



CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose:

To set clear expectations for the behaviour, promotion of fairness, and ensure a safe and respectful environment for everyone involved in junior football.

Scope:

This policy aligns with the standards expected by the Western Football Netball League (WFNL) and the National Community Football Policy Handbook (2025). This policy details the mandatory and enforceable Code of Conduct for the AJFC Committee and our players, coaches, officials and parents / supporters.

Foundational Club Expectations:

1. All parties are responsible for and obligated to behave in a manner that will bring credit to ourselves, our Club, and the game of Australian Rules Football.
2. All parties should understand that the Rules of the game are mutual agreements which no-one should evade or break. All those involved in junior football should strive to develop a respect for the League in which they participate, their Club and their opponents.
3. For the game to be enjoyable, players must have the opportunity to participate, learn and achieve their potential. The role of coaches, officials, parents / supporters (e.g. adults) is to provide a safe and inclusive environment for this to occur.
4. All parties should ensure that both on and off field behaviour is consistent with the principles of good sportsmanship. Therefore:
 - a. Swearing or abuse by either club officials, players or spectators is not permissible at any time.
 - b. Disputing an umpire's decisions or behaving in an aggressive manner toward them is totally unacceptable. If there is a genuine concern, there are appropriate channels of communication in place.
 - c. Aggressive behaviour and abuse toward opposition players, coaches, club officials or spectators is likewise unacceptable.
5. Players should be proud when walking off the ground after each game knowing they have given of their best.
6. All accredited coaches should be assessed by clubs regarding their knowledge of the rules and attitude toward working with young people. If their attitude or knowledge is inadequate, steps should be taken to enable them to attend the next available Coaches Accreditation Course for a further re-accreditation. Common sense should prevail if there is an attitudinal problem.

7. It is inappropriate for clubs with a large list of players in any one age group to neither loan nor make allowances for those clubs with smaller lists. Those teams with the greater number should play with no more than one extra player on the field, or loan players to the opposition.
8. The consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited at any venue while junior football is being conducted.

Codes of Conduct:

AJFC Committees' Code of Conduct

1. Ensure all young people have equal opportunities for participation.
2. Ensure that rules and equipment are modified to suit the age, ability and maturity level of players and that equipment and facilities are safe.
3. Provide quality supervision and instruction.
4. Be fair, considerate and honest in all dealings.
5. Resolve conflicts fairly and promptly through established procedures.
6. Remember that young people participate in football for their enjoyment and benefit. Do not over emphasise awards.
7. Support the efforts of coaches and officials and help improve the standards of coaching and officiating.
8. Involve, where appropriate, members in planning, leadership, evaluation and decision making related to junior football administration.
9. Ensure that everyone involved in junior football emphasises 'fair play' and not winning at all costs.
10. Develop Codes of Conduct and encourage everyone to follow them.
11. Make it clear that abusing young people in any way is unacceptable and will result in reporting and appropriate disciplinary action.

Players' Code of Conduct

1. Understand and play by the rules.
2. Respect umpires and other officials. Never argue with an official. If you disagree with a decision, have your captain approach the official during a break or after the game only.
3. Play for the "fun of it" and not just to please parents and coaches. This doesn't mean that you shouldn't take it seriously, just that at the same time you should enjoy it.
4. Control your temper. Verbally abusing other players or officials or deliberately distracting or provoking an opponent is not acceptable or permitted in any sport.
5. Be a good sport. Acknowledge all good plays whether they are by your team or your opponent. Be a fair winner and a good loser.
6. Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of another player. At all times show respect and manners.
7. Listen to your coach and try to apply their advice at practice and in games.

Coaches' Code of Conduct

1. Remember that football is for enjoyment. Kids play for fun and winning is only part of their motivation.
2. Be reasonable in your demands on a player's time, energy and enthusiasm. Younger children have more time but short attention spans. Older children have greater demands from their studies and many of them need to work.
3. Operate within the rules and teach your players to respect the rules. Do not encourage players to ignore or deliberately break any rules.
4. Give all players a fair and reasonable amount of game time. Players cannot improve without the opportunity of a reasonable amount of match practice.
5. Develop team respect for the ability of opponents. Encourage introducing themselves to their opponents on field, congratulating them whether they win or lose and accepting loss gracefully.
6. Instill in your players respect for umpires and other officials. They are there to enforce the rules of play but they cannot always be right. Teach your players to accept bad calls graciously.
7. Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of the players. Avoid putting players in dangerous conditions. For example, severely wet grounds, extreme heat and/or dehydration.
8. Role model good sportsmanship. Display control, respect and professionalism. Disappointment at losing is natural but teach players that it can be an important learning experience.
9. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every child playing sport. All players are entitled to equal treatment and respect.
10. Obtain suitable qualifications and keep up to date with the latest coaching practices and the principles of growth and development in young people.

Officials' Code of Conduct

1. Officiate according to the rules and where subjective judgment is necessary decide based on what is fair to all players.
2. Be consistent, objective and courteous when making decisions.
3. Avoid any situation which may be perceived as a conflict of interest.
4. Accept responsibility for all actions taken. If you make a mistake, admit it.
5. Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all competitors.
6. Emphasise the spirit of the competition rather than the errors. Do not 'over officiate'.
7. Ensure that your behaviour and comments are always positive and supportive on and off the field.
8. Place the safety and welfare of players above all else.

Parents / Supporters Code of Conduct

1. Encourage playing according to the Rules.
2. Remember that young people play for their own enjoyment, not yours. Do not force them to play if they don't want to.
3. Focus on effort and performance rather than winning or losing. This assists children to set realistic goals related to their ability.
4. Respect officials' decisions and teach players to do likewise. If you disagree with an official, raise the issue through the appropriate channel rather than question the official's judgment and honesty in public.
5. Applaud good performance and efforts from all footballers.
6. Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from junior football. Condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by a player, coach, official or spectator.
7. Show appreciation for volunteer coaches and officials. Without them, your child could not play football.
8. Direct any grievances to the Team Manager or Coaches Coordinator.

Penalties for Breaches of Codes of Conduct:

Players

On field

1. Any player who concedes a 50-metre penalty is to be removed from the ground and spoken to by the coach and benched for a length of time at the coach's discretion.
2. Any player who is swearing is to be removed from the ground and spoken to by the coach and benched for a length of time at the coach's discretion.
3. Any player sent off for a first time will be required to explain their actions to an Executive Committee representative and/or Coaches Coordinator before they can play the following game.
4. Any player sent off for a second time in a season must meet with an Executive Committee representative and/or Coaches Coordinator to be informed of a suspension.
5. Any player sent off for a third time must meet with an Executive Committee representative and/or Coaches Coordinator to provide a valid reason why they want to stay at the club and be given a longer suspension.
6. Any player who chooses not to meet with the Executive Committee representative and/or Coaches Coordinator, will not take the field in a game until he/she does so, unless they make a prior agreement with the President and only the President.

Players, Coaches, Officials, & Parents / Supporters

Off field

1. The Committee and Coaches retain the right to refer any player, coach or official representing AJFC, parent or supporter to the Executive Committee for disciplinary action for any off-field breaches, that in any in way brings the club into disrepute.

Escalation process

Coaches are required to raise any player specific breaches with the Coach Coordinator, who will provide support in addressing the issue with the involved parties. Should the behaviour continue, the Coach Coordinator will escalate to the Executive committee. A meeting will be requested with the involved parties to discuss the actions required to address the behaviour and reiterate the Code of Conduct. Should this meeting be declined, or the negative behaviour were to continue, any further decisions (e.g. suspension or delisting) will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Breaches by a Coach, Official or Parent / Supporter must be reported promptly to the club Administrator or President. A meeting will be requested with the involved parties to discuss the actions required to address the behaviour and reiterate the Code of Conduct. Should this meeting be declined, or the negative behaviour were to continue, any further decisions (e.g. removal from position of authority or suspension) will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

Review and Compliance:

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the committee to ensure its effectiveness.

Non-compliance with this policy may result in appropriate action, up to and including removal from the position of authority within the club.