



NATIONAL COMMUNITY FOOTBALL POLICY HANDBOOK

MARCH 2023

 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 9](#) 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.

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 8](#).

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 or Footyweb (as applicable).

Complaint Submission Form means a complaint submission form in the form set out in [Appendix 5](#) or such other form prescribed by the Controlling Body from time to time.

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".

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 10](#).

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 12](#).

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.

Footyweb means the online competition management system operated by GameDay designed to assist Football Bodies with the management of their competitions and membership data.

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 3](#) 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://www.play.afl/clubhelp/policies/laws-of-the-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 Report means a medical report in the form set out in [Appendix 14](#) or such other form prescribed by the Controlling Body from time to time.

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 7](#) 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 4](#) or such other form prescribed by the relevant 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 [3.11](#).

Person means a Club, 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 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 13](#).

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 11](#).

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 15](#); 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 [3.2\(b\)\(i\)](#).

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.

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 2023, or such later time as determined by the AFL.

2.5 AFL national policies, regulations and guidelines superseded

- (a) This Policy Handbook is intended to supersede 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) Unless determined otherwise by a Controlling Body, the Superseded Policies, Regulations and Guidelines will 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 and transfers

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) The age eligibility requirements for a Player participating in a Competition are specified in the Australian Football Match Policy.
- (ii) A Player's Competition age group shall be based on that Player's age as at 31 December in the year prior to the applicable playing year.
- (iii) 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 2021 then that Player's Competition age group for the 2022 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 will not be eligible to participate in both a boys Competition (or Competitions) and a girls Competition (or Competitions) 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 Registration and transfer process

(a) **Registration**

- (i) A Player must be registered via the Competition Management Platform to play Australian Football for a Club and/or participate in a Competition.
- (ii) A Player may only register under one name and must not submit multiple concurrent registrations. Clubs must monitor compliance with this Section [3.2\(a\)\(ii\) and where a Club becomes aware of an issue under this Section 3.2\(a\)\(ii\) they must immediately notify the relevant Controlling Body.](#)
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) For a Player registration to be active, the Club must accept the Player registration via the Competition Management Platform.
- (v) Unless otherwise specified in this Policy Handbook, the Player registration period in respect of each season commences on 1 November.

(b) **Transfer**

- (i) Subject to Section [3.2\(b\)\(ii\)](#), 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 [3.2\(b\)\(i\)](#), notification of the Transfer Request will be automatically sent via the Competition Management Platform to the Source Club.

- (iv) Subject to Sections [3.2\(b\)\(v\)](#) and [3.2\(b\)\(vi\)](#), 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**).
- (v) 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 [3.4\(c\)](#) applies to the Transfer Request.
- (vi) 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) Norther 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**

A Source Club may, within six (6) calendar days from notification of a Transfer Request under Section [3.2\(b\)\(ii\)](#), either approve or refuse the Transfer Request.

3.3 Transfer approval

(a) **How Transfer is finalised**

- (i) If a Source Club fails to either approve or refuse a Transfer Request in accordance with Section [3.2\(c\)](#), 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 Sections [3.4\(d\)](#), if a Transfer Request is approved under Section [3.2\(c\)](#) or [3.3\(a\)\(i\)](#):
 - (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 [3.3\(a\)\(ii\)\(C\)](#), 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.
- (c) **False or misleading information**
- (i) If a Player submits false or misleading information or intentionally fails to disclose information during the registration process under Section [3.2\(a\)](#) or in relation to any Transfer Request under Section [3.2\(b\)](#), that Player:
 - (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 a retrospective determination that the Player was ineligible for Matches in which they participated.
 - (ii) In addition to any sanction imposed or determination made by the Controlling Body in respect of a Player under Section [3.3\(c\)\(i\)](#), 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.

3.4 Transfer refusal

(a) **How Transfer is refused**

If a Source Club refuses a Transfer Request under Section [3.2\(c\)](#), the Transfer will be refused in the Competition Management Platform.

(b) **Grounds for refusal**

- (i) Subject to Sections [3.4\(b\)\(ii\)](#) and [3.4\(c\)](#), 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 [3.4\(b\)\(iii\)](#)); 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 [3.4\(d\)](#).

For the avoidance of doubt a Source Club may only refuse a Transfer Request on grounds set out in Section [3.4\(b\)\(i\)](#).

- (ii) Where a Source Club refuses a Transfer Request on grounds specified in Section [3.4\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#) or [3.4\(b\)\(i\)\(C\)](#) 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 [3.4\(c\)](#).]*
- (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 [3.2\(b\)\(i\)\(A\)](#) or [3.2\(b\)\(i\)\(B\)](#).

(c) **24-month rule**

A Player who has not played a Match for a period of 24 months or greater may submit a Transfer Request in accordance with 3.2(b) at any time and that Player's Source Club may not refuse the Transfer Request under any circumstances.

(d) **Transfer 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 [3.2\(b\)\(iii\)](#).
- (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 [3.4\(d\)\(i\)](#), 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.

3.5 Appealing a Transfer refusal

- (a) 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.
- (b) Where a dispute cannot be resolved under Section [3.5\(a\)](#), a Player and their Destination Club may appeal the Transfer refusal by the Source Club provided that:
 - (i) 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](#);
 - (ii) 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
 - (iii) 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 interchange and 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) 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.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) 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 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 or transfer 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) Practice matches

- (i) A Declared Player must not play in a practice or trial match with an interstate Club without the written consent of the Player's Source Club.

- (ii) Any alleged breach of Section [3.10\(b\)\(i\)](#) may be dealt with by the Permit Committee in accordance with Section [3.11](#).
- (c) **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](#).
- (d) **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.
- (e) **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.
- (f) **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.
- (g) **Non-use of Competition Management Platform**

Where a Controlling Body does not use the Competition Management Platform, this Section 3 will not apply.

3.11 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\(b\)\(iii\)](#) 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](#), [3.9](#) and [3.10](#); or
 - (iv) deal with any other matters as determined by the AFL.
- (d) To refer a matter to the Permit Committee under Sections [3.11\(b\)](#) and [3.11\(c\)](#), 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 [3.11\(b\)](#) in any manner it reasonably determines; and
 - (ii) levy a fee for the administration of matters under Section [3.11\(b\)](#) (with the fee amount to be determined by the Permit Committee).

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, via the Player's Club, to the relevant Controlling Body for assessment. Where the Player is an Underage Player, that Player's parent or guardian must consent to such application.
- (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; and
 - (ii) supported by a Certificate from a Medical Specialist appropriately qualified in an area of practice directly related to the dispensation being sought. Such Certificate must state the reasons for supporting the application for dispensation which directly relate to 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) 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;
- (d) the availability of other assistance to the Player to enable them to effectively participate in Australian Football;
- (e) the safety and welfare of the Player and those Players they will be participating with and against; and
- (f) 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; and
 - (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).
 - (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; or
 - (B) 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 grant Accreditation to the Applicant 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 will not be granted Accreditation.
 - (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 under Section [5.2](#) that Person may, within 14 calendar days of such decision, by written application have that determination reviewed by the AFL Head of 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 Head of 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 Head of 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 Head of Community Football (or their nominee) failed to have regard to relevant matters or had regard to irrelevant matters;
 - (B) the AFL Head of 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 Coach.AFL account.

[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; and
 - (C) if applicable, complete:
 - (1) the relevant training applicable for Accreditation; and/or
 - (2) the relevant update or refresher training (as applicable).
 - (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; or
 - (B) 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 grant Accreditation to the Applicant 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 will not be granted Accreditation.
- (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 Head of 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 Head of 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 Head of 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 Head of Community Football (or their nominee) failed to have regard to relevant matters or had regard to irrelevant matters;
 - (B) the AFL Head of 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 [3.3\(a\)\(ii\)\(B\)](#), 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\(b\)](#), 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.

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 may 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 Head of Community Football (or their nominee), waive a portion of that 12-month period and arrange an early Re-Registration Hearing.
- (g) 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;
- (iii) if a Player or Football Official is re-registered and subsequently receives a suspension as a result of a Reportable Offence or Policy Breach, that 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.

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 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 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;
- (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.

10. Vilification and discrimination

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 25.2(c); 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.
- (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) conciliator; and
- (vi) where a Person involved in a conciliation is under the age of eighteen (18) years:
 - (A) the Person must always be represented by a Club Officer (and such representative must not be a parent or guardian of the Person); and
 - (B) a parent or guardian of the Person may attend a conciliation in place or 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) 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).

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, LGBTIQA+ 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 to 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. Twitter);

- (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 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. Respect and responsibility

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

15. 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.
- Occasionally extreme weather conditions arise and there is a need to assess whether Australian Football should be played in such conditions. Part D sets out the approach that should be adopted when assessing extreme weather conditions and the risk to Players and Football Officials.

16. Injury management

16.1 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 well 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 injury prevention and immediate emergency and injury management in Australian Football.

16.2 Minimum requirements

- (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 person with Appropriate Minimum Qualifications (see Section [16.3](#)) for the relevant level of Australian Football is in attendance; and
 - (ii) an appropriately stocked first aid kit and adequate sport-specific rescue/transport equipment (e.g. stretcher and neck brace) are available.
- (b) Where the minimum requirements specified in Section [16.2\(a\)](#) 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.

[Guidance note: In addition to the minimum requirements, the AFL strongly recommends that each Club has a defibrillator available at each Match or training session.]

16.3 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:

Appropriate Minimum Qualifications					
Level (Age)	AFL/AFLW	State League	Senior (18+)	Youth (13-17)	Auskick/Junior (5-12)
Recommended	Level 2 Sports Trainer or QMP	Level 2 Sports Trainer or QMP	Sports Trainer (Level 1 or 2) or QMP	Sports Trainer (Level 1 or 2) or QMP	Sports Trainer (Level 1 or 2) or QMP
Minimum	Level 2 Sports Trainer or QMP	Sports Trainer (Level 1) or QMP	Sports Trainer (Level 1) or QMP or ERC	Sports Trainer (Level 1) or QMP or ERC	Sports Trainer (Level 1) or QMP or ERC or First Aider

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

- (i) **ERC** means a person who has completed an AFL-approved Emergency Response Coordinator Course which is current and up to date;
- (ii) **First Aider** means a person who has obtained a nationally accredited first aid certificate which is current and up-to-date and includes assessed competencies HLTAID003 (Provide First Aid);
- (iii) **Level 2 Sports Trainer** means a person who has completed a Controlling Body-approved Level 2 Sports Trainer Course which is current and up to date;
- (iv) **Level 1 Sports Trainer** means a person who has completed a Controlling Body-approved Level 1 Sports Trainer Course which is current and up to date;
- (v) **Qualified Medical Professional (QMP)** means a qualified doctor, paramedic, physiotherapist, osteopath, chiropractor, registered nurse or firefighter with Emergency Management Competency and appropriate first aid competencies.

16.4 Approved courses

Where a person completes a Controlling Body-approved Level 1 or Level 2 Sports Trainer Course or AFL-approved Emergency Response Coordinator Course that person will achieve Emergency Management Competency.

16.5 Emergency Management Competency

For the purposes of this Policy Handbook, Emergency Management Competency means proficiency in the following areas:

- (a) emergency planning including:
 - (i) ensuring access to a telephone and calling an ambulance if required;
 - (ii) venue access for emergency vehicles; and
 - (iii) access to appropriate and adequate first aid equipment and supplies;
- (b) understanding emergency response priorities and applying emergency procedures including the DRSABCD procedure (Danger, Response, Send for help, Airway, Breathing, and CPR and Defibrillation);

- (c) assessment of injured participants including:
 - (i) application of STOP (Stop, Talk, Observe, Prevent) and TOTAPS (Talk, Observe, Touch, Active movement, Passive movement & Skills);
 - (ii) immediate management of severe injuries and life-threatening medical emergencies, including:
 - (A) spinal & neck injuries;
 - (B) intracranial (brain) injuries & concussion (definition, causes, signs and management);
 - (C) unconscious casualties;
 - (D) airway/respiratory distress such as choking, airway obstructions & asthma;
 - (E) management of open wounds and application of the blood rule; and
 - (F) soft tissue injury management and application of RICER (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation, Referral) with no harm;
- (d) on-field and off-field communication including:
 - (i) liaising with Umpires, other Football Officials, Qualified Medical Professionals and parents/guardians;
 - (ii) visible and clearly understood signals used for emergency and injury management;
 - (iii) encouraging teamwork; and
 - (iv) record keeping; and
- (e) transporting injured participants including lifts, carries and use of an appropriate stretcher (pole and scoop).

17. Protective equipment

17.1 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 [17](#) 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.

17.2 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 13](#).

17.3 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 [17.3\(b\)](#).
- (b) A Controlling Body may only grant approval under Section [17.3\(a\)\(iii\)](#) 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.

17.4 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).

17.5 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. 'Boil and bite' type mouthguards are not as effective and, in rare cases, can dislodge during play and block the airway.

17.6 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.

18. Extreme weather

18.1 AFL statement on extreme weather

Environmental factors regularly affect the playing of Australian Football. While environmental factors will not usually influence whether a Match should commence or continue, occasionally extremely adverse weather conditions may give rise to a need to assess whether Players and/or Football Officials are in danger. This Section sets out the approach that each Controlling Body must adopt when assessing extreme weather conditions.

18.2 Extreme heat

(a) Effects of extreme heat

Heat-related stress can lead to impaired Player performance (for example, dizziness, headaches, collapse and illness). In extreme cases, heat can 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) monitor the implementation of heat stress management strategies by Clubs and Player.
- (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 recovery; 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) use cooling aids during Matches and training sessions such as ice vests, water spray bottles, cold sponges, fans (in changerooms and on interchange bench) and shade;
 - (B) provide heat permeable apparel to Players;
 - (C) report incidents of heat stress illness to the relevant Controlling Body;
 - (D) ensure a Club Football Official is available to monitor and manage Players for heat stress issues as they arise during a Match;
 - (E) provide adequate fluids in appropriate bottles;
 - (F) ensure trainers are fit enough to access as many players as possible during the game; and
 - (G) coordinate training times to avoid extreme heat conditions.

(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) ensure adequate fluid intake prior to and during Matches (500-700mls per quarter);
- (ii) monitor hydration;
- (iii) notify Club Football Officials when affected by heat or when performance is noticeably affected;
- (iv) use cooling strategies before, during and after Matches;
- (v) not play in the heat with an existing illness; and
- (vi) apply sun protection factor 30+ sunscreen.

18.3 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 metal framed 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.

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

The AFL respects the rights of women who are pregnant and is committed to providing support to assist them to do so. The [AFL National Female Community Football Guidelines](#) (as amended from time to time) set guidelines for Players' continued participation in Australian Football during pregnancy.

21. Infectious diseases and active bleeding

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

APPENDIX 8 – Citation Notice

Date: *[insert]*

[insert name]
[insert address]

Dear *[name]*,

Citation Notice

[The AFL] / [insert State Football Body] hereby issues you with a Citation Notice in accordance with the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

The Citation Notice is issued to you in addition to the sanction handed down by *[insert Controlling Body]* on *[insert date]* in respect of the following *[Reportable Offence / Policy Breach]*:

- *[insert details of Reportable Offence or Policy Breach]*.

Please be aware that your CoachAFL Accreditation remains subject to the National Community Football Policy Handbook.

Should you have any queries in respect of the above matters, please contact us at coachregistrar@afl.com.au.

Regards,

APPENDIX 9 – AFL National Age Dispensation Application Form

Part A – Player details			
Player First Name		Player Surname	
Player D.O.B.		Club Name	
Years playing AFL		Age Groups played in	

Part B – Dispensation requirements to be met		
<p>The Club is to read and acknowledge that it understands the following requirements which apply to an application for Age Dispensation to play down a Grade, as set out in Section 4 of the National Community Football Policy Handbook.</p>	<p>An application for dispensation to play down a Grade may only be made on the basis of a disability or physical size considerations.</p>	
	<p>Any application on the basis of a disability must be supported by a current medical certificate from a medical specialist appropriately qualified in the area of practice relevant to the disability. The certificate is to detail the nature of the Player's disability, describe how the disability impacts the Player's capacity to participate in an age group commensurate to their age and state any other reasons for supporting the application for dispensation which directly relate to the dispensation being sought.</p>	
	<p>An application on the basis of physical size considerations must be supported by a current medical certificate confirming that the player's Body Mass Index ('BMI') is below the 5th percentile for the player's age or the player's height is below the 5th percentile for the player's age.</p>	
	<p>The application under either ground must also detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) 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; (ii) How it is proposed that the approval 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; (iii) The availability of other assistance to the Player to enable them to effectively participate in Australian Football; (iv) How the participation of the Player in a lower age group will not adversely impact the safety and welfare of the Player and those Players in that lower age group. 	
Club Acknowledgement	<p>We have read understand the above requirements and confirm that this application is made in accordance with these requirements.</p>	

Part C – Dispensation Request			
Ground for Application (select one)	Application on the basis of a disability		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Application on the basis of physical size considerations (BMI below the 5 th percentile or height below the 5 th percentile)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Player's applicable age group (e.g. U13)		Age group requested (e.g. U12)	
<p>Club Submission in Support of the Application</p> <p>Provide any additional background information that is relevant to the application. Provide any information that helps address each of the</p>			

matters raised in the <i>"Dispensation Requirements to be Met"</i> .			
Medical Certificate Attached	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical Specialist name and speciality. If reports from more than one medical specialist attached, list each name and speciality.	
Other Supporting Documents Attached	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a brief summary of any other supporting document attached (e.g. a letter from the Player's parents / guardian)	

Parent / Guardian 1 Name		Signature		Date	
Parent / Guardian 2 Name		Signature		Date	
Club Contact Name		Signature		Date	
Club Contact Email				Phone	

Controlling Body Determination	
Dispensation to play in the requested age group is approved, subject to any conditions specified below	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dispensation to play in the requested age group is not approved, for reasons specified	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conditions / Reasons	
Date of Decision	

APPENDIX 10 – Deregistration Warning

Date: *[insert]*

[insert name]

[insert address]

Dear *[name]*,

Deregistration warning

In accordance with Section 7.7(a) of the National Community Football Policy Handbook (**Handbook**), you are hereby notified that you have served a total of ten (10) or more matches of suspensions as a Player or Football Official as a result of Reportable Offences (as that term is defined in the Handbook).

Please be aware that, should you incur further suspensions such that you have been suspended for a total of sixteen (16) matches (or greater) as a Player or Football Official a result of Reportable Offences, you will be automatically de-registered.

Playing within the confines of the Laws of Australian Football and Handbook will ensure that you avoid further suspensions and are able to continue to participate in Australian Football.

Should you have any queries in respect of the above matters, please contact us at *[insert]*.

Regards,

APPENDIX 11 – 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 12 – Non-exhaustive list of examples of disabilities

To provide practical guidance to administrators, this Appendix includes 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.

2

(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 13 – 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

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;
- (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>Note: The AFL's preference is products made from thermoplastic.</p>
Foam / rubber padding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leukofoam• Neoprene

APPENDIX 14 – Medical Report Template

I, _____

Club Medical Officer for the _____ Football Club

provide this Medical Report for player _____ at the request
of the Match Review Panel as a result of an incident that occurred during the match:

_____ v _____

Played on ____ / ____ / ____ (date) at _____ (venue).

The incident occurred at _____ (time) during quarter _____ at the following
approximate location on the Playing Surface: _____.

The player received the following treatment (*limit to clinical facts*) –

Immediate

Condition(s) treated:

Player required immediate on field assessment: ☐ No ☐ Yes (Details: ☐ Trainer / ☐ Physio / ☐ Doctor)

Did the player leave the Playing Surface as a result of the incident: ☐ No ☐ Yes

If 'Yes', estimated time missing from match as a result of the incident (excluding breaks): _____

Did the player return to play: ☐ No ☐ Yes

Was anything reported by the player after the match as a result of the incident: ☐ No ☐ Yes

If 'Yes', specify what was reported: _____

Ongoing

Further investigation required: ☐ No ☐ Yes (Details: ☐ Radiology / ☐ Specialist referral)

Ongoing treatment required: ☐ No ☐ Yes (Details: ☐ Physiotherapy / ☐ Medication / ☐ Surgery)

Expected number of – Missed days training: _____ Missed matches: _____

Any additional information:

Signed: (Club Doctor)

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Time: _____

Controlling Body to Complete

Lodged with the Secretary of the Match Review Panel on ____ / ____ / ____ (date) at ____ (time)

Signed: (Secretary of the Match Review Panel)

APPENDIX 15 – Standard Player Declaration

NAME, CLUB AND LEAGUE

This Declaration is made by: ('the Player')

Of: Football Club ('the Club')

An affiliated club of the: Football League ('the League')

Affiliated with: ('State Football Body')

VALIDITY PERIOD

Valid until:/...../.....

PLAYER PAYMENTS

(strike through where not applicable)

Per senior match won: \$ Per senior match lost or drawn: \$

Per non-senior match won: \$ Per non-senior match lost or drawn: \$

Incentives: \$ for

Deductions from match pay: Annual subs: \$ Social functions: \$

Club property: \$ Other: \$

Coaching (if applicable): \$ for

Other payments: \$ for

DATE FOR PAYMENT

☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly ☐ Other (describe):

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(strike through where not applicable)

☐ I volunteer in the football and other Club activities as a hobby or pastime.

☐ Any services I provide to the Club are provided as a hobby or pastime.

☐ I do not rely on the above payments (if applicable) for my regular personal income.

☐ I have (if applicable) submitted a 'statement by a supplier' to the Club (available at <https://www.ato.gov.au/forms/statement-by-a-supplier-not-quoting-an-abn/>)

(Note: It is the responsibility of the Player to satisfy themselves that the above acknowledgements are true and correct. Players are encouraged to obtain their own tax advice in respect of the payments they receive in connection with AFL football).

By signing this Declaration, the Player and Club confirm they will comply with all applicable rules, regulations and policies including this Handbook and applicable State Football Body rules and regulations.

SIGNED

By the Player:
Date:

By parent or
legal guardian
Date:
(where Player is under 18 years of age)

For the Club:
Date:
(delete inapplicable titles)

Position: President | Secretary | Treasurer | Football Manager

APPENDIX 16 – Revision History

REVISION HISTORY	
01.04.2022	Version 1 of Policy Handbook published.
03.03.2023	<p>Version 2 of the Policy Handbook published.</p> <p><i>New Sections:</i> 1.4, 3.10(g), 4.1(c), 4.2(b), 4.2(e) 7.3(b), 9.1(g), 9.1(h), 10.2, 23.1(b)(ii), 23.2(b)(i)(E), 23.4(b)(iii), 25.5(b)(v), 25.5(b)(x), 25.5(b)(xi), 25.5(d), 25.5(e), Appendix 1 – 3(c)(viii), 7(g)(i)(B), 7(g)(i)(C), Appendix 9, Appendix 10.</p> <p><i>Amended Sections:</i> 1.1, 3.1(c), 3.2(a)(ii), 3.2(b)(vi), 3.2(c), 3.4(b)(i)(B), 3.7(a)(i)(D), 3.7(c)(v), 3.8(a), 3.8(e), 3.9(b)(iv), 3.10(f), 4.1(a), 4.1(b), 4.2(a), 4.3(c), 6.2(a)(i)(C), 7.2(a)(i), 7.2(c), 7.3(c), 7.7(a), 7.8(a), 9.2(h), 10.1, 10.3(a), 10.3(c), 10.3(d), 10.3(g), 10.5(b), 13.2(a), 13.2(b), 16.2(a), 16.2(b), 16.3(a), 16.3(b), 16.4, 22.1(a), 23.1(a), 23.1(b)(i), 23.4(b), 25.3(c)(iii)(D), 25.4(a), 25.5(b)(iv), 26.1(b)(i), 26.1(c)(i)(A), Appendix 1 – 3(c)(iii), 3(c)(v), 3(d)(i), 3(d)(iii), 3(f)(i), (3)(f)(ii), 5(a)(Table 5), 6, 7(b)(i), 7(c)(i), 7(c)(iii), 7(f)(iii)(C), 7(j), Appendix 2, Appendix 7.</p> <p><i>Deleted Sections:</i> 16.4(b), 23.1(b)</p>

