii) Match Day

(A) If lightning is predicted within 10km of a Match venue at the scheduled starting time, that Match may be delayed or suspended by the relevant Controlling Body or Umpire(s).

(B) A decision to resume play in respect of a Match which has been delayed or suspended due to lightning will be made by the Controlling Body or Umpire(s) based on information obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology and in consultation with the relevant Clubs.

(d) **Club responsibility**

(i) A Club must monitor environmental factors such as lightning in respect of Matches and any training sessions administered by the Club. The Club should assess the lightning risk by reviewing information provided by the Bureau of Meteorology.

(ii) Where there is a risk of lightning, a Club must adhere to the following general guidelines:

(A) If a lightning threat emerges, a nominated Club Football Official must contact all relevant coaching, rehabilitation and training staff and provide updates on a regular basis.

(B) A decision to delay, suspend or resume training should be made in consultation with relevant coaching and administration staff.

(C) If Players are training when the lightning threat becomes real, then they should leave the training venue immediately and take shelter inside a building or car. They should not shelter under or near trees.

(D) Once the storm's path has been reassessed, there must be a minimum of 30 minutes elapsed before returning to training.

(E) Where there is no access to Bureau of Meteorology information, the 30/30 Safety Guideline serves as a guide for the suspension and subsequent resumption of activities.

18. Sun / UV protection

18.1 AFL statement on sun / UV protection

- (a) A Person may be exposed to ultraviolet (UV) light when participating in Australian Football. Prolonged exposure to UV light can result in sunburn, chronic sun damage to both skin and eyes and increase the risk of precancerous and cancerous skin lesions. Sport-specific factors such as increased sweating can increase skin photosensitivity and result in an increased risk of sunburn. A Person should undertake sun protection measures for all outdoor activities, particularly when the UV levels are 3 or greater. The World Health Organisation (WHO) outlines the UV radiation exposure categories or UV Index (UVI) with levels from 0 low to 11+ extreme.

Exposure Category	UVI Range
Low	< 2
Moderate	3 to 5
High	6 to 7
Very High	8 to 10
Extreme	11+

- (b) Australian Football is only one contributor to a Person's overall sun exposure and a Person should apply these guidelines to non-football related leisure and work activities.

18.2 Club and Person responsibility

- (a) Clubs are encouraged to develop specific sun protection guidelines that are relevant to their geographic location and training requirements. A sport-specific sun protection guideline template can be found on the SunSmart website.
- (b) Club Officers should download the SunSmart Mobile Application to assist with monitoring of daily UV levels.
- (c) Where possible, Clubs should reduce sun exposure for Players and Football Officials by scheduling outdoor training sessions outside of times of peak UV levels (i.e. early morning or late afternoon noting that UV levels are higher in the middle of the day).
- (d) Training sessions undertaken when UV levels are high should be reduced in duration where possible.
- (e) Clubs should provide shade for Football Officials participating at training sessions and Matches. Additional shade structures on the benches for Matches should also be considered when matches are played when high UV levels are 3 or greater.

- (f) At times when Players and Football Officials have an increased risk of sun exposure, the following additional measures should be employed:
 - (i) SPF 50+ water-resistant sunscreen should be available at all outdoor training sessions and Matches when the UV levels are (or are expected to be) greater than 3. Expired sunscreen should not be used.
 - (ii) Players and Football Officials should be educated by Clubs to apply a generous amount of sunscreen to all exposed skin at least 30 minutes before sun exposure and sweating occurs and reapplied every 2 hours.
 - (iii) Zinc based sunscreens can be used as an alternative and applied to high exposure areas such as the face.
 - (iv) Where possible, long-sleeved clothing, with Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) should be worn. A UPF rating above 15 is suitable however the AFL recommends a 50+ UPF rating.
 - (v) Players and Football Officials should wear a hat and sunglasses for outdoor training sessions where practical.
- (g) Players and Football Officials should perform regular self-examination of their skin and consult a doctor if they become aware of any changes. These might include new freckles or moles or a change in size, colour or shape.

19. Concussion

[The Management of Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football](#) (as amended from time to time) is adopted as part of this Policy Handbook and its terms are deemed terms of this Policy Handbook.

20. Pregnant players

20.1 AFL statement on pregnant players

- (a) The AFL respects the rights of women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or the carer of a child to participate in Australian Football and is committed to providing support to assist them to do so. The AFL prohibits any actions that may amount to discrimination against a player because of the Player's pregnancy, breastfeeding or status as the carer of a child.
- (b) While many sporting activities are safe for pregnant women, there may be risks that apply to some women during pregnancy. Those risks will depend on the nature of the sporting activity and the pregnant woman's circumstances. The AFL respects and supports the rights of pregnant players who, in consultation with medical professionals, elect to continue to participate in Australian Football competitions, provided that at all times the health and wellbeing of the Player and their unborn child is paramount.

20.2 Club and Player responsibility

- (a) All Players should agree to, as soon as possible after becoming aware that they are pregnant, and on an ongoing basis throughout their pregnancy, obtain and

disclose to their Club Coach regular medical advice which sets out the Player's doctor's opinion regarding:

- (i) the risks associated with participating in the Australian Football competition and associated training and events while pregnant;
 - (ii) taking into account their individual circumstances, whether it is safe for the player to continue participating in the Australian Football competition and associated training and events; and
 - (iii) any other information that the doctor considers relevant.
- (b) The Club may seek additional information about a Player's pregnancy as reasonably required.
- (c) All information provided by a Player about her pregnancy must be kept strictly confidential unless the express consent of the Player is provided. Announcements regarding the Player's pregnancy should only be made in consultation with the Player.
- (d) It is recommended that:
- (i) after a Player becomes aware that they are pregnant, the Player should receive medical clearance and sign an insurance declaration form (prescribed by the AFL from time to time) prior to participation; and
 - (ii) Clubs ensure that all pregnant Players are advised that the Australian Football National Risk Protection Program may not cover them while pregnant.

21. Active bleeding

Law 24 of the Laws of the Game regulates the management of active bleeding in Australian Football.

PART E – DISCIPLINARY

What is the purpose of Part E?

- This Part E (Disciplinary) sets out how alleged Reportable Offences and Policy Breaches are dealt with.
- Alleged Reportable Offences are processed in accordance with Section [22](#), which covers Umpire reports, the referral and investigation of alleged Reportable Offences, Notices of Charge and Early Guilty Pleas.
- Alleged Policy Breaches are processed in accordance with Section [23](#), which covers the submission and investigation of written complaints, Notices of Breach and decisions available to the AFL and Controlling Bodies following an investigation of a Policy Breach.
- Following the processes under Section [22](#) or Section [23](#), a matter may be referred to the Tribunal. Section [25](#) deals with the operation and powers of the Tribunal. Section [26](#) deals with appeals from the Tribunal to the Appeal Board.
- The points above are for background only and are not operative terms of this Policy Handbook.

22. Reportable Offences

22.1 Making a report

(a) Notice of Report– Umpire report

- (i) Subject to Section [22.1\(a\)\(ii\)](#), if an Umpire considers that a Person has committed a Reportable Offence, the Umpire will use their best endeavours to inform the Person that they have been reported either:
 - (A) immediately following the relevant incident;
 - (B) before the commencement of the quarter following the relevant incident; or
 - (C) if the relevant incident occurs in the final quarter, as soon as reasonably practicable after the completion of the Match.
- (ii) An Umpire may inform the captain, acting captain or Club Officer of a report where it is impractical to inform the Person.
- (iii) As soon as practicable after completion of the Match, the Umpire must:
 - (A) complete a Notice of Report;
 - (B) lodge the Notice of Report together with the Match paperwork to the Controlling Body; and
 - (C) retain a copy of the Notice of Report.

(b) Incident Referral Form – Umpire or Club incident referral after Match

- (i) If an Umpire considers that a Person may have committed a Reportable Offence but did not report that Person under Section [22.1\(a\)](#), then as soon as practicable after completion of the Match, the Umpire must:

- (A) complete an Incident Referral Form; and
- (B) lodge the Incident Referral Form with the Controlling Body in the manner prescribed by the Controlling Body from time to time (together with the Match paperwork if possible),

provided that the Incident Referral Form must be lodged no later than 5:00pm on the next business day after the relevant Match or at such other time as the Controlling Body determines.

[Guidance note: If an Incident Referral Form is lodged, refer to Section [22.2](#).]

- (ii) If a Club considers that a Person has committed a Reportable Offence, the Club may:

- (A) complete an Incident Referral Form, or such other form as prescribed by the Controlling Body; and
- (B) lodge the Incident Referral Form with the Controlling Body in the manner specified by the Controlling Body from time to time,

provided that the Incident Referral Form must be lodged no later than 5:00pm on the next business day after the relevant Match or at such other time as the Controlling Body determines.

[Guidance note: If an Incident Referral Form is lodged, refer to Section [22.2](#).]

- (iii) The Controlling Body may levy a fee for the administration of an Incident Referral Form lodged in accordance with Section [22.1\(b\)\(ii\)](#), which may be refunded if the Controlling Body determines that the Person who is the subject of the Incident Referral Form has committed a Reportable Offence.
- (iv) An Incident Referral Form lodged in accordance with Section [22.1\(b\)\(ii\)](#) may not be withdrawn by the Club after it has been lodged with the Controlling Body.

(c) **Incident Referral Form – Power of Executive Officer**

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy Handbook, if an Executive Officer (or their nominee) considers that a Person has committed a Reportable Offence during a Match, the Executive Officer (or their nominee) may report that Person by completing an Incident Referral Form for assessment by the Controlling Body under [22.2\(a\)](#).

22.2 Investigating an incident

(a) **Assessment**

As soon as practicable after a Controlling Body receives:

- (i) a Notice of Report under Section [22.1\(a\)\(iii\)](#);

- (ii) an Incident Referral Form under Section [22.1\(b\)\(i\)](#), [22.1\(b\)\(ii\)](#) or [22.1\(c\)](#); or
- (iii) a referral under Section [23.2\(a\)\(i\)\(D\)](#) or [23.2\(c\)\(i\)\(F\)](#),

the Controlling Body must undertake an assessment of the alleged Reportable Offence set out in the Notice of Report or Incident Referral Form or referral and following its assessment, the Controlling Body may complete a Notice of Charge.

[Guidance note: If a Notice of Charge is completed, refer to Section [22.3](#).]

(b) **Match Review Panel**

- (i) A Controlling Body may appoint any number of Persons to assist with the assessment of alleged Reportable Offences, including the review of Match footage (**Match Review Panel**). The Match Review Panel may comprise one Person.
- (ii) If instructed by a Controlling Body, the Match Review Panel may:
 - (A) assist an Executive Officer in relation to a determination under Section [22.1\(c\)](#); or
 - (B) assist the Controlling Body in relation to an assessment under Section [22.2\(a\)](#); or
 - (C) review Match footage and/or investigate any incident which occurred during a Match using reasonable measures (including by interviewing any relevant Person and taking witness statements) to assess whether a Reportable Offence has been committed during a Match.
- (iii) If, after an assessment under Section [22.2\(b\)\(ii\)\(C\)](#), the Match Review Panel considers that a Person has committed a Reportable Offence, the Match Review Panel must complete a Notice of Charge.

[Guidance note: If a Notice of Charge is completed by the Match Review Panel, refer to Section [22.3](#).]

22.3 Notice of Charge

(a) **Issuing Notice of Charge**

If:

- (i) a Controlling Body completes a Notice of Charge under Section [22.2\(a\)](#); or
- (ii) a Match Review Panel completes a Notice of Charge under Section [22.2\(b\)\(iii\)](#),

then the Controlling Body must, as soon as practicable after the relevant Match, issue the Notice of Charge to the charged Person and that Person's Club.

[Guidance note: Once a Notice of Charge is issued, refer to Section [22.4](#).]

(b) **Withdrawal of Notice of Charge**

A Match Review Panel may withdraw a Notice of Charge completed under Section [22.2\(a\)](#) or [22.2\(b\)\(iii\)](#) (as applicable) at any time prior to a Tribunal hearing by lodging a written notice with the Controlling Body.

(c) **Notice of Charge**

A Notice of Charge must categorise and grade (if applicable) the alleged Reportable Offence based on the categories and gradings of Reportable Offences specified in [Appendix 1](#).

22.4 Early Guilty Plea – Reportable Offence

(a) **Person may enter Early Guilty Plea**

Subject to Section [22.4\(c\)](#), where a Person has been issued a Notice of Charge, that Person may enter an Early Guilty Plea in relation to the Reportable Offence set out in the Notice of Charge and accept the Early Guilty Plea penalty prescribed by the Controlling Body in accordance with [Appendix 1](#) or elect to contest the Notice of Charge, by no later than 5:00pm on the next business day after receipt of the Notice of Charge, or such other time as the Controlling Body determines.

[Guidance note: Sometimes an Early Guilty Plea will not be available because a Controlling Body may refer the Notice of Charge directly to the Tribunal under Section [22.4\(c\)](#).]

(b) **Proceed to Tribunal hearing**

(i) If a Person elects to contest a Notice of Charge issued under Section [22.4\(a\)](#) then the Controlling Body must refer the matter to the Tribunal and, subject to Sections [25.4\(a\)\(iv\)](#) and [25.4\(a\)\(vi\)](#), that Person will not be entitled to any reduction to the sanction applicable to the Reportable Offence as per [Appendix 1](#).

(ii) If a Person fails to respond to a Notice of Charge issued under Section [22.4\(a\)](#) then the Controlling Body may:

(A) refer the matter to the Tribunal to be dealt with in accordance with Section [25](#) and, subject to Sections [25.4\(a\)\(iv\)](#) and [25.4\(a\)\(vi\)](#), that Person will not be entitled to any reduction to the sanction applicable to the Reportable Offence as per [Appendix 1](#); or

(B) apply the Early Guilty Plea penalty without referring the matter to the Tribunal.

(c) **Early plea not available**

(i) On issuing a Notice of Charge under Section [22.3\(a\)](#), a Controlling Body may refer the Notice of Charge directly to the Tribunal to be determined under Section [25](#).

[Guidance note: Refer to the Direct Tribunal Offences provisions set out in Clause [4](#) of Appendix 1 which must be referred directly to the Tribunal.]

(ii) If a Notice of Charge is referred directly to the Tribunal, the charged Person may not enter an Early Guilty Plea.

22.5 Recording of Reportable Offences

On issuing a Notice of Charge under Section [22.3\(a\)](#), a Controlling Body must record the details and outcome of a Reportable Offence against the relevant Person's profile in the Competition Management Platform (where that Person has a profile).

23. Policy Breaches

23.1 Making a complaint

(a) Written complaint by person

Subject to Section [23.1\(b\)](#), if a Person considers that another Person has committed a Policy Breach, the first Person may submit a written complaint to:

- (i) the relevant Controlling Body (other than the AFL) by submitting a Notice of Complaint to that Controlling Body; or *[Guidance note: If complaint submitted to Controlling Body, refer to Section [23.2\(c\)](#).]*
- (ii) the AFL via the AFL's electronic complaint submission platform (accessible [here](#)); or *[Guidance note: If complaint submitted to AFL, refer to Section [23.2\(a\)](#).]*
- (iii) otherwise in the manner specified by the AFL from time to time.

(b) Time limitation

- (i) Subject to Section [23.1\(b\)\(ii\)](#), a written complaint under Section [23.1\(a\)](#) must be submitted as soon as practicable but no later than 30 days after the alleged incident except that a written complaint which relates to an alleged breach of Section [11](#) (Safeguarding Children and Young People) may be submitted at any time after the alleged incident.
- (ii) If a Club (including a Club Officer) considers that a Person has committed a Policy Breach in connection with a Match, that Club must, by no later than 5:00pm on the next business day after the relevant Match or such other time as the relevant Controlling Body determines, submit a written complaint in accordance with Section [23.1\(a\)](#).

*[Guidance note: Clubs are held to a higher standard. Clubs **must** submit a complaint in relation to a suspected Policy Breach during a Match, whereas an ordinary person may choose to do so but within the time parameters stated.]*

(c) Levy of fee

A Controlling Body may levy a fee for the administration of a written complaint (with the fee amount to be determined by the Controlling Body), which may be refunded if the Controlling Body determines that the Person who is the subject of the written complaint may have committed a Policy Breach.

(d) Withdrawal of complaint

A complaint submitted in accordance with Section [23.1\(a\)](#) cannot be withdrawn by the submitting party after it has been submitted, unless otherwise approved by the Controlling Body.

(e) Referral – Power of Executive Officer

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy Handbook, if an Executive Officer (or their nominee) considers that a Person has committed a Policy Breach, the Executive Officer (or their nominee) may refer a matter for assessment by the Controlling Body under Section [23.2\(c\)](#).

23.2 Assessing and investigating a complaint

(a) AFL assessment following receipt of complaint

- (i) Subject to Section [23.2\(a\)\(ii\)](#), as soon as practicable after the AFL receives a written complaint under Section [23.1\(a\)\(ii\)](#) or from a Controlling Body under Section [23.2\(c\)\(i\)\(A\)](#), the AFL must undertake an assessment of the alleged Policy Breach set out in the written complaint and following its assessment, the AFL may:
 - (A) investigate the matter in accordance with Section [23.2\(b\)](#); or
 - (B) delegate the matter to the relevant Controlling Body to be dealt with in accordance with Section [23.2\(d\)](#); or
 - (C) refer the matter to a government authority (including the police); or
 - (D) refer the matter to the relevant Controlling Body to be assessed as an alleged Reportable Offence in accordance with Section [22.2\(a\)](#).
- (ii) As soon as practicable after the AFL receives a written complaint under Section [23.1\(a\)\(ii\)](#) which relates to an alleged breach of Section [10.1](#) (Vilification and discrimination – Prohibited conduct), the AFL must undertake an assessment of the alleged breach of Section [10.1](#) and following its assessment, the AFL must either:
 - (A) undertake the preliminary resolution process set out in Section [10.3](#); or
 - (B) delegate the matter to the relevant Controlling Body to be dealt with in accordance with Section [23.2\(d\)](#).

(b) AFL investigation

- (i) Except where prohibited by law, the AFL may investigate and deal with any matter in connection with this Policy Handbook including to:
 - (A) use reasonable measures to establish the facts of the alleged Policy Breach (including by interviewing any relevant Person and taking witness statements);
 - (B) determine all questions arising or objections made in relation to an alleged Policy Breach;
 - (C) refer any matter concerning an alleged Policy Breach for hearing and determination, in whole or in part, by a body or person appointed by the AFL;
 - (D) stand down any Person subject to any action specified under Sections [23.2\(a\)](#) to [23.2\(e\)](#) (including any investigation or associated

Tribunal or Appeal Board hearing) from participating in or in connection with a Competition;

- (E) consider external expert advice regarding cultural or religious matter or other relevant lived experience;
 - (F) exercise any other powers conferred by this Policy Handbook; and
 - (G) delegate any of its powers under this Policy Handbook.
- (ii) If the AFL elects to investigate a matter under this Policy Handbook, the AFL must give written notice to the Person(s) the subject of the investigation.
 - (iii) On completion of an investigation under this Section [23.2\(b\)](#), the AFL must proceed with the matter in accordance with Section [23.3\(a\)](#).

(c) **Controlling Body assessment following receipt of complaint**

- (i) Subject to Section [23.2\(c\)\(ii\)](#), as soon as practicable after a Controlling Body receives a written complaint under Section [23.1\(a\)\(i\)](#) or is referred a matter under Section [23.1\(e\)](#), the Controlling Body must undertake an assessment of the alleged Policy Breach and following its assessment, the Controlling Body may:
 - (A) escalate the matter to the AFL on behalf of the relevant Person in accordance with Section [23.1\(a\)\(ii\)](#) and notify the relevant Person(s) of that escalation; or
 - (B) procure the relevant Person to submit their written complaint to the AFL in accordance with Section [23.1\(a\)\(ii\)](#); or
 - (C) investigate the matter in accordance with Section [23.2\(e\)](#); or
 - (D) complete a Notice of Breach; or
 - (E) refer the matter to a government authority (including the police); or
 - (F) refer the matter for assessment as an alleged Reportable Offence in accordance with Section [22.2\(a\)](#).
- (ii) As soon as practicable after a Controlling Body receives a written complaint under Section [23.1\(a\)\(i\)](#) which relates to an alleged breach of Section [10.1](#) (Vilification and discrimination – Prohibited conduct), the Controlling Body must undertake an assessment of the alleged breach of Section [10.1](#) and following its assessment, the Controlling Body must either:
 - (A) undertake the preliminary resolution process set out in Section [10.3](#); or
 - (B) escalate the written complaint to the AFL on behalf of the relevant Person in accordance with Section [23.1\(a\)\(ii\)](#) and notify the relevant Person(s) of that escalation.

[Guidance note: A Controlling Body has numerous options once a complaint is received and assessed. The Controlling Body must be clear about which Section of the Policy Handbook the alleged Policy Breach relates to before choosing a course of action.]

(d) **Controlling Body assessment following delegation by AFL**

As soon as practicable after the AFL delegates a matter to a Controlling Body under Section [23.2\(a\)\(i\)\(B\)](#), the Controlling Body must undertake an assessment of the alleged Policy Breach set out in the written complaint and following its assessment, the Controlling Body may, having regard to the AFL's findings including any recommendations (if any):

- (i) where the written complaint relates to an alleged breach of Section [10.1](#) (Vilification and discrimination – Prohibited conduct), undertake the preliminary resolution process set out in Section [10.3](#); or
- (ii) investigate the matter in accordance with Section [23.2\(e\)](#); or
- (iii) complete a Notice of Breach.

[Guidance note: This Section only applies where the AFL delegates a matter to another Controlling Body once the AFL has assessed the matter itself. With any delegation the AFL may provide recommendations as to the appropriate course of action.]

(e) **Controlling Body investigation**

- (i) If a Controlling Body elects to investigate a matter under Section [23.2\(c\)\(i\)\(C\)](#) or [23.2\(d\)\(ii\)](#), the Controlling Body must:
 - (A) notify the Person(s) the subject of the investigation as soon as practicable; and
 - (B) use reasonable measures to establish the facts of the alleged Policy Breach (including by interviewing any relevant Person and taking witness statements).
- (ii) A Controlling Body may engage a third party, appropriately qualified investigator to assist with an investigation.
- (iii) On completion of its investigation, a Controlling Body must proceed with the matter in accordance with Section [23.3\(b\)](#).

(f) **State Football Body stand down rule**

A State Football Body may, with the prior written consent of the AFL, stand down any Person subject to any action specified under Sections [23.2\(a\)](#) to [23.2\(e\)](#) (including any investigation or resulting Tribunal or Appeal Board hearing) from participating in or in connection with a Competition.

[Guidance note: Generally, a Person will only be stood down in the most serious of circumstances and the AFL must consent to any proposed stand down.]

(g) **Vexatious complaints**

A Person (including a Disciplinary Officer or Club) must not knowingly submit a complaint that is untrue, vexatious or malicious.

(h) **Cooperation with investigation**

A Person the subject of an investigation under this Section [23.2](#) and other Persons relevant to an investigation (including, for the avoidance of doubt, Clubs) must:

- (i) cooperate with the investigation;
- (ii) answer questions and provide statements truthfully during the investigation;
- (iii) not make any false or misleading statement or act in a manner calculated to or which is likely to mislead.

(i) **Investigations involving minors**

Where a Person involved in an investigation under this Section [23.2](#) is under the age of eighteen (18) years then during the investigation that Person must always be supported by:

- (i) a parent or guardian of the Person; and
- (ii) where possible, a Club Officer.

[Guidance note: It is critical that all minors are always supported by an adult if they are the subject to or involved in any investigation.]

(j) **Confidentiality**

- (i) Subject to Section [23.2\(j\)\(ii\)](#), a Controlling Body must use reasonable endeavours to keep confidential any information obtained under Section [23.2](#).
- (ii) Information obtained under Section [23.2](#) may be used or disclosed by a Controlling Body in connection with investigations under this Policy Handbook and in reporting any reasonable suspicion of criminal conduct to relevant authorities. Without limiting the foregoing, a Controlling Body may disclose such information to the public where it is reasonable to do so in the interests of the open administration of AFL and State Football Body disciplinary processes provided that no information that identifies a person will be disclosed other than a person's name and information about their participation in a Competition.

23.3 Decision following investigation

(a) **AFL decision following investigation**

- (i) On completion of an investigation under Section [23.2\(b\)](#), the AFL may:
 - (A) deliver its findings (including any recommendations) to the relevant Controlling Body and direct that Controlling Body to make a determination in accordance with Section [23.3\(b\)](#); or
 - (B) impose a sanction on any Person who has committed a Policy Breach on any terms and conditions, including to reprimand, suspend or deregister a Person; or
 - (C) deal with the matter in such other manner as the AFL sees fit which may include the AFL attempting to conciliate or mediate the matter or issuing a warning letter or dismissing the matter altogether.
- (ii) All decisions of the AFL, including in connection with an alleged Policy Breach, are final and subject only to any rights of appeal provided by law.

(b) **Controlling Body decision following investigation**

- (i) On completion of an investigation under Section [23.2\(e\)](#) or as soon as practicable after a direction from the AFL under Section [23.3\(a\)\(i\)\(A\)](#), the relevant Controlling Body may, having regard to the AFL's findings including any recommendations (if any):
 - (A) complete a Notice of Breach; or
 - (B) deal with the matter in such other manner as the Controlling Body determines which may include the Controlling Body attempting to conciliate or mediate the matter or issuing a warning letter or dismissing the matter altogether.
- (ii) On completing a Notice of Breach under Section [23.3\(b\)\(i\)\(A\)](#), a Controlling Body may elect to refer the Notice of Breach directly to the Tribunal (to be determined under Section [24](#)) without prescribing a sanction.

[Guidance note: Refer to the definition of "Notice of Breach" and Section [23.5](#) when completing a Notice of Breach.]

(c) **Appealing Controlling Body decision**

A decision by a Controlling Body under Section [23.3\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) may be appealed in accordance with Section [26](#).

23.4 Issuing or withdrawing Notice of Breach

(a) **Issuing Notice of Breach**

If a Controlling Body completes a Notice of Breach under Section [23.2\(c\)\(i\)\(D\)](#), [23.2\(d\)\(iii\)](#) or [23.3\(b\)\(i\)\(A\)](#) then the Controlling Body must:

- (i) issue that Notice of Breach to the charged Person and that Person's Club (if applicable); and
- (ii) provide the other Person and that Person's Club (if applicable) with a copy of the Notice of Breach.

(b) **Completing a Notice of Breach**

A Notice of Breach must:

- (i) categorise the alleged Policy Breach;
- (ii) set out the sanction prescribed by the Controlling Body (for example, a reprimand, suspension or Deregistration) unless the matter is referred directly to the Tribunal in which case no prescribed sanction is required; and
- (iii) include the details set out in the form of the Notice of Breach set out in [Appendix 6](#).

[Guidance note: In setting out a sanction under Section [23.4\(b\)\(ii\)](#), a Controlling Body may, at its discretion, offer a discount to the prescribed sanction for the acceptance of an Early Guilty Plea]

(c) **Withdrawal of Notice of Breach**

A Controlling Body may withdraw a Notice of Breach completed under Section [23.2\(c\)\(i\)\(D\)](#) or [23.3\(b\)\(i\)\(A\)](#) at any time prior to a Tribunal hearing.

23.5 Early Guilty Plea – Policy Breach

(a) **Person may enter Early Guilty Plea**

Subject to Section [23.5\(c\)](#), where a Person has been issued a Notice of Breach, that Person may enter an Early Guilty Plea in relation to the Policy Breach and accept the Early Guilty Plea penalty prescribed by the Controlling Body in the Notice of Breach or elect to contest the Notice of Breach, by no later than 48 hours after receipt of the Notice of Breach, or such other time as the Controlling Body determines.

(b) **Proceed to Tribunal hearing**

- (i) If a Person elects to contest a Notice of Breach issued under Section [23.5\(a\)](#) then the Controlling Body must refer the matter to the Tribunal and that Person will not be entitled to any reduction to the sanction available with the Early Guilty Plea penalty.
- (ii) If a Person fails to respond to a Notice of Breach issued under Section [23.5\(a\)](#) then the Controlling Body may:
 - (A) refer the matter to the Tribunal to be dealt with in accordance with Section [25](#) and that Person will not be entitled to any reduction to the sanction available with the Early Guilty Plea penalty; or
 - (B) apply the Early Guilty Plea penalty without referring the matter to the Tribunal.

(c) **Early plea not available**

If a Notice of Breach is referred directly to the Tribunal in accordance with Section [23.3\(b\)\(ii\)](#), the relevant Person may not enter an Early Guilty Plea.

24. Disciplinary Officer

- (a) The Controlling Body may, from time to time, appoint one or more Disciplinary Officers who may:
- (i) assist with the assessment and/or investigation of an alleged Policy Breach under Section [23.2\(c\)](#), [23.2\(d\)](#) or [23.2\(e\)](#);
 - (ii) advise the Tribunal of the particulars of a Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach;
 - (iii) advise the Appeal Board of the particulars of a Notice of Appeal;
 - (iv) make submissions in relation to a Notice of Charge, Notice of Breach or Notice of Appeal;
 - (v) respond to any matters put in defence in relation to a Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach;

- (vi) ask questions of any Person appearing before the Tribunal or Appeal Board;
 - (vii) where necessary or desirable in the interests of general justice and fairness, call any Person to give evidence before the Tribunal; and
 - (viii) address the Tribunal or Appeal Board prior to the final submissions of any Person.
- (b) A Disciplinary Officer may, with leave of the Tribunal, amend any Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach to be determined by the Tribunal prior to or at any time during a Tribunal hearing.

[Guidance note: An umpire advocate may be appointed as a Disciplinary Officer from time to time.]

25. Tribunal

25.1 Function

- (a) The function of the Tribunal is to deal with any Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach referred to it under this Policy Handbook.
- (b) A Notice of Charge or a Notice of Breach is, for the purposes of this Section [25](#), a Notice.
- (c) For the avoidance of doubt, this Section [25](#) only applies to a Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach referred to the Tribunal under this Policy Handbook.

25.2 Establishment

(a) **Appointment of Tribunal**

A Controlling Body may, from time to time, appoint persons to the Tribunal.

(b) **Tribunal members**

The Tribunal must consist of:

- (i) a person who in the opinion of the Controlling Body possesses sufficient knowledge of Australian Football and sufficiently qualified to competently perform the role of chairperson (**Chairperson**); and
- (ii) a panel of persons who in the opinion of the Controlling Body possess sufficient knowledge of Australian Football and are sufficiently qualified to competently perform the role of Tribunal panel member (**Tribunal Panel**).

(c) **Qualifications of Tribunal members**

Except where the Controlling Body determines otherwise, a person must not be appointed to the Tribunal if:

- (i) in the twelve (12) months preceding the relevant appointment date, that person:
 - (A) has been a member of a board of directors of a Club affiliated with the Controlling Body that has appointed the Tribunal;

- (B) has been a coach or assistant or specialty coach of a Club affiliated with the Controlling Body that has appointed the Tribunal;
- (C) has been a Player; or
- (D) has been an employee of a Club affiliated with the Controlling Body that has appointed the Tribunal; or
- (ii) that person has failed to meet any Tribunal-specific training or education requirements specified by the AFL from time to time.
- (d) **Resignation and removal of Tribunal members**
 - (i) A member of the Tribunal may resign by providing written notice to the Controlling Body.
 - (ii) The Controlling Body may remove a member of the Tribunal at any time.

25.3 Procedure and evidence

- (a) **Composition of Tribunal for hearing**
 - (i) Except where the Controlling Body determines otherwise, at any Tribunal hearing, the Tribunal must comprise:
 - (A) the Chairperson or, in the Chairperson's absence, a member of the Tribunal Panel who will act as Chairperson; and
 - (B) a minimum of two (2) and maximum of four (4) Tribunal Panel members.
 - (ii) Persons appointed as Chairperson and to the Tribunal Panel may be rotated from time to time as determined by the Controlling Body.
- (b) **Representation**
 - (i) Subject to Section [25.3\(b\)\(iii\)](#), at any Tribunal hearing a Person issued with a Notice (in this Section [25](#), the **charged Person**) must:
 - (A) appear in person; and
 - (B) subject to Section [25.3\(b\)\(ii\)](#), be represented by:
 - (1) a Club Officer; or
 - (2) a barrister or solicitor unless such representation is expressly prohibited under applicable Competition rules.

[Guidance note: Refer to Section [25.3\(c\)](#) for information about how and when a Person may attend a Tribunal hearing. The wording "appear in person" does not necessarily mean the charged Person must be physically present at the Tribunal hearing.]
 - (ii) If a charged Person appears in person and elects not to be represented in accordance with Section [25.3\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) then the charged Person may act as their own advocate.

- (iii) Where a Person issued with Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach is under the age of eighteen (18) years at the time of the Tribunal hearing:
 - (A) the Person must be represented under Section [25.3\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) (and such representative must not be a parent or guardian of the Person); and
 - (B) a parent or guardian of the Person may attend any Tribunal hearing in support of the Person.
 - (iv) Where the Chairperson is of the opinion that a Person or representative of a Person appearing before the Tribunal has failed to observe directions of the Tribunal or otherwise acted in a contemptuous, irresponsible or discourteous manner, the Chairperson may dismiss the Person or Person's representative and, if appropriate, adjourn the proceedings to enable the Person to obtain fresh representation.
- (c) **Attendance at Tribunal hearing**
- (i) Subject to Section [25.3\(c\)\(ii\)](#), the following persons must attend a Tribunal hearing at the date, time and place/forum (including by video or telephone conferencing) notified by the Controlling Body:
 - (A) the charged Person and their representative;
 - (B) any Football Official, Player, parent or guardian of a Player if requested to do so by the Controlling Body or Tribunal;
 - (C) any person nominated and permitted to give evidence under Section [25.3\(e\)](#);
 - (D) a Disciplinary Officer nominated by a Controlling Body under Section [24\(a\)](#).
 - (ii) In respect of a Tribunal hearing:
 - (A) the Chairperson may excuse a Person from appearing at a Tribunal hearing if the Chairperson is satisfied that the Person is suffering from an injury or medical condition that will reasonably prevent that Person's attendance;
 - (B) any person required to attend a tribunal hearing under Section [25.3\(c\)](#) who wishes to attend a Tribunal hearing via video or telephone must first seek the prior approval of the Controlling Body (except where video or telephone conferencing is the forum fixed by the Controlling Body);
 - (C) the Controlling Body or Tribunal may, at any time prior to the Tribunal hearing, vary the date, time and place/forum of the Tribunal hearing and upon doing so, must advise all directly interested parties of such variation; and
 - (D) if any person who is required to attend a Tribunal under Section [25.3\(c\)](#), fails to appear at a Tribunal hearing at the notified date, time and place/forum, the Tribunal may proceed to hear and determine the matter and impose any sanction in the absence of that person or

postpone the Tribunal hearing provided that Section [25.5](#) will apply to a charged Person for the period of any postponement (as if the charged Person was suspended).

(d) **General conduct of Tribunal hearing**

- (i) A Tribunal hearing:
 - (A) must be held in the State or Territory of the charged Person's registered Club, unless otherwise notified or approved by the Controlling Body; and
 - (B) will be conducted by the Tribunal with as little formality and technicality and as much expedition as a proper consideration of the matter permits.
- (ii) The Tribunal is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to a court of law and may inform itself as to any matter in any such manner as it determines.
- (iii) A Controlling Body may establish and apply guidelines for the practice and procedure of a Tribunal hearing provided that such guidelines are not inconsistent with this Policy Handbook. Any such guidelines must be directory in nature and no decision of the Tribunal will be invalidated by reason of a guideline not being followed.
- (iv) The Tribunal must:
 - (A) subject to Section [25.3\(d\)\(v\)](#), provide any Person whose interest will be directly and adversely affected by its decision, a reasonable opportunity to be heard;
 - (B) hear and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner; and
 - (C) make a decision that a reasonable Tribunal could honestly arrive at.
- (v) The Tribunal will use reasonable endeavours to hear and determine any Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach referred to it before the Club of the relevant Person(s) is next scheduled to compete but to the extent that natural justice principles require that:
 - (A) a Person be given adequate notice of or sufficient time to prepare for a hearing; or
 - (B) a Tribunal hearing be scheduled at a time which does not affect the preparation of the Person(s) or the Club of the Person(s) for the next scheduled Match,

those requirements are expressly excluded from this Policy Handbook.

(e) **Evidence**

- (i) A charged Person may, subject to the following provisions of [25.3\(e\)\(i\)](#), request to adduce witness evidence at the Tribunal hearing:

- (A) any such request must be submitted to the Controlling Body in writing by no later than 10.00am on the day after the Notice of Breach or Notice of Charge is issued (or such other time determined by the Controlling Body);
- (B) the request must contain:
 - (1) the name and address of the witness, and, in the case of any expert witness, evidence proposed to be adduced, their qualifications and experience;
 - (2) a summary of the substance of the evidence the charged Person proposes to adduce from the witness;
- (ii) In this Section [25](#), the word witness includes the charged Person, where the charged Person intends to, or does give evidence at the Tribunal hearing.
- (iii) Unless permission is granted by the Chairperson, a Person shall not adduce the evidence of a witness unless that Person complies with Section [25.3\(e\)\(i\)](#).
- (iv) After receiving a request submitted in accordance with Section [25.3\(e\)\(i\)](#), the Chairperson may permit a Person to adduce the evidence of a witness.
- (v) Where expert evidence from a witness is adduced, or on any other occasion, the Tribunal, at the direction of the Chairperson, may hear any other expert evidence in relation to the matters requiring its determination.
- (vi) In relation to a Notice of Charge only, and only in exceptional and compelling circumstances, as determined by the Controlling Body in its absolute discretion, will the Tribunal receive evidence from a person who is not an Umpire or recorded on the team sheet for a relevant Match.
- (vii) Any video or medical evidence which is not already in the possession of the Controlling Body must be submitted by a Club to the Controlling Body if requested by the relevant Controlling Body.
- (viii) A charged Person may, subject to the following provisions of 25.3(e)(viii), request to adduce video or photographic evidence at the Tribunal hearing of the incident in respect of which the Person is charged:
 - (A) any such request must be submitted to the Controlling Body in writing by no later than 10.00am on the day after the Notice of Breach or Notice of Charge is issued (or such other time determined by the Controlling Body);
 - (B) the request must:
 - (1) attach the video or photographic evidence or a link to the video or photographic evidence;
 - (2) contain the name and address of the person who took the video or photographic evidence;

(3) contain with a summary of the substance of the evidence the charged Person proposes to adduce in relation to the video or photographic evidence.

- (ix) Unless permission is granted by the Chairperson, a Person shall not adduce video or photographic evidence unless that Person complies with Section [25.3\(e\)\(viii\)](#).
- (x) After receiving a request submitted in accordance with Section [25.3\(e\)\(viii\)](#), the Chairperson may permit a Person to adduce the video or photographic evidence.
- (xi) At a Tribunal hearing, a Person may rely on any incident contained in the prescribed video examples set out in [Appendix 2](#) as evidence of an incident comparable to the incident in respect of which the Person is charged, subject to the following provisions:
 - (A) it will not be necessary to obtain the leave of the Chairperson to adduce such evidence;
 - (B) the Chairperson may give some directions to the Tribunal as to the use of such evidence;
 - (C) subject to the Chairperson's directions, it will be a matter for the Tribunal to determine the assistance such evidence provides and the weight given to it;
 - (D) adequate notice must be given by the Person to the Controlling Body of any prescribed video example sought to be relied upon; and
 - (E) the Tribunal will not consider evidence (including video evidence) of any other incidents.

(f) **Matters referred under Anti-Doping Code**

Where a Notice of Breach referred to the Tribunal relates to an alleged breach of the Anti-Doping Code, this Section [25](#) must be read in conjunction with the provisions of the Anti-Doping Code, provided that to the extent of any inconsistency, the provisions of the Anti-Doping Code will prevail.

(g) **Challenges**

If a Person intends to:

- (i) challenge the jurisdiction of the Tribunal to deal with a matter;
- (ii) challenge the constitution of the Tribunal;
- (iii) challenge the formalities relating to a Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach; or
- (iv) raise any other matter requiring a legal or technical interpretation,

that Person must provide full written particulars of all relevant matters and forward a copy of those particulars to the Controlling Body and any other Person who has

a direct interest in the proceedings (including, if applicable, the Disciplinary Officer) by midday on the day after the issue of the Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach.

(h) **Standard of proof**

- (i) In relation to a Notice of Charge, the Tribunal will decide whether a Reportable Offence against a Person has been committed on the balance of probabilities.
- (ii) In relation to a Notice of Breach, the Tribunal will decide whether a Policy Breach has been committed to its comfortable satisfaction.

(i) **Onus of proof**

No Person appearing before the Tribunal shall bear an onus of establishing that an alleged Reportable Offence or Policy Breach has been committed.

(j) **Cooperation with Tribunal**

If in the opinion of the Tribunal, a Person who appears before the Tribunal:

- (i) fails to fully cooperate with the Tribunal;
- (ii) fails to truthfully answer any questions asked by a Disciplinary Officer or Tribunal;
- (iii) fails to provide any document in that Person's possession or control relevant to the Tribunal hearing following a request by a Disciplinary Officer or Tribunal;
- (iv) makes any false or misleading statement or makes a statement or acts in a manner which may mislead a Disciplinary Officer or Tribunal; or

fails to produce video evidence to the Controlling Body where requested to do so under section [25.3\(e\)\(vii\)](#); that Person may be dealt with in such manner as the Tribunal determines, including, where relevant, factoring in that Person's conduct in imposing a sanction under Section [25.4\(a\)](#).

(k) **Prohibited conduct**

- (i) A charged Person, that Person's representative or any Person acting in concert with a charged Person, must not contact, or procure another Person to contact, a Person who may be required to give evidence before the Tribunal, where that contact is intended to or may otherwise mislead the Tribunal or unfairly affect the conduct of the Tribunal hearing.
- (ii) A Person must not comment publicly on:
 - (A) the contents of a Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach prior to the conclusion of any Tribunal hearing and/or completion of a matter; or
 - (B) any matter relating to an investigation under this Policy Handbook, until completion of such investigation and/or relevant determination by the Tribunal,

unless the Person establishes, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Controlling Body, that such public comment was not intended to influence or affect the conduct of a Tribunal hearing or the process of an investigation.

- (iii) If a Controlling Body determines that a Person has breached this Section [25.3\(k\)](#), that Person:
 - (A) will be deemed to have also breached Section [9.2\(a\)](#) of this Policy Handbook; and
 - (B) notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy Handbook, may be dealt with in such manner as the Controlling Body determines including referral of such breach to the Tribunal.

(l) **Sanction on Person's Club**

In addition to any sanction imposed or determination made under Section [25.3\(k\)\(iii\)](#), the Controlling Body may impose a sanction on that Person's Club:

- (A) where the Person was a Football Official of the Club; and
- (B) where the Person was not a Football Official of the Club, unless the Club satisfies the Controlling Body that the Person engaged in the relevant conduct without the knowledge of the Club.

(m) **Costs**

Each party to a Tribunal hearing will bear their own costs in relation to the Tribunal process.

25.4 Outcomes

(a) **Tribunal decision**

- (i) A decision of the Tribunal must be determined according to the opinion of a majority of the sitting Tribunal.
- (ii) Subject to Section [25.4\(a\)\(iv\)](#), if:
 - (A) in relation to a Notice of Charge, the Tribunal determines that a Reportable Offence has been committed by a Person, the Tribunal must impose the sanction applicable to the Reportable Offence in accordance with [Appendix 1](#); or
 - (B) in relation to a Notice of Breach, the Tribunal determines that a Policy Breach has been committed by a Person, the Tribunal may impose a sanction on that Person, on any terms and conditions, including to reprimand or suspend that Person provided that the Tribunal may not deregister that Person.
- (iii) In determining a sanction under Section [25.4\(a\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#), the Tribunal may be guided, to the extent applicable and relevant, by the sanctions applicable to Reportable Offences in accordance with [Appendix 1](#). A 'suspended' match suspension is not a sanction available to the Tribunal.

- (iv) The Tribunal may determine that a reduced sanction is applicable in exceptional and compelling circumstances, including where:
 - (A) a Person has a verifiable exemplary Disciplinary History;
 - (B) a Reportable Offence or Policy Breach was committed in response to provocation;
 - (C) a Reportable Offence or Policy Breach was committed in self-defence; or
 - (D) there are multiple Reportable Offences and/or Policy Breaches arising from the same incident or course of conduct,

and it is appropriate in such exceptional and compelling circumstances to reduce the sanction.

- (v) In determining any sanction, the Tribunal will have no regard to the effect of the sanction on deregistration.
- (vi) Should a Person plead guilty to a Reportable Offence subject to an alternative classification, and successfully contest the Notice of Charge at the Tribunal (such that the Tribunal determines to downgrade the charge), the Person will be entitled to receive a reduction in the sanction equivalent to the reduction obtained had the Player submitted an Early Guilty Plea for that lesser offence.
- (vii) The Tribunal is not obliged to give reasons for any decision it makes under this Policy Handbook.
- (viii) If the Tribunal makes a decision under this Section [25.4\(a\)](#) in relation to a Person who was under the age of eighteen (18) years at the time the Reportable Offence or Policy Breach occurred, the Controlling Body must not publish the decision of the Tribunal insofar that it is viewable by the general public without the express permission of the relevant Person and their parent/guardian except that, to ensure effective administration of Competitions, access to such decisions and related sanctions will be available to the Controlling Body and any Club Officer who has access to Competition records.

(b) **Validity of charge and hearings**

- (i) Where there is any procedural irregularity in relation to a Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach or any other relevant matter, the Tribunal must still hear and determine the relevant matter unless the Tribunal is satisfied that the irregularity has caused or may cause injustice.
- (ii) The Chairperson may direct that a Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach be amended to ensure that the Notice of Charge or Notice of Breach is heard and determined according to its merits. For the avoidance of doubt, the power to amend includes the power to substitute a charge.
- (iii) A decision of the Tribunal is not invalid because of a defect or irregularity in, or in connection with, the appointment of a Tribunal member.

- (iv) Subject to Sections [25.3\(d\)\(v\)](#), [25.3\(h\)](#) and [25.3\(i\)](#), any procedure or requirement regulating the function of the Tribunal is directory in nature and a decision of the Tribunal will not be invalid by reason of that procedure or requirement not being fulfilled.

25.5 Suspension of Person

- (a) Where a sanction imposed under Section [22.3](#), [23.4\(b\)\(ii\)](#) or [25.4](#) is a suspension that suspension must be expressed as a number of Matches.
- (b) A Person suspended:
 - (i) must serve such suspension in the grade in which the Person played or participated immediately prior to such suspension;
 - (ii) may not serve the suspension in any pre-season or off-season Matches but may participate in such Matches unless otherwise determined by the relevant Controlling Body;
 - (iii) may not serve the suspension in any practice or trial matches;
 - (iv) may participate in practice or trial matches unless otherwise determined by the relevant Controlling Body;
 - (v) may not serve the suspension in any Competition bye round or where the relevant Person's team has a bye;
 - (vi) may not serve the suspension in any cancelled or forfeited Matches unless otherwise determined by a Controlling Body;
 - (vii) in a junior Competition and graduating to a senior Competition must serve the suspension in the senior Competition;
 - (viii) who is transferring from one Competition to another Competition will carry over any suspensions to the new Competition;
 - (ix) during a split round may not serve the suspension in that same round in another grade (including representative football);
 - (x) who is seeking to appeal the suspension is subject to Section [26.4\(b\)](#);
 - (xi) who receives more than one suspension in respect of the same Match or incident is subject to Clause [7\(d\)](#) of [Appendix 1](#);
 - (xii) (other than a Player suspended for a Reportable Offence) may not communicate with any Football Official on Match day for the duration of their suspension;
 - (xiii) (other than a Player suspended for a Reportable Offence), may not enter the playing area or Club change rooms at any Match on Match day for the duration of their suspension;
 - (xiv) may not perform any Football Official duties on Match day for the duration of their suspension, including any role that would require that Person to be entered on a team sheet. *[Guidance note: For example, a suspended Player cannot play or perform the role of runner or assistant coach during their suspension period.]*

- (c) Unless otherwise specified by the relevant Controlling Body in exceptional and compelling circumstances, a suspended Person will not be eligible to play, coach or otherwise be involved in representative football if the representative fixture occurs while the Person is serving the suspension. The representative fixture will not count as part of the suspension.
- (d) Where a Person is suspended, and a scenario arises with respect to the application of that suspension that is not specifically dealt with in Sections [25.5\(b\)](#) and [25.5\(c\)](#), then the relevant Controlling Body or Controlling Bodies may apply the suspension at their discretion (acting reasonably and having regard to the principles set out in Section [25.5\(b\)](#) and [25.5\(c\)](#)). If two Controlling Bodies are involved, both Controlling Bodies must agree on the application of the suspension under this Section [25.5\(d\)](#).
- (e) Where a matter cannot be resolved under Section [25.5\(d\)](#), an involved Controlling Body may refer the matter to the AFL for resolution.
- (f) Law 22.4 of the Laws of the Game will apply in conjunction with this Section [25.5](#) in relation to all Persons suspended by the Tribunal.

25.6 Criticism of decision

- (a) A Person must not make any unfair, unreasonable or excessive public criticism of a Tribunal decision or of any Tribunal member or any other matter touching or concerning the Tribunal or a determination made by it.
- (b) If a Person breaches Section [25.6\(a\)](#) that Person and that Person's Club may be dealt with in such manner as the Controlling Body sees fit including referral of such breach to the Tribunal.

26. Appeal Board

26.1 General

(a) Function

The function of the Appeal Board is to deal with any appeal commenced by a Controlling Body or Person in respect of:

- (i) a decision made by a Controlling Body under Section [23.3\(c\)](#); or
- (ii) a decision made by the Tribunal under Section [25](#); or
- (iii) a decision made by a Controlling Body under Section [4.1\(d\)](#); or
- (iv) a dispute referred in accordance with Section [3.5\(d\)\(ii\)\(A\)](#) or [3.5\(d\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#) in relation a Transfer refusal by a Source Club which cannot be resolved.

(b) Grounds for appeal

- (i) Except where the Controlling Body determines otherwise, a Person the subject of a decision or a Controlling Body affected by a decision made by a Controlling Body under Section [4.1\(d\)](#) or [23.3\(c\)](#) or the Tribunal under Section [25](#) (**Appellant**) may appeal to the Appeal Board in respect of such decision on one or more of the following grounds:

- (A) the decision involved an error of law that had a material impact on the Tribunal's decision;
 - (B) the decision was so unreasonable that no Controlling Body or Tribunal acting reasonably could have come to that decision having regard to the evidence before it;
 - (C) the classification of the Reportable Offence or Policy Breach or other conduct (as applicable) was manifestly excessive or inadequate; or
 - (D) that the sanction imposed was manifestly excessive or inadequate,
- (each, an **Appeal Ground**).

- (ii) For the avoidance of doubt, only the Appeals Grounds in Sections [26.1\(b\)\(i\)\(A\)](#) and [26.1\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) apply in respect of an appeal brought under Section [4.1\(d\)](#).
- (iii) A Person (**Appellant**) may appeal to the Appeal Board under Section [3.5\(d\)\(ii\)\(A\)](#) or [3.5\(d\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#) in respect of a Transfer refusal by a Source Club where the relevant Transfer dispute cannot be resolved by the parties under Section [3.5\(d\)\(i\)](#) (also **Appeal Ground**).
- (iv) For the avoidance of doubt, an Appellant may not appeal any decision of the AFL to the Appeal Board.

(c) **Notice of appeal**

- (i) An appeal must be submitted by the Appellant lodging with the Controlling Body, by no later than 5:00pm on the day following the relevant decision of the Tribunal or Controlling Body or such other time as the Controlling Body determines, the following:
 - (A) a duly completed Notice of Appeal which must specify the Appeal Ground(s) relied upon by the Appellant and supporting submissions in respect of the Appeal Ground(s); and
 - (B) payment of a fixed fee determined by the Controlling Body (which will be dealt with in accordance with Sections [26.4\(d\)](#) and [26.4\(e\)](#)).
- (ii) The Controlling Body must fix a date, time and place/forum (including by video or telephone conferencing) for the Appeal Board hearing as soon as practicable after the lodgement of a Notice of Appeal and payment in accordance with Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) and must advise all interested parties of those particulars.

[Guidance note: Refer to the definition of "Notice of Appeal" when completing a Notice of Appeal.]

(d) **Lodgement of appeal**

An Appellant may appeal to the relevant Controlling Body's Appeal Board (e.g. local league appeals board) where constituted or, where no such body is constituted, to the relevant State Football Body's Appeal Board.

(e) **Appeal Board may dismiss appeal**

- (i) The Appeal Board may dismiss an appeal to the Appeal Board without conducting any hearing if the Appeal Board determines that:
 - (A) the subject matter of the appeal is trivial or unrelated to the functions of the Appeal Board;
 - (B) the appeal is frivolous or vexatious;
 - (C) the appeal lacks substance or credibility; or
 - (D) the appellant does not have a sufficient interest in the decision that is the subject of the appeal.
- (ii) Where the Appeal Board dismisses an appeal under Section [26.1\(e\)\(i\)](#) the Chairperson will notify the Appellant and Controlling Body in writing as soon as practicable after the appeal has been dismissed.

26.2 Establishment

(a) Appointment

A Controlling Body may, from time to time, appoint persons to the Appeal Board.

(b) Appeal Board Members

The Appeal Board must consist of:

- (i) a person who in the opinion of the Controlling Body possesses sufficient knowledge of Australian Football and the law to competently perform the role of chairperson of the Appeal Board (**Chairperson of the Appeal Board**); and
- (ii) a panel of persons who in the opinion of the Controlling Body possess sufficient knowledge of Australian Football and the law to competently perform the role of Appeal Board panel member (**Appeal Board Panel**).

(c) Qualifications of Appeal Board members

Except where the Controlling Body determines otherwise, a person must not be appointed to the Appeal Board if:

- (i) in the twelve (12) months preceding the relevant appointment date, that person:
 - (A) has been a member of a board of directors of a Club affiliated with the Controlling Body that has appointed the Appeal Board;
 - (B) has been a coach or assistant or specialty coach of a Club affiliated with the Controlling Body that has appointed the Appeal Board;
 - (C) has been a Player; or
 - (D) has been an employee of a Club affiliated with the Controlling Body that has appointed the Appeal Board; or

- (ii) that person has failed to meet the appeal board training or education requirements set out by the AFL from time to time.
- (d) **Resignation and removal of Appeal Board members**
- (i) A member of the Appeal Board may resign by providing written notice to the Controlling Body.
 - (ii) A Controlling Body may remove a member of the Appeal Board at any time.

26.3 Procedure and Evidence

(a) **Composition of Appeal Board**

- (i) Except where the Controlling Body determines otherwise, at any Appeal Board hearing, the Appeal Board must comprise:
 - (A) the Chairperson of the Appeal Board or, in their absence, a member of the Appeal Board Panel who will act as Chairperson of the Appeal Board; and
 - (B) a minimum of one (1) and maximum of two (2) Appeal Board Panel members.
- (ii) Any Chairperson of the Appeal Board or Appeal Board Panel member who:
 - (A) has also been appointed as Chairperson or Tribunal Panel member; and
 - (B) sat on the Tribunal for the matter that is the subject of any Appeal Board hearing,must not sit on the Appeal Board for the Appeal Board hearing.
- (iii) Persons appointed as Chairperson of the Appeal Board and to the Appeal Board Panel may be rotated from time to time as determined by the Controlling Body.

(b) **Representation**

- (i) Subject to Section [26.3\(b\)\(ii\)](#), at any Appeal Board hearing an Appellant must:
 - (A) appear in person; and
 - (B) be represented by:
 - (1) a Club Officer; or
 - (2) a barrister or solicitor on such terms as the Chairperson of the Appeal Board directs unless such representation is expressly prohibited under applicable Competition rules.

[Guidance note: Refer to Section [26.3\(c\)](#) for information about how and when a Person may attend an Appeal Board hearing. The wording "appear in person" does not necessarily mean the relevant person must be physically present at the Appeal Board hearing.]

- (ii) If an Appellant appears in person and elects not to be represented in accordance with Section [26.3\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) then the Appellant may act as their own advocate.
 - (iii) Where an Appellant is under the age of eighteen (18) years at the time of the Appeal Board hearing:
 - (A) the Appellant must be represented under Section [26.3\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) (and such representative must not be a parent or guardian of the Appellant); and
 - (B) a parent or guardian of the Appellant may attend any Appeal Board hearing in support of the Appellant.
 - (iv) At any hearing before the Appeal Board, a Disciplinary Officer appointed by the Controlling Body shall be entitled to appear.
 - (v) Where the Chairperson of the Appeal Board is of the opinion that an Appellant, a representative of an Appellant or a Disciplinary Officer appearing before the Appeal Board has failed to observe directions of the Appeal Board or otherwise acted in a contemptuous, irresponsible or discourteous manner, the Chairperson of the Appeal Board may dismiss the Appellant, representative or Disciplinary Officer and if appropriate, adjourn the proceedings to enable the Appellant or Controlling Body to obtain fresh representation.
- (c) **Attendance at Appeal Board hearing**
- (i) Subject to Section [26.3\(b\)](#), an Appellant, a representative of the Appellant and a Disciplinary Officer, must attend an Appeal Board hearing at the date, time and place/forum (including by video or telephone conferencing) fixed by the Controlling Body.
 - (ii) Any Football Official, Player, parent or guardian of a Player must appear before the Appeal Board if requested to do so by the Controlling Body or Appeal Board.
 - (iii) In respect of an Appeal Board hearing:
 - (A) the Chairperson of the Appeal Board may excuse an Appellant from appearing at an Appeal Board hearing if the Chairperson of the Appeal Board is satisfied that the Appellant is suffering from an injury or medical condition that will reasonably prevent that Appellant's attendance;
 - (B) any Appellant, including the Appellant's representative, or Disciplinary Officer, who wishes to attend an Appeal Board hearing via video or telephone must first seek the prior approval of the Controlling Body (except where video or telephone conferencing is the forum fixed by the Controlling Body);
 - (C) the Controlling Body or Appeal Board may, at any time prior to the Appeal Board hearing, vary the date, time or place/forum of the Appeal Board hearing and upon doing so, must advise all interested parties of such variation; and

- (D) if an Appellant, or that Appellant's representative, or a Disciplinary Officer fails to appear at an Appeal Board hearing at the notified date, time and place/forum, the Appeal Board may proceed to hear and determine the matter and impose any sanction in the absence of that person.

(d) **General Conduct of Appeal Board hearing**

- (i) An Appeal Board hearing must be held in the State or Territory of the Appellant's registered Club, unless otherwise notified or approved by the Controlling Body.
- (ii) The Appeal Board:
 - (A) may regulate any proceedings brought before it in such manner as the Chairperson of the Appeal Board determines; and
 - (B) is not bound by the rules of evidence or by practices and procedures applicable to a court of law and may inform itself as to any matter in such manner as it determines.
- (iii) The Appeal Board must:
 - (A) subject to Section [26.3\(d\)\(iv\)](#), provide any Person whose interest will be directly and adversely affected by its decision, a reasonable opportunity to be heard;
 - (B) hear and determine the matter before it in an unbiased manner; and
 - (C) make a decision that a reasonable Appeal Board could honestly arrive at.
- (iv) The Appeal Board will use reasonable endeavours to hear and determine any appeal before the Club of the Appellant is next scheduled to compete but to the extent that natural justice principles require that:
 - (A) the Appellant be given adequate notice of or sufficient time to prepare for a hearing; or
 - (B) an Appeal Board hearing be scheduled at a time which does not affect the preparation of the Appellant or the Club of the Appellant for the next scheduled Match,

those requirements are expressly excluded from this Policy Handbook.

(e) **Review of evidence by Appeal Board**

- (i) The Appeal Board must hear an appeal by way of a review of the evidence presented before the Tribunal or Controlling Body (as applicable) and will determine whether the Appeal Ground(s) nominated by the Appellant has been established.
- (ii) An Appellant may not produce fresh evidence at an Appeal Board hearing without leave of the Appeal Board.

- (iii) If an Appellant seeks leave to produce fresh evidence, the Appeal Board will not grant such leave unless the Appeal Board is satisfied that:
 - (A) the evidence could not by reasonable diligence have been obtained by the Person prior to the conclusion of the Tribunal hearing or Controlling Body investigation (as applicable); and
 - (B) the evidence is of sufficient probative value such that, considered with other evidence which was before the Tribunal or Controlling Body (as applicable), the Tribunal or Controlling Body would have reached a different decision.

(f) **Onus and standard of proof on appeal**

At an Appeal Board hearing, the Appellant will bear the onus of establishing, on the balance of probabilities, one or more Appeal Grounds.

(g) **Prohibited conduct**

- (i) A Person must not comment publicly on the contents of a Notice of Appeal prior to a determination by the Appeal Board or conclusion of the matter unless the Person establishes, to the reasonable satisfaction of the Controlling Body, that such public comment was not intended to influence or affect the conduct of an Appeal Board hearing.
- (ii) If a Person breaches Section [26.3\(g\)\(i\)](#), that Person:
 - (A) will be deemed to have also breached Section [9.2\(a\)](#) of this Policy Handbook; and
 - (B) notwithstanding any other provision of this Policy Handbook, may be dealt with in such manner as the Tribunal or Controlling Body determines.

(h) **Sanction on Person's Club**

In addition to any sanction imposed or determination made under Section [26.3\(g\)](#), the Controlling Body may impose a sanction on that Person's Club:

- (A) where the Person was a Football Official of the Club; and
- (B) where the Person was not a Football Official of the Club, unless the Club satisfies the Controlling Body that the Person engaged in the relevant conduct without the knowledge of the Club.

(i) **Costs**

Notwithstanding Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#), each party to an appeal will bear their own costs in relation to the appeal process.

26.4 Outcomes

(a) **Decision of Appeal Board**

- (i) A decision of the Appeal Board must be determined according to the opinion of a majority of the sitting Appeal Board. Where no majority is reached, the

decision of the Appeal Board must be determined according to the opinion of the Chairperson.

- (ii) Where the Appeal Board determines that one or more Appeal Grounds has been established, the Appeal Board may confirm, reverse or modify the decision of the Tribunal or Controlling Body (as applicable) and make such orders and give such directions in such manner as it determines provided that any suspension imposed must be expressed in Matches.
- (iii) The Appeal Board is not obliged to give reasons for any decision it makes under this Policy Handbook.
- (iv) If the Appeal Board makes a decision under this Section [26.4\(a\)](#) in relation to a Person who was under the age of eighteen (18) years at the time the Reportable Offence or Policy Breach occurred, the Controlling Body must not publish the decision of the Appeal Board such that it is viewable by the general public without the express permission of the relevant Person and their parent/guardian except that, to ensure effective administration of Competitions, access to such decisions and related sanctions may be available to the Controlling Body and any Club Official who has access to Competition records.

(b) Person to serve sanction

Subject to Section [26.4\(c\)](#), where the Tribunal or Controlling Body imposes a sanction on a Person that prevents the Person from participating in a Match, Section [25.5](#) will apply and the Person must serve that sanction pending the determination of any appeal.

(c) Power to adjourn

- (i) Subject to Section [26.4\(c\)\(ii\)](#), the Appeal Board may, of its own motion or upon application of any party to the appeal, order:

- (A) that an appeal be adjourned; and/or
- (B) a stay of the execution of the sanction imposed by the Tribunal or Controlling Body pending the determination of the appeal,

if the Appeal Board is satisfied that exceptional and compelling circumstances apply such that it would be harsh and unreasonable if such an order was not made.

- (ii) In making an order under Section [26.4\(c\)\(i\)](#), the Appeal Board must have regard to:
 - (A) the merits of the appeal and the Appellant's prospects of success;
 - (B) the interests of other Clubs and Persons;
 - (C) the effect on the results of the relevant Competition; and
 - (D) the need to permit the due and proper administration of Australian Football.

(d) Success of appeal and refund of fixed fee

- (i) For the purposes of this Section [26.4\(d\)](#), an appeal is:
 - (A) successful if the Appeal Board determines that one or more Appeal Grounds has been established; and
 - (B) unsuccessful if the Appeal Board determines that no Appeal Ground has been established.
 - (ii) Where an appeal is successful, 50% (or such other proportion determined by the Controlling Body) of the fixed fee paid by the Appellant under Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) must be refunded to the Appellant on receipt by the Controlling Body of a refund request or appropriate tax invoice. For the avoidance of doubt, the remaining balance of the fixed fee paid by the Appellant under Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) will not be refunded.
 - (iii) Where an appeal is unsuccessful, the fixed fee paid by the Appellant under Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) will not be refunded and will be retained by the Controlling Body, unless the matter involves a monetary sanction and/or the Appeal Board determines that it would be manifestly unjust and unfair not to refund part of the fixed fee in which case, part of the fixed fee may be refunded.
- (e) **Abandon appeal and refund of fixed fee**
- (i) An Appellant may abandon an appeal prior to any Appeal Board hearing by giving written notice to the Controlling Body in which case 50% (or such other proportion determined by the Controlling Body) of the fixed fee paid by the Appellant under Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) must be refunded to the Appellant on receipt by the Controlling Body of a written refund request or appropriate tax invoice. For the avoidance of doubt, the remaining balance of the fixed fee paid by the Appellant under Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) will not be refunded.
 - (ii) If an Appellant abandons an appeal during the conduct of the Appeal Board hearing, the fixed fee paid by the Appellant under Section [26.1\(c\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) will not be refunded and will be retained by the Controlling Body.
- (f) **Validity of appeal and hearing**
- (i) Where there is any procedural irregularity in relation to an Appeal Board hearing, the Appeal Board must still hear and determine the appeal unless the Appeal Board is of the opinion that the irregularity has caused or will cause injustice.
 - (ii) A decision of the Appeal Board is not invalid because of a defect or irregularity in, or in connection with, the appointment of an Appeal Board member.
 - (iii) Subject to Sections [26.3\(d\)\(iii\)](#) and [26.3\(d\)\(iv\)](#), any procedure or requirement regulating the function of the Appeal Board is directory in nature and a decision of the Appeal Board is not invalid by reason of that procedure or requirement not being fulfilled.
- (g) **Criticism of Appeal Board decision**
- (i) A Person must not make any unfair, unreasonable or excessive public criticism of an Appeal Board decision or of any Appeal Board member or

any other matter relevant to the Appeal Board or a determination made by it.

- (ii) If a Person breaches Section [26.4\(g\)\(i\)](#), that Person and that Person's Club may be dealt with in such manner as the Appeal Board or Controlling Body sees fit including referral of such breach to the Tribunal.

(h) **Exhaust appeal rights**

A Person must exercise their right of appeal under this Policy Handbook and have any appeal heard and determined by the Appeal Board before commencing any relevant proceedings or becoming a party to any relevant proceedings in a court of law.

APPENDIX 1 – Reportable Offences

1. Application

- (a) This Appendix 1 sets out the different categories of Reportable Offences and appropriate sanctions and courses of action in respect of Reportable Offences.
- (b) The categories of Reportable Offences are as follows:
 - (i) Classifiable Offences (Clauses [2](#) and [3](#) of this Appendix 1);
 - (ii) Direct Tribunal Offences (Clause [4](#) of this Appendix 1);
 - (iii) Low-level Offences (Clause [5](#) of this Appendix 1); and
 - (iv) Auditory Offences (Clause 6 of this Appendix 1).
- (c) This Appendix 1 is to be used by a Controlling Body (including any Match Review Panel, Match Review Officer or other person(s) responsible for assessing a Reportable Offence) to determine the appropriate category of offence, sanction or course of action prior to any Tribunal involvement under Section [25](#).

[Guidance note: Examples of Reportable Offences committed in the AFL/AFLW Competition are listed in Appendix 2. The AFL will make vision of these examples available to Controlling Bodies from time to time.]

2. Classifiable Offences

(a) Which Reportable Offences are Classifiable Offences?

A Classifiable Offence is a Reportable Offence specified in Table 1 below which may be graded by a Controlling Body in order to determine an appropriate base sanction for that Reportable Offence.

Table 1 – Classifiable Offences
Charging
Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact to the Eye Region
Forceful Front-On Contact
Headbutt or Contact Using Head
Kicking
Kneeing
Rough Conduct
Striking
Tripping
Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact to the Face

(b) **Grading Classifiable Offences**

- (i) Unless otherwise specified in this Policy Handbook, a Controlling Body must grade a Classifiable Offence in accordance with Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Classification Table				
Conduct	Impact	Contact	Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea
Intentional	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	5 or more Matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
		Body	4 or more Matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
	High	High/Groin/Chest	4 Matches	3 Matches
		Body	3 Matches	2 Matches
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest	3 Matches	2 Matches
		Body	2 Matches	1 Match
	Low	High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches	1 Match
		Body	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand
Careless	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	4 or more Matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
		Body	3 or more Matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
	High	High/Groin/Chest	3 Matches	2 Matches
		Body	2 Matches	1 Match
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches	1 Match
		Body	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand
	Low	High/Groin/Chest	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand
		Body	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand

*Refer to Clause 2(b)(vi) of Appendix 1.

- (ii) If applicable, a Controlling Body may grade a Classifiable Offence in accordance with the specific classification table adopted by the relevant Controlling Body provided such table has been approved by the AFL.
- (iii) For a Controlling Body to arrive at a grading set out in Table 2, the Controlling Body must use the interpretation provisions set out in Clause [3](#) of this Appendix 1 to assess whether:
 - (A) the Conduct is Intentional or Careless;
 - (B) the Impact is Severe, High, Medium or Low; and
 - (C) the Contact with the other Person is High/Groin/Chest or to the Body.
- (iv) A Controlling Body may refer a Classifiable Offence directly to the Tribunal on the basis that:
 - (A) it is a Classifiable Offence which the Controlling Body has graded as Severe Impact (together with any Contact or Conduct grading); or
 - (B) it is a Classifiable Offence which attracts a base sanction that the Controlling Body finds inappropriate.

[Guidance note: Refer to Section [22.4\(c\)](#). See also Clause [4](#) (Direct Tribunal Offences) of this Appendix 1.]

- (v) References to 'Chest' in this Appendix 1 apply to Persons participating in female Competitions only.
- (vi) In respect of a charge for a Classifiable Offence where the Impact is graded by the Controlling Body as Severe, if only the minimum prescribed sanction (set out in Table 2 above) is sought, the Controlling Body will, in its discretion, specify that minimum prescribed sanction and the Player may enter an Early Guilty Plea and accept the sanction without the matter being referred directly to the Tribunal. If the Controlling Body does not specify that the minimum prescribed sanction is sought, the charge will be referred to the Tribunal and the charged Player will not have the option to enter an Early Guilty Plea.

3. Determining the grading of Classifiable Offences

(a) Grading Conduct

- (i) The Conduct will be graded as Intentional or Careless.
- (ii) Intentional Conduct
 - (A) A Person intentionally commits a Classifiable Offence if the Person engages in the conduct constituting the Reportable Offence with the intention of committing that Reportable Offence.
 - (B) An intention is a state of mind and may be formed on the spur of the moment.
 - (C) Whether or not a Person intentionally commits a Reportable Offence depends upon the state of mind of the Person when the Person

engages in the conduct with which they are charged. What the Person did is often the best evidence of their intention. In some cases, the evidence that the conduct itself provides may be so strong as to compel an inference of what the Person's intent was, no matter what they may say about it afterwards. If the immediate consequence of conduct is obvious and inevitable, the deliberate engaging of the conduct carries with it evidence of an intention to produce the consequence.

- (D) As an example, a strike will be regarded as Intentional where a Person delivers a blow to another Person with the intention of striking them.
 - (E) The state of a Person's mind is an objective fact and has to be proved in the same way as other objective facts. The whole of the relevant evidence has to be considered. It is necessary to weigh the evidence of the Person as to what their intentions were along with whatever inference as to their intentions can be drawn from their conduct and/or other relevant facts. The Person may or may not be believed. Notwithstanding what the Person says, it may be able to be concluded from all the material that the Person intentionally engaged in the conduct constituting the Reportable Offence.
- (iii) Careless Conduct
- (A) A Person's conduct will be regarded as Careless where it constitutes a breach of the duty of care owed by the Person. Each Person owes a duty of care to other Persons not to engage in conduct which will constitute a Reportable Offence being committed against those Persons.
 - (B) To constitute a breach of that duty of care, the conduct must be such that a reasonable Player would not regard it as prudent in all the circumstances.
 - (C) Further, a Person will be careless if they breach their duty to take reasonable care to avoid conduct which can be reasonably foreseen to result in a Reportable Offence.

(b) **Grading Impact**

- (i) The Impact will be graded as Low, Medium, High or Severe. In an assessment as to the level of Impact, the following factors will be considered:
 - (A) the extent of force and, in particular, any injury sustained by the Person who was offended against (as set out in any relevant medical report).
 - (B) the absence of injury does not preclude the classification of Impact as Low, Medium, High or Severe;
 - (C) the potential to cause injury must also be factored into the determination of Impact, particularly in the following cases:

- (1) intentional strikes, such as those with a swinging clenched fist, raised forearm or elbow;
 - (2) high bumps, particularly with significant head contact and/or momentum;
 - (3) any head-high contact with a Player who has their head over the ball, particularly when contact is made from an opponent approaching from a front-on position;
 - (4) forceful round-arm swings that make head-high contact to a Player in a marking contest, ruck contest or when tackling;
 - (5) any contact that occurs when the other Person should not reasonably be expecting or is not reasonably prepared for contact (i.e. contact off the ball);
 - (6) any dangerous tackle.
- (D) Low Impact is the minimum impact required for a Classifiable Offence which requires more than just negligible impact. However, the potential to cause injury may result in an upgrade to the level of Impact, including from negligible to a higher level of Impact;
 - (E) strong consideration will be given to the distance the incident occurs from the ball and the expectation of contact of the other Person (especially in the case of intentional strikes);
 - (F) consideration will also be given not only to the impact between the offending Person and the other Person, but also any other impact to the other Person as a result of that impact; *[Guidance note: For example, where the other Person as a result of the impact from an offending Person is pushed into the path of a fast-moving third Person, the impact to the other Person may be classified as High or Severe Impact, even though the level of impact between the other Person and offending Person was only Low or Medium Impact.]*
 - (G) the body language of the offending Person in terms of flexing, turning, raising or positioning the body to either increase or reduce the force of impact; and
 - (H) the following Table 3 sets out Impact guidelines and provides a summary of indicative Impact guidelines for Low, Medium, High and Severe Impact incidents:

Table 3 – Impact guidelines	
Low	<p>Player: Minimal or no impact on the Match - the Player continued to play the majority of the Match and suffered no or minimal ongoing issues.</p> <p>Person (other than Player): Person continued in their relevant capacity in relation to the Match for the majority of the Match and suffered no or minimal ongoing issues.</p> <p>The Impact grading may be raised under the potential to cause injury provisions in this Appendix 1.</p>

Medium	<p>Player: Clearly some impact on the Player, and/or the Player left the field for a lengthy period of time, and/or some possible lower level ongoing treatment(s) required, and/or may miss one Match.</p> <p>Person (other than Player): Clearly some impact on the Person, and/or the Person was prevented from continuing in their official capacity in relation to the Match for a lengthy period of time, and/or some possible lower level ongoing treatment(s) required.</p> <p>The Impact grading may be raised under the potential to cause injury provisions in this Appendix 1.</p>
High	<p>Player: Major impact on the Player, and/or the Player was unable to participate in the remainder of the Match, and/or major ongoing issues that require medical intervention and/or may miss some Matches.</p> <p>Person (other than Player): Major impact on the Person, and/or the Person was unable to continue in their official capacity in relation to the Match for the remainder of the Match, and/or major ongoing issues that require medical intervention and/or may miss some Matches.</p> <p>The Impact grading may be raised under the potential to cause injury provisions in this Appendix 1.</p>
Severe	<p>Person (including Player): Major impact and serious injury to the Person, and/or likely to miss a significant number of Matches.</p> <p>The sanction determination may be raised under the potential to cause injury provisions in this Appendix 1.</p>

For the avoidance of doubt, Table 3 is included for guidance purposes and must be considered together with factors set out in Clause [3\(b\)](#) of this Appendix 1.

(c) **Grading Contact (High/Groin/Chest, Body)**

- (i) High Contact is not limited to contact to the head and includes contact to the top of the shoulders.
- (ii) A classification of High Contact may apply to a Careless or Intentional Dangerous Tackle (refer to Clause [8\(f\)\(iii\)](#) of this Appendix 1) which has the potential for injury to be caused through dangerous high contact with the ground and where high contact does not actually occur.
- (iii) Contact to the Groin includes contact to the crease or hollow at the junction of the inner part of each thigh with the trunk together with the adjacent region, including the testicles and vulva.
- (iv) Contact to the Chest means contact to the breast(s) of the other Person (females only).
- (v) Where contact is both High and to the Body, it will usually be classified as High Contact.
- (vi) Where contact is both to the Chest and to the Body, it will be classified as Contact to the Chest (females only).

- (vii) Contact will be classified as High, to the Groin or, in the case of females only, to the Chest, where a Person's head, groin or chest makes contact with another Person or object such as the fence or the ground as a result of the actions of the offending Person. By way of example, should a Person tackle another Person around the waist and as a result of the tackle, the tackled Person's head makes forceful contact with the fence or the ground the Contact in these circumstances would be classified as High, even though the tackle was to the body.
- (viii) The Controlling Body has the discretion to grade contact as Body contact rather than High contact where the Body impact would result in a more significant sanction.

(d) **Impact of a bad record on Classifiable Offence**

- (i) The sanction for Classifiable Offences may be increased where a Person has a bad Disciplinary History.
- (ii) Where a Person has been found or pleaded guilty to two low-level Classifiable Offences within a 12 month period (those Classifiable Offences with a base sanction of 1 match as per Table 2), any third or subsequent low-level Classifiable Offence (with a base sanction of 1 match as per Table 2) within the same 12 month period (as at the date of the offence) will result in a base sanction of 2 matches, with the Person able to accept 1 match with an Early Guilty Plea. For the avoidance of doubt, the Low-level Offences referred to in Clause [5](#) of this Appendix 1 will not be affected by this bad record provision.
- (iii) A Controlling Body has the power pursuant to Section [22.4\(c\)](#) to directly refer a Person to the Tribunal as a result of the Person's bad Disciplinary History. In this instance the Tribunal will not be bound by Table 2. Evidence in relation to the record of a Person may be tendered to the Tribunal without the leave of the Chairperson.

(iv)

(e) **Injury**

The Controlling Body and the Tribunal can inquire and receive information as to the nature and extent of any injury suffered by a Person in relation to a Reportable Offence. The nature and extent of injury may be a relevant factor in determining the level of Impact, Contact and in some instances, the nature of the Conduct. A Club must provide a medical report upon request by the Controlling Body or Tribunal.

4. Direct Tribunal Offences

(a) **Which Reportable Offences are Direct Tribunal Offences?**

Direct Tribunal Offences are those Reportable Offences which are referred by the Controlling Body directly to the Tribunal for determination without grading (i.e. without an assessment of the Reportable Offence using Table 2), including the following Reportable Offences:

Table 4 – Direct Tribunal Offences
Attempting to Strike an Umpire
Behaving in an Abusive, Insulting, Threatening or Obscene Manner Towards or in Relation to an Umpire
Eye Gouging
Intentional Contact with an Umpire
Spitting on Another Person
Spitting on or at an Umpire
Stomping
Striking an Umpire
Serious Misconduct

(b) **Determination of Direct Tribunal Offences**

The Tribunal will determine a Direct Tribunal Offence in accordance with Section [25](#). The Tribunal will determine the appropriate sanction for a Direct Tribunal Offence in its absolute discretion.

5. Low-level Offences

(a) **Which Reportable Offences are Low-level Offences?**

Low-level Offences are the following low-level Reportable Offences which, having regard to the provisions of this [Clause 5](#) and [Clause 8](#) of this Appendix 1, do not require classification (i.e. do not require an assessment of the Reportable Offence using Table 2):

Table 5 – Low-level Offences
Attempt to Strike / Kick / Trip
Careless Contact with an Umpire
Disputing Decision
Instigator of a Melee / Wrestle
Interfering with a Player Kicking for Goal
Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Injured Player
Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Umpire

Not Leaving the Playing Surface
Obscene Gesture
Pinching
Prohibited Boots, Jewellery or Equipment
Scratching
Shaking, Climbing or Interfering with Goal or Behind Post
Spitting at Another Player
Staging
Striking
Kicking
Time Wasting
Tripping
Engaging in a Melee / Wrestle
Any Other Act of Low-Level Misconduct which is not a Classifiable Offence or Direct Tribunal Offence

(b) **Sanctions for Low-level Offences**

- (i) Unless otherwise specified in this Policy Handbook, for Low-level Offences a Controlling Body must impose the base sanctions (with a reduced sanction for an Early Guilty Plea) set out in Table 6 below:

Table 6 – Low-level Offence Base Sanctions			
1st & 2nd Low-level Offence		3rd & Subsequent Low-Level Offence	
Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea	Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea
1 Match	Reprimand	2 Matches	1 Match

- (ii) If applicable, a Controlling Body may impose base sanctions for Low-level Offences in accordance with the specific Low-level Offence sanctions table adopted by the relevant Controlling Body provided such table has been approved by the AFL.
- (iii) A reference to second, third and subsequent Low-level Offences is a reference to a second, third or subsequent Low-level Offence occurring at

any time in the previous 12 months (as at the date of the current offence). The second, third or subsequent Low-level Offence need not be the same offence as the first or any other Low-level Offence. For the avoidance of doubt, a prior offence other than a Low-level Offence will not count as a first offence for the purposes of the above Table 5.

- (iv) A Controlling Body may refer a Low-level Offence directly to the Tribunal on the basis that it is a Low-level Offence which attracts a base sanction that the Controlling Body finds inappropriate.

6. Auditory Offences

(a) Which Reportable Offences are Auditory Offences

An Auditory Offence is a Reportable Offence specified in Table 7 below which may be graded by a Controlling Body in order to determine an appropriate base sanction for that Reportable Offence.

Table 7 – Auditory Offences
Using Abusive, Insulting or Obscene Language towards or in relation to an Umpire
Using Abusive, Insulting, Threatening or Obscene Language

(b) Grading Auditory Offences

- (i) Unless otherwise specified in this Policy Handbook, a Controlling Body must grade an Auditory Offence in accordance with Table 8 below.

Table 8 – Auditory Classification Table				
Conduct	Receiver	Volume	Base Sanction	Early Guilty Plea
Threatening	Umpire*	Any	4 or more Matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
	Another Person	Loud	4 or more Matches (Tribunal)*	N/A
		Medium or Low	3 Matches	2 Matches
High-level Abusive / Obscene / Insulting	Umpire	Loud	4 Matches	3 Matches
		Medium or Low	3 Matches	2 Matches
	Another	Loud	3 Matches	2 Matches

	Person	Medium or Low	2 Matches	1 Match
Low-level Abusive / Obscene / Insulting	Umpire	Loud	3 Matches	2 Matches
		Medium or Low	2 Matches	1 Match
	Another Person	Loud	2 Matches	1 Match
		Medium or Low	1 Match	Fine and/or Reprimand

**Refer to Clauses [6\(b\)\(iv\)](#) and [6\(b\)\(v\)](#) of this Appendix 1 for treatment of offences graded as Threatening language directed at an Umpire and Threatening language directed at Another Person of Loud Volume.*

- (ii) If applicable, a Controlling Body may grade an Auditory Offence in accordance with the specific classification table adopted by the relevant Controlling Body provided such table has been approved by the AFL.
 - (iii) For a Controlling Body to arrive at a grading set out in Table 8, the Controlling Body must use the interpretation provisions set out in Clause [6\(c\)](#) of this Appendix 1 to assess whether:
 - (A) the Conduct is Threatening, High-level Abusive, Obscene or Insulting or Low-level Abusive, Obscene or Insulting;
 - (B) the Receiver of the Conduct is an Umpire or Another Person; and
 - (C) the Volume of the Conduct is Loud, Medium or Low.
 - (iv) Subject to Clause [6\(b\)\(v\)](#) of this Appendix 1:
 - (A) in respect of a charge graded by the Controlling Body as Threatening language directed at an Umpire, that charge will be classified as Behaving in an Abusive, Insulting, Threatening or Obscene Manner Towards or in Relation to an Umpire, a Direct Tribunal Offence; and
 - (B) in respect of a charge graded by the Controlling Body as Threatening language directed at Another Person of Loud Volume, the Controlling Body may refer that charge directly to the Tribunal.
 - (v) In respect of a charge under Clause [6\(b\)\(iv\)](#) of this Appendix 1, if only the minimum prescribed sanction (set out in Table 8 above) is sought, the Controlling Body will, at its discretion, specify that minimum prescribed sanction and the Player may enter an Early Guilty Plea and accept the sanction without the matter being referred directly to the Tribunal. If the Controlling Body does not specify that the minimum prescribed sanction is sought, the charge will be referred to the Tribunal and the charged Player will not have the option to enter an Early Guilty Plea.
- (c) **Interpretative provisions of Auditory Offences**
- (i) Grading Conduct
 - (A) The Conduct of an Auditory Offence will be graded as:

- (1) Threatening;
 - (2) High-level Abusive, Obscene or Insulting; or
 - (3) Low-level Abusive, Obscene or Insulting.
- (B) Threatening language means language that conveys an intention to cause bodily harm or cause someone to feel vulnerable or at risk.
- (C) High-level and Low-level Abusive, Obscene or Insulting language includes rude, shocking or offensive language which may abuse, insult or offend any person or group. In grading whether Abusive, Obscene or Insulting language is High-level or Low-level, the following factors will be considered:
- (1) the tone of the language;
 - (2) the extent of aggression in the language;
 - (3) the actual or potential hurt caused by the language;
 - (4) the body language of the offending Person.

[Guidance note: Where any auditory offence involves the use of words or sounds that are considered to constitute vilification or discrimination, the offence is to be dealt with under Section 10.]

- (ii) Grading Receiver
- (A) The Receiver will be graded as Umpire or Another Person.
 - (B) Umpire means a field, boundary, goal or emergency umpire who has been appointed to officiate in the relevant Match.
 - (C) Another Person means any person who is not an Umpire, regardless of whether that person is able to be identified or not.
- (iii) Grading Volume
- (A) The Volume of an Auditory Offence will be graded as Loud, Medium or Low.
 - (B) Loud means the language could be heard from more than 50 metres away or heard by spectators.
 - (C) Medium means the language could be heard from more than 10 metres away, but less than 50 metres away, and/or heard by other Players and/or heard by Football Officials.
 - (D) Low means the language could be heard from no more than 10 metres away, and/or conversational language.

7. Other factors regarding sanctions

- (a) **Reduction in base sanction for an Early Guilty Plea**

The base sanction for a Classifiable Offence or Auditory Offence will be decreased where a Person submits an Early Guilty Plea (if available). As per Table 2 or Table 8 (as applicable):

- (i) an Early Guilty Plea in respect of a Classifiable Offence or Auditory Offence with a fixed base sanction of a two, three or four Match suspension will result in a one Match reduction in that suspension; and
 - (ii) an Early Guilty Plea in respect of a Classifiable Offence or Auditory Offence with a base sanction of a one Match suspension will result in a reprimand and/or fine (at the discretion of the Controlling Body).
- (b) **No automatic reduction for exemplary record**
- (i) A Person will not receive an automatic reduced base sanction for their exemplary Disciplinary History.
 - (ii) If a Classifiable Offence or Auditory Offence is contested or referred to the Tribunal, a Person with a verifiable exemplary Disciplinary History may argue that their Disciplinary History constitutes exceptional and compelling circumstances under Section [25.4\(a\)\(iv\)\(A\)](#). This may make it inappropriate to apply the sanctions in Table 2 or Table 8 (as applicable) to the determined classification. In such circumstances, the Tribunal may determine the appropriate sanction in its absolute discretion,
- (c) **Reportable Offences in a Grand Final**
- The Controlling Body or Tribunal (as applicable) may apply (at its absolute discretion) a loading of up to 100% in relation to the base sanction for any Reportable Offence committed during a Grand Final.
- (d) **Multiple Reportable Offences in a single Match**
- Where a Person is found guilty of multiple Reportable Offences from a single match, the individual sanctions must be added together to form the final sanction applicable to the Person.

8. Other factors regarding certain Reportable Offences

- (a) **General**
- (i) The Laws of the Game sets out a non-exhaustive list of specific Reportable Offences in Law 22.2.2 as well as providing for various categories of permitted contact which will not constitute a Reportable Offence (for example, legally using a hip, shoulder, chest, arms or open arms, providing the football is no more than five metres away, and contact which is incidental to a marking contest where a Player is legitimately marking or spoiling or attempting to mark or spoil the football).
 - (ii) The Laws of the Game define certain Reportable Offences, but provide that in interpreting/classifying Reportable Offences, words, terms or phrases which are not defined in the Laws of the Game will be given their ordinary meaning.

- (iii) This Clause 8 provides guidance in relation to the characteristics of particular Reportable Offences and other relevant factors.

(b) **Striking, Kicking**

- (i) Striking and kicking are interpreted in accordance with their ordinary meaning. A strike would usually be by hand, arm or elbow and would generally not apply to other contact using the body. A strike can also occur with an open hand. A kick is generally applied to contact by foot or leg.
- (ii) A strike or kick requires more than negligible impact to be a Classifiable Offence.
- (iii) Where a strike or kick does not have more than negligible impact, it is open to a Controlling Body to charge a Person with Striking or Kicking under Table 5 where it is satisfied that notwithstanding the result, the intention of the Person was to commit a Reportable Offence. Where no contact is made, a Controlling Body may charge a Person with an Attempt to Strike or Kick, which are both Low-level Offences.

(c) **Classification of certain strikes**

The following factors will be considered when determining the classification of the Reportable Offence of Striking:

- (i) **Intent:** Notwithstanding any other part of this Policy Handbook, the fact that an act of striking occurred behind the play or off the ball or during a break in play or with a raised forearm or elbow is usually consistent with the strike being intentional. Further, where a Player intends to forcefully push or fend an opposition Player off the ball (including to gain separation for the purpose of contesting the ball) and the effect is that the Player commits the Reportable Offence of Striking, the strike will usually be graded as Intentional.
- (ii) **Impact:** Notwithstanding any other part of this Policy Handbook, any Careless or Intentional strike which is of an inherently dangerous kind and/or where there is a potential to cause an injury (such as a strike with a raised elbow or forearm) will usually not be classified as Low Impact even though the extent of the actual physical impact may be low. Such strikes will usually be classified at a higher level commensurate with the nature and extent of the risk of injury involved. Strong consideration will also be given to the distance the incident occurs from the ball and the expectation of contact of the other Player.

(d) **Misconduct**

- (i) Misconduct has a wide meaning and generally is any conduct which would be reasonably regarded as unacceptable or unsportsmanlike or where it has the effect or potential to prejudice the reputation of any Person, Club or Controlling Body or to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute.
- (ii) Acts of Serious Misconduct will be referred directly to the Tribunal.

[Guidance note: Generally, for conduct to constitute Serious Misconduct, the Controlling Body will consider that a sanction of at least 4 Matches is appropriate as a sanction for that conduct.]

(iii) Any other act of Misconduct will be a Low-level Offence unless the Controlling Body determines that:

(A) the Low-level Offence sanction is inappropriate; and

(B) the act of Misconduct is not Serious Misconduct,

in which case the Controlling Body may impose a sanction of either a 2 Match or 3 Match suspension, with the relevant Person entitled to receive a reduction in the sanction equivalent to the reduction applicable in Table 2 with an Early Guilty Plea (i.e. a 2 Match suspension reduced to a 1 Match suspension with an Early Guilty Plea).

(e) **Forceful Front-On Contact**

(i) Bumping or making contact that is at least Low Impact to an opponent from front-on when that opponent has their head over the ball is a Reportable Offence. Unless Intentional, such conduct will be deemed Careless except where:

(A) the Player was contesting the ball and it was reasonable for the Player to contest the ball in that way; or

(B) the contact was caused by circumstances outside the control of the Player which could not reasonably be foreseen,

in which case such conduct will not constitute a Reportable Offence.

(ii) Any Careless or Intentional Forceful Front-On Contact where High Contact has been made and that has the potential to cause injury will usually be graded at a minimum as Medium Impact, even though the extent of the actual physical impact may be low.

(iii) A Player may bump another Player's body from side-on but any contact forward of side-on will be deemed to be front-on. A Player with their head down in anticipation of winning possession of the ball or after contesting the ball will be deemed to have their head over the ball for the purposes of this Clause [8\(e\)](#) of this Appendix 1.

(f) **Rough Conduct**

Rough Conduct is interpreted widely and may be any contact which is unreasonable in the circumstances.

It is a Reportable Offence for a Person to intentionally or carelessly engage in Rough Conduct against another Person which is unreasonable in the circumstances. Without limiting the wide interpretation of Rough Conduct, regard will be had to the following recognised forms of Rough Conduct:

(i) Rough Conduct (High Bumps)

A Person will be guilty of Rough Conduct where in the bumping of another Person (whether reasonably or unreasonably) the Person causes contact that is at least Low Impact to be made with any part of their body to that Person's head or neck. Unless Intentional, such conduct will be deemed to be Careless, except where:

(1) the Person was contesting the ball and it was reasonable for the Person to contest the ball in that way; or

(2) the contact to the other Person's head or neck was caused by circumstances outside the control of the Person which could not be reasonably foreseen,

in which case such conduct will not constitute a Reportable Offence.

Any high bump which constitutes Rough Conduct that has the potential to cause injury will usually be graded at a minimum as Medium Impact, even though the extent of the actual physical impact may be low.

The purpose of Clause [8\(f\)\(i\)](#) of this Appendix 1 is to, as far as practicable, minimise the risk of head injuries to Persons and this purpose must be front of mind for all Persons and will guide the application of the Clause.

For the purposes of this Policy Handbook, head clashes that occur when a Person has elected to bump are circumstances that can reasonably be foreseen. Players will ordinarily be liable if they elect to bump if not contesting the ball.

(ii) Rough Conduct (Bumps to the Body)

If Clause [8\(f\)\(i\)](#) does not apply (for example, in the case of a bump to the body), a Person may still be guilty of Rough Conduct if the Person's conduct was unreasonable in the circumstances. In determining whether a bump was unreasonable in the circumstances the following factors will be considered (without limitation):

- (A) whether the degree of force applied by the Person bumping was excessive for the circumstances;
- (B) whether the Person being bumped was in a vulnerable position; and
- (C) whether the Person could reasonably expect the contact having regard to the Person's involvement in play or ability to influence the contest.

(iii) Rough Conduct (Dangerous Tackles)

The application of a tackle may be considered Rough Conduct where the tackle is unreasonable in the circumstances. In determining whether the application of a tackle constitutes a Reportable Offence and whether the tackle is Careless or Intentional, the following factors will be considered (without limitation):

- (A) whether the tackle consists of more than one action, regardless of whether the Person being tackled is in possession of the ball;
- (B) whether the tackle is of an inherently dangerous kind, such as a spear tackle or a tackle where a Player is lifted off the ground;
- (C) whether the Person being tackled is in a vulnerable position (for example, arm(s) pinned) with little opportunity to protect themselves;

(D) whether the Person being tackled is slung, driven or rotated into the ground with excessive force (for example, a run down tackle where the tackled player is driven into the ground with excessive force).

(iv) Rough Conduct (Contact Below the Knees)

Under the Laws of the Game, making contact with an opponent below the knees is prohibited. A Person who keeps their feet is vulnerable to serious injury from other Persons who lunge, dive or slide toward them and make contact below the knees. This Clause [8\(f\)\(iv\)](#) aims to protect such Persons from the risk of foreseeable injury. A Person may be guilty of Rough Conduct if the Person makes contact below the knees of another Person and does so in a manner which is unreasonable in the circumstances. It is not a defence that the Person who made contact below the knees was contesting the ball or was first to the ball. The primary responsibility of Persons with respect to contact below the knees is to avoid the risk of foreseeable injury. In determining whether contact below the knees is unreasonable in the circumstances, the following factors will be considered:

- (A) the degree of momentum and/or force involved in the contact;
- (B) whether the Person causes contact below the knees by sliding with their foot, feet, knee or knees in front of them;
- (C) whether the other Person was in a position that was vulnerable to contact below the knees (for example, standing over the ball or approaching from the opposite direction); and
- (D) whether the Person making contact had any realistic alternative ways of approaching the contest or situation.

Where contact is not made below the knees of the other Person but to another part of that Person's body, a Person may still be guilty under the general definition of Rough Conduct for making unreasonable contact by sliding or dropping into another Person with their knees or feet first.

(v) Rough Conduct (Smotherers)

Where a Player elects to leave the ground in an attempt to smother the football, any reasonably foreseeable high contact with an opponent that is at least Low Impact will be deemed to be Careless at a minimum, unless the Player has taken all reasonable steps to avoid that high contact and/or minimise the force of that high contact (for example, by adopting a body position that minimises the force of the high contact).

(g) **Contact with an Umpire**

(i) Intentional Contact with an Umpire

- (A) Contact with an Umpire that is aggressive, forceful, demonstrative or disrespectful will be deemed intentional and the Person will be referred directly to the Tribunal. In determining the sanction for Intentional Contact with an Umpire, the Tribunal must have regard to the number of elements of the offence (aggressive, forceful, demonstrative and/or disrespectful) which are established.

(B) A Player may also be charged with the offence of Intentional Contact with an Umpire by pushing or holding an opponent into an Umpire or their direct path.

(C) Where contact with an umpire is forceful but only incidental (i.e. it is not otherwise aggressive, demonstrative or disrespectful), the Controlling Body has the discretion to not charge the Player with Intentional Contact with an Umpire (resulting in a direct referral to the Tribunal) and instead charge the Player with Careless Contact with an Umpire (but provided such Contact is not otherwise disrespectful, demonstrative or aggressive).

(ii) **Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Umpire**

Where contact with an Umpire is not aggressive, forceful, demonstrative or disrespectful but could otherwise be regarded as intentional, it will be classified as Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact with an Umpire which is a Low-level Offence.

(iii) **Careless Contact with an Umpire**

A charge of Careless Contact with an Umpire is a Low-level Offence. In determining whether the contact was careless, the following factors will be considered:

- (A) whether contact occurs at a centre bounce or ball up;
- (B) whether the Person has set up behind the Umpire;
- (C) whether the Person has taken a path that intersects the Umpire's exit line from a stoppage;
- (D) the force of the contact;
- (E) whether the Umpire's decision making is impeded;
- (F) whether the Umpire goes to ground as a result of the contact;
- (G) any mitigating factors (for example, effort to avoid contact, offline bounce or throw, pushed by opponent into Umpire's path).

A Player may also be charged with the offence of Careless Contact with an Umpire by pushing or holding another Person into an Umpire or their direct path.

(h) **Umpire abuse**

Using Abusive, Insulting or Obscene Language Towards or in relation to an Umpire will be a Low-level Offence unless the Controlling Body determines that:

- (i) the Low-level Offence sanction is inappropriate; and
- (ii) the conduct does not constitute the Direct Tribunal Offence of Behaving in an Abusive, Insulting, Threatening or Obscene Manner Towards or in Relation to an Umpire,

in which case the Controlling Body may impose a sanction of either a 2 Match, 3 Match or 4 Match suspension, with the relevant Person entitled to receive a reduction in the sanction equivalent to the reduction applicable in Table 2 with an Early Guilty Plea (i.e. a 2 Match suspension reduced to a 1 Match suspension with an Early Guilty Plea).

(i) **Using Abusive, Insulting or Obscene Language**

Using Abusive, Insulting or Obscene Language will be a Low-level Offence unless the Controlling Body determines that:

- (i) the Low-level Offence sanction is inappropriate; and
- (ii) the conduct does not constitute the Direct Tribunal Offence of Serious Misconduct,

in which case the Controlling Body may impose a sanction of either a 2 Match or 3 Match suspension, with the relevant Person entitled to receive a reduction in the sanction equivalent to the reduction applicable in Table 2 with an Early Guilty Plea (i.e. a 2 Match suspension reduced to a 1 Match suspension with an Early Guilty Plea).

(j) **Melee**

(i) Engaging in a Melee/Wrestle

A Melee/Wrestle is defined as an incident involving Persons who are grappling or otherwise struggling with one another, and which is likely to bring the game of Australian Football into disrepute or prejudice the interests or reputation of the Controlling Body. In determining if a Person's conduct constitutes Engaging in a Melee/Wrestle, the following factors will be considered:

- (A) the duration the Person is involved in the Melee/Wrestle;
- (B) the vigour applied by the Person;
- (C) whether the Melee/Wrestle occurs at a break in play, particularly at quarter breaks and half time;
- (D) whether the Person contributed to an escalation of the Melee/Wrestle; and
- (E) the role of the Person (for example, Player or Football Official).

(ii) Instigator of a Melee/Wrestle

Where a Person's conduct results in retaliatory action which leads to a Melee/Wrestle, that Person's conduct may constitute a Reportable Offence of Instigator of a Melee/Wrestle. The Reportable Offence of Instigator of Melee/Wrestle is separate to the Reportable Offence of Engaging in a Melee/Wrestle and a Person may be found guilty of both Reportable Offences.

(k) **Staging**

Staging includes excessive exaggeration of contact in an unsportsmanlike manner. In determining whether a Person's conduct constitutes the Reportable Offence of Staging, the following factors will be considered:

- (i) whether the conduct affected, or was likely to affect, the Umpire decision-making;
- (ii) whether the conduct incited a melee; and/or
- (iii) whether the conduct was in the spirit of the game.

(l) **Tripping**

- (i) Tripping is interpreted in accordance with its ordinary meaning. In determining whether a Person's conduct constitutes the Reportable Offence of Tripping, to the following factors will be considered:
 - (A) how fast the opponent was moving;
 - (B) whether the trip was by hand or by foot/leg; and
 - (C) whether contact was made with a swinging motion.
- (ii) To constitute a Classifiable Offence, Tripping requires more than negligible impact. Where a trip does not have more than negligible impact, it is still open to the Controlling Body or Tribunal to charge a Person with Tripping under Table 5 where it is satisfied that notwithstanding the result, a Reportable Offence was committed. Where no contact or minor contact is made, the Panel can charge a Person with an Attempt to Trip, which is a Low-level Offence.

APPENDIX 2 – Example Reportable Offences

The following incidents are examples of Reportable Offences which were processed in accordance with these Guidelines. Vision of these incidents is available on request to the AFL.

CLASSIFIABLE OFFENCES	
Striking	<p>Example 1 - Lewis Young on Mason Wood (Round 6, 2023) Careless Conduct, Low Impact, Body Contact</p> <p>Example 2 - Nicholas Blakey on Joshua Treacy (Round 9, 2023) Careless Conduct, Low Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 3 - Beau McCreery on James Sicily (Round 21, 2023) Careless Conduct, Medium Impact, Body Contact</p> <p>Example 4 - Samuel Wicks on Ryan Lester (Round 14, 2023) Careless Conduct, High Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 5 - Eloise Jones on Mia King (Finals Week 3, 2023) Intentional Conduct, Low Impact, Body Contact</p> <p>Example 6 - Lincoln McCarthy on Kamdyn McIntosh (Round 16, 2023) Intentional Conduct, Low Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 7 - Joshua Rachele on Jack Buckley (Round 18, 2023) Intentional Conduct, Medium Impact, High Contact</p>
Kneeing	<p>Example 8 - Lloyd Meek on Max Gawn (Round 9, 2023) Careless Conduct, Low Impact, Body Contact</p>
Rough Conduct	<p>Example 9 - Marlion Pickett on Jeremy McGovern (Round 18, 2023) Careless Conduct, Low Impact, Body Contact</p> <p>Example 10 - Hannah Ewings on Sofia Hurley (Round 6, 2023) Intentional Conduct, Low Impact, Body Contact</p>
Rough Conduct (High Bumps)	<p>Example 11 - Jack Viney on Lachlan Fogarty (Finals Week 2, 2023) Careless Conduct, Low Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 12 - Taylor Duryea on Jamie Cripps (Round 23, 2023) Careless Conduct, Medium Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 13 - Rhyan Mansell on James Aish (Round 13, 2023) Careless Conduct, Severe Impact, High Contact</p> <p>EXCEPTION: CONTESTING THE BALL</p> <p>Example 14 - Ollie Wines on Christian Petracca (Round 10, 2023)</p> <p>EXCEPTION: CIRCUMSTANCES OUTSIDE CONTROL</p> <p>Example 15 - Marcus Bontempelli on Jed Bews (Round 24, 2023)</p>

Rough Conduct (Dangerous Tackles)	<p>Example 16 - Katie Lynch on Jacqueline Parry (Round 1, 2023) Careless Conduct, Low Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 17 - Jaeger O'Meara on Charlie Spargo (Round 11, 2023) Careless Conduct, Medium Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 18 - Will Day on Bradley Close (Round 4, 2023) Careless Conduct, High Impact, High Contact</p> <p>Example 19 - Dee Heslop on Rhiannon Watt (Round 10, 2023) Careless Conduct, Severe Impact, High Contact</p>
Forceful Front-On Contact	<p>Example 20 - Lachlan Hunter on Connor Rozee (Round 10, 2023) Careless Conduct, Medium Impact, High Contact</p> <p>EXCEPTION: CONTESTING THE BALL</p> <p>Example 21 - Bailey Humphrey on Keidean Coleman (Round 20, 2023)</p>
Unreasonable or Unnecessary Contact to the Eye Region	<p>Example 22 - Dayne Zorko on Luke Pedlar (Round 11, 2023) Intentional Conduct, Low Impact, High Contact</p>
Tripping	<p>Example 23 - Joshua Rachele on Andrew McGrath (Round 17, 2023) Intentional Conduct, Low Impact, Body Contact</p>
Kicking	<p>Example 24 - Tom Atkins on Jamie Webster (Round 23, 2023) Careless Conduct, Medium Impact, Body Contact</p>

DIRECT TRIBUNAL OFFENCES	
Any Other Act of Serious Misconduct which the MRO Considers Appropriate to Refer to the Tribunal	<p>Example 25 - Sam Swikowski on Jack Ginnivan (Round 10, 2022) – two match suspension</p>

LOW-LEVEL OFFENCES	
Careless Contact with an Umpire	<p>Example 26 - Tom Atkins (Round 9, 2023)</p> <p>Example 27 - James Jordon and Liam Stoker (Round 17, 2023)</p>
Engaging in a Melee or Wrestle	<p>Example 28 - Darcy Fogarty and James Sicily (Round 6, 2023)</p>
Staging	<p>Example 29 - Zachary Merrett (Round 18, 2023)</p>

Other Misconduct	Example 30 - Cody Weightman on Brennan Cox (Round 16, 2023) Example 31 - Jy Simpkin (Round 8, 2023)
Tripping	Example 32 - Willie Rioli on Connor Idun (Round 22, 2023)
Attempting to Trip	Example 33 - Aishling Moloney on Casey Sherriff (Round 5, 2023)

APPENDIX 3 – Serious Criminal Offences

The following offences are considered Serious Criminal Offences for the purposes of this Policy Handbook:

- (a) offences relating to assault and/or violence in relation to a child, whether physical, sexual and/or emotional;
- (b) offences relating to violence or of a violent nature;
- (c) offences relating to culpable and/or dangerous driving that can attract a detention or custodial sentence;
- (d) offences relating to drug trafficking, abuse or supply;
- (e) offences relating to the exploitation of children;
- (f) offences relating to theft, felony and/or related offence of property or person;
- (g) offences relating to fraud and/or any activity related to fraudulent behaviour; and
- (h) offences relating to embezzlement or any impropriety relating to monies or property.

APPENDIX 4 – Non-exhaustive list of examples of disabilities

To provide practical guidance to administrators, this Appendix is a non-exhaustive list of disabilities which may give rise to grounds for granting age dispensation to a Player.

1. Physical disabilities

(a) **Amputee**

Amputee refers to a person who has lost a limb, part of a limb or more than one limb.

(b) **Cerebral Palsy**

(i) Cerebral palsy is a non-progressive disability caused by damage to a part of the brain that controls physical movement so that normal, smooth muscle movement does not or may not always occur.

(ii) Cerebral palsy can vary in presentation from a mild to moderate form affecting one or two limbs, to severe forms affecting the whole body.

(c) **Wheelchair Reliance**

A person may need to use a wheelchair for various reasons including:

(i) spinal injury – injury to the spinal cord;

(ii) Spina Bifida – a neural tube defect which may be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors;

(iii) Muscular Dystrophy – a group of hereditary and genetic muscle diseases which may create a disability relating to progressive muscle weakness;

(iv) Cerebral Palsy; and

(v) double leg amputations.

(d) **Transplant**

(i) A transplant occurs when a healthy human organ is used to replace a diseased or seriously affected organ in a recipient human being.

(ii) In the case of a transplant medical considerations and restrictions would dictate the safe level of sporting activity available to an affected Person within certain limitations.

(e) **Acquired Brain Injury**

An acquired brain injury (**ABI**) is caused during or after birth rather than as part of a genetic or congenital disorder. An ABI can result in cognitive, physical, emotional, or behavioural impairments that lead to temporary or permanent changes in brain functioning.

(f) **Down Syndrome**

Down syndrome is a chromosomal condition caused by the presence of all or part of an extra 21st chromosome.

(g) **Cystic Fibrosis**

Cystic fibrosis (also known as CF or mucoviscidosis) is an autosomal recessive genetic disorder affecting (amongst other things) the lungs.

2. Neurological disabilities

(a) **Epilepsy**

Epilepsy is a common and diverse set of chronic neurological disorders characterized by seizures. Epileptic seizures result from abnormal, excessive or hypersynchronous neuronal activity in the brain.

(b) **Autism spectrum disorders**

Autism spectrum disorders (including Asperger syndrome) are a group of related disorders of neural development which may be characterized by impaired social interaction and communication.

3. Intellectual disabilities

(a) Intellectual disability is a disability characterised by "significant" limitation both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social and practical adaptive skills. This disability originates before the age of 18.

(b) "Significant" impairment in intellectual functioning is sometimes defined as being measured as 2 standard deviations below the mean in respect of certain conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills (as measured by a Medical Specialist).

4. Sensory disabilities

(a) **Deaf/hard of hearing**

The inability to hear can be partial or complete. Some degree of hearing loss is a common disability and can affect one in twenty adults.

(b) **Blind/vision impaired**

Light involves both visual acuity and visual field. People with visual acuity in both eyes of less than 6/60 which cannot be improved by glasses are considered legally blind in Australia.

5. Mental illness

ICD 10 or DSM5 classification of mental illness.

APPENDIX 5 – Categories of Protective Equipment

1. Category 1 Protective Equipment

Category 1 Protective Equipment includes:

Protective Equipment	Guidance notes
Mouthguard	
Thigh padded shorts	Example – rhino shorts
Shin guard	A shin guard is defined as a guard that protects the shin, is below the standard sock and not designed for any other function
Ankle brace	
Simple Neoprene only devices	No straps or exposed plastic or metal
Breast protection	Example – Boob Armour, Zena Z1
Helmets	Soft padded or foam helmets only
Spectacles	Must meet requirements as outlined in Section 16.6

2. Category 2 Protective Equipment

Category 2 Protective Equipment includes:

Protective Equipment	Guidance notes
Shoulder guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermoplastic AC joint • No edges exposed
Arm guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermoplastic material with exterior padding > 3mm • Surgical foam or Neoprene • No edges or straps exposed • Minimum thickness as clinically indicated • All appliances to be neoprene covered
Hand and finger guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermoplastic material • Not beyond end of the finger but acceptable if contoured around distal end of finger and this is clinically indicated • Covered by tape • No exposed edges and material thickness as indicated below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finger = 1.6mm thickness ○ Thumb = 3mm thickness ○ Metacarpal = 3mm thickness • Refer to images below:



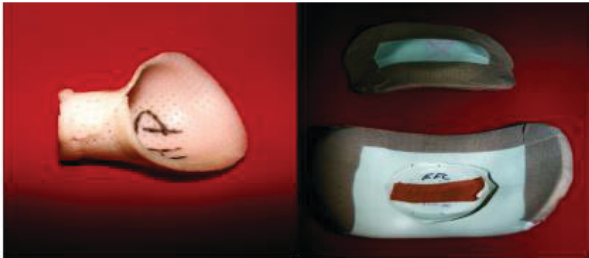
ORFIT FINGER SPLINT

ORFIT FINGER SPLINT



ORFIT THUMBGUARD

ORFIT THUMBGUARD



ORFIT THUMBGUARD

RIB GUARDS

Trunk guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermoplastic material • Covered by foam rubber or Neoprene • No edges • 3.2mm maximum thickness
Hip, pelvis and thigh guards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neoprene • Soft padding (foam rubber)

3. Category 3 Protective Equipment

Category 3 Protective Equipment includes any protective equipment other than Category 1 Protective Equipment and Category 2 Protective Equipment. Category 3 Protective Equipment may include:

- (a) knee braces (other than simple Neoprene only devices);
- (b) helmets (except soft padded or foam helmets);
- (c) gloves;
- (d) shoulder pads;
- (e) back supports; and
- (f) arm guards.

4. Materials approved for use

The following materials are approved materials for Protective Equipment:

Material	Guidance notes
Neoprene	
Thermoplastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preference low temperature thermoplastic:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Aquaplast○ ORFIT○ Braceform○ Polyflex II○ Orthoplast• Maximum thickness is 3.2mm• Together with padding as specified in this Appendix <p><i>Note: The AFL's preference is products made from thermoplastic.</i></p>
Foam / rubber padding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leukofoam• Neoprene

Brand references included in this [Appendix 5](#) are for guidance only and should not be construed as AFL endorsement of such brands.

APPENDIX 6 – AFL forms and templates

The following is a list of AFL forms and templates which are referred to in the Policy Handbook or otherwise support the function of the Policy Handbook are set out below and can be found here on the Play AFL website: <https://play.afl/clubhelp/handbook-templates>

Doc no.	Form / Template	Section	For use by
B0301	Late Transfer Request	3.3(b)(ii)	Player / Club
B0302	Request to Club for Transfer Refusal Evidence	3.5(b)(iii)	Controlling Body
B0303	Notice of Appeal - Transfer Refusal	3.5(d)	Player / Club
B0305	Standard Player Declaration	3.8	Player / Club
B0401	Age Dispensation Application	4.1(b)	Player / Club
B0504	Coach Citation Notice	5.4(a)	AFL / State Football Body
B0701	Deregistration Warning Notice	7.7(a)	Controlling Body
B0702	Deregistration Notice – Reportable Offence Threshold	7.2(a) 7.7(b)(i)	Controlling Body
B0707	Reregistration Application Form	7.8(a)	Player / Football Official
C1001	Notice of Complaint Prohibited Conduct	10 23.1(a)	Person / Club
E2201	Notice of Report	22.1(a)(iii)	Umpire
E2202	Incident Referral Form	22.1(b)(i) 22.1(b)(ii) 22.1(c)	Umpire Club Executive Officer
E2203	Notice of Charge – EGPO Low Level Offence	22.2(a) 22.2(b)(iii) 22.3(c)	Controlling Body
E2204	Notice of Charge – EGPO Classifiable Offence	22.2(a) 22.2(b)(iii) 22.3(c)	Controlling Body MRP
E2205	Notice of Charge – Direct Tribunal Referral	22.2(a) 22.2(b)(iii) 22.3(c) 22.4(c)	Controlling Body MRP
E2301	Notice of Complaint	23.1(a)(i)	Person / Club
E2304	Notice of Breach – Early Guilty Plea	23.2(c)(i)(D) 23.2(d)(iii) 23.3(b)(i)(A)	Controlling Body
E2305	Notice of Breach – Direct Tribunal Referral	23.2(c)(i)(D) 23.2(d)(iii) 23.3(b)(i)(A) 23.3(b)(ii)	Controlling Body
E2501	Tribunal Advocate & Witness Information Form (attached to Notice of Charge / Notice of Breach)	25.3(b) 25.3(e)(i)	Person / Club
E2502	Notice of Tribunal Outcome	N/A	Controlling Body
E2601	Notice of Appeal	26.1(c)	Person / Club / Controlling Body

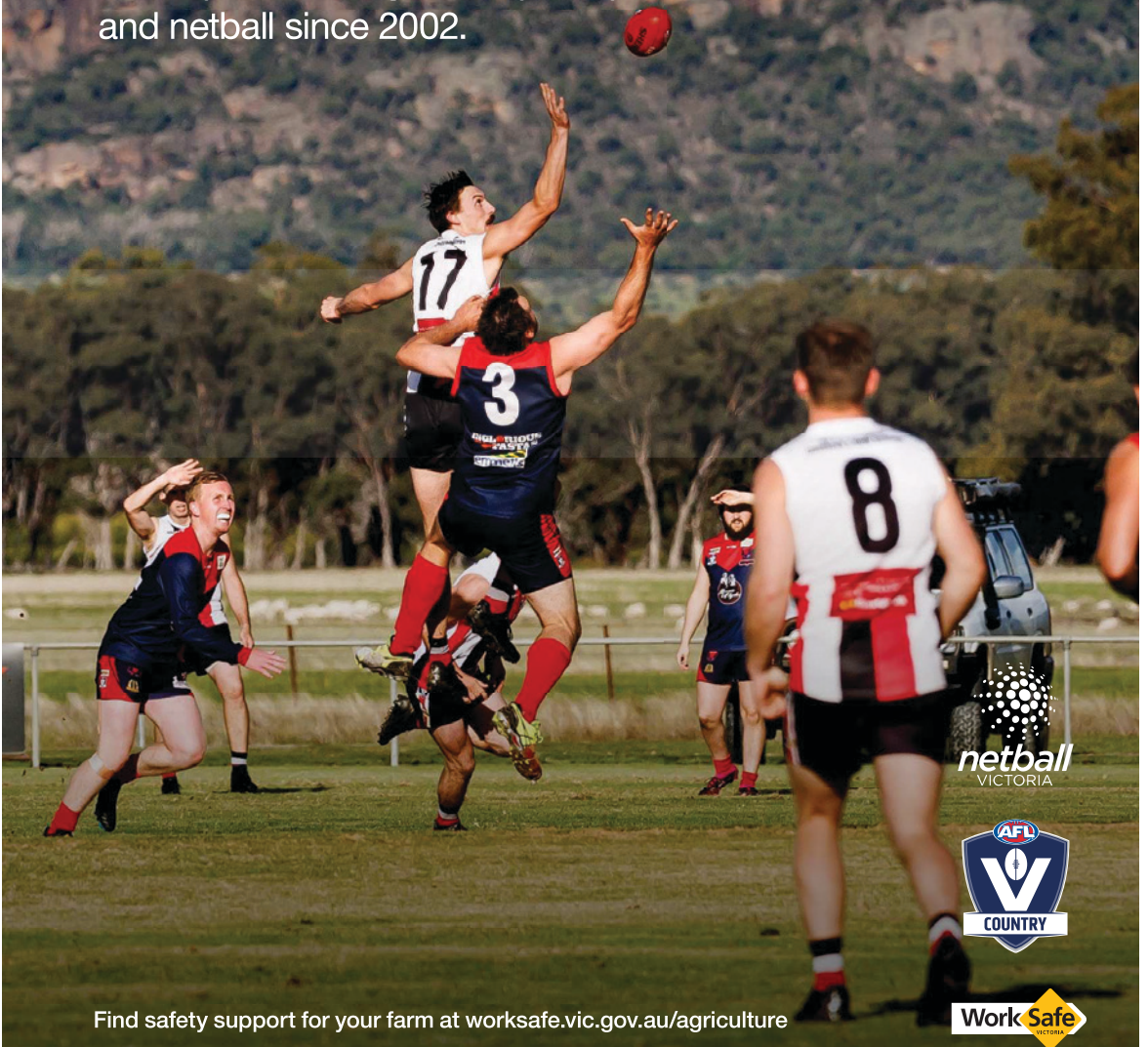
APPENDIX 7 – Revision History

REVISION HISTORY	
01.04.2022	Version 1 of Policy Handbook published.
03.03.2023	Version 2 of the Policy Handbook published.
08.03.2024	Version 3 of the Policy Handbook published.



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