

# BLACKBURN JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

## POLICY HANDBOOK

*Updated August 2025*



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# SECTION A - GENERAL

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. CLUB STATEMENT

- (a) The Blackburn Junior Football Club (**BJFC**) provide an opportunity for the youth of Blackburn and the surrounding suburbs to play football in a safe and enjoyable environment. Our aim is to provide the best football experience for junior players and their supporters. The Club has developed a set of policies that are designed to support our core values and ensure that the Club continues to develop as one of the best clubs in the Eastern Football Netball League (**EFNL**).
- (b) We have a strategy which is designed to achieve this. Our strategy is built around four key themes:
  - Participation
  - Development
  - Governance
  - Community
- (c) Underpinning this are our core values which we strive to demonstrate in our culture:
  - Fun
  - Fairness
  - Respect
  - Commitment
  - Sportsmanship
- (d) Any variation to the policies requires the approval of the Executive Committee.
- (e) While the policies provide a comprehensive management framework, it is possible that matters may arise which are not covered by existing policies. Such matters or any suggestions regarding our policies should be referred to our Club Secretary at [secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au).
- (f) The Club will always endeavour to provide for the health, welfare and wellbeing of its players, administrators, volunteers, supporters and spectators. We are proud of BJFC's success to date and we want to ensure we remain a successful Club providing the best football experience for junior players, their families and their supporters.
- (g) BJFC has developed a set of policies and procedures that reflect our core values and help to ensure we can provide the best possible environment for juniors to play football and retain the wonderful culture of our Club in the EFNL.
- (h) Our policies are designed to ensure the Club deals with various matters in a fair and transparent way.
- (i) By registering to play with the BJFC, the player, along with their parents, guardians and supporters agree to abide by the Club's Policies and this Policy Handbook. In accepting their various positions, all coaches, team officials and Club officials agree to abide by these policies. The PLAYHQ registration link is found [here](#).

### 1.2. DEFINITIONS

**AFL Community Handbook** means the AFL Community Football Handbook, as published by the AFL and amended from time to time, including any annexed guidelines or standards applicable to junior football.

**Annexure** means any Annexure attached to this Policy handbook.

**Club** means the Blackburn Junior Football Club (BJFC).

**EFNL** means the Eastern Football Netball League (EFNL), being the recognised governing and controlling body of

the competition in which BJFC participates.

**EFNL Policies** means all policies, rules, and procedural instruments formally adopted by the EFNL, which BJFC is required to adhere to. This includes, but is not limited to, the EFNL Junior By-Laws, the EFNL Junior Operations Handbook and EFNL Codes of Conduct. These policies are available at: <https://www.efnl.org.au/by-laws-and-rules>.

**Executive** means the BJFC Executive Committee, constituted and vested with the responsibilities set out in Clause 2.3 of this Policy Handbook.

**General Committee** means the BJFC General Committee, appointed and delegated with the responsibilities prescribed in Clause 2.3 of this Policy Handbook.

**Junior Club** means the Blackburn Junior Football Club (BJFC).

**Laws of the Game** means the Laws of Australian Football, as determined and administered by the Australian Football League (AFL) and available at: <https://play.afl/learning-resource/laws-game>.

**Policy Handbook** means this BJFC Club Policy Handbook, as adopted by the BJFC Committee and amended from time to time.

**Senior Club** means the Blackburn Football Club.

### 1.3. INTERPRETATION

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

- (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, that is not a designated public holiday in the relevant location, and if not otherwise specified in the Policy Handbook, a business day ends at 5.00pm in the relevant location;
- (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;
- (h) throughout this Policy Handbook, the terms ‘must’ and ‘shall’ indicate a mandatory obligation. The terms ‘may’ and ‘should’ carry an element of discretion. Any variation from a mandatory requirement under this Policy Handbook requires the approval of the Executive Committee.
- (i) references to this Policy Handbook includes the document as amended, varied, supplemented or replaced from time to time, together with all Annexures incorporated by reference.

#### 1.4. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

- (a) This Policy Handbook must be read in conjunction with the:
  - i. BJFC Child Safety Policy;
  - ii. EFNL Policies, including the EFNL Junior By-Laws and Operations Handbook; and
  - iii. AFL Community Football Handbook, including the Laws of the Game and applicable national policies.
- (b) Where content may not be covered by this Policy Handbook please refer to the EFNL Policies or AFL Community Handbook.
- (c) All matches played by BJFC must comply with the Laws of the Game as administered by the AFL, unless otherwise advised or modified by the EFNL. The Laws of the Game, as published by the AFL, are incorporated into this Policy Handbook and apply unless specifically modified by the EFNL. They are deemed to form part of this Handbook.
- (d) As a member club of the EFNL, BJFC adopts and is bound by the rules set by the EFNL. These will change from time to time. EFNL documents are available at (<https://efnl.org.au/>).
- (e) This Policy Handbook, including all Annexures, applies to all Members, Teams, Participants, Officials, Volunteers, and Spectators associated with BJFC and involved in EFNL competitions or club activities.
- (f) The Annexures form part of this Policy Handbook.
- (g) In the event of any inconsistency between:
  - i. this Policy Handbook;
  - ii. EFNL Policies; or
  - iii. official AFL rules or national policies,the BJFC Executive Committee reserves the right to determine the appropriate application, interpretation or resolution.
- (h) Any matter not expressly provided for in this Policy Handbook will be dealt with as the BJFC Executive Committee considers appropriate, having regard to the spirit and intent of relevant EFNL and AFL frameworks.
- (i) Any capitalised term not defined in this Policy Handbook has the meaning given to it in the AFL Community Football Handbook, unless the context otherwise requires.

## 2. CLUB HISTORY & OVERVIEW

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to provide an opportunity for the youth of our area to participate in Australian Rules Football in a safe and enjoyable environment.**

### 2.1. BLACKBURN FOOTBALL

- (a) BJFC is part of the Blackburn Football Club (**Senior Club**).
- (b) The Senior Club has a long and proud history, playing its first games in the 1890's on the same ground we play on today, Morton Park. The Senior Club had its first Annual General Meeting in 1903 and won its first premiership in 1922.
- (c) The Club now plays in the EFNL, the largest football competition, with our seniors playing in the prestigious Premier Division and most of our junior teams playing in A Division.
- (d) We very proudly field many women's teams in Junior, Senior and Masters competitions and have become one of the leading Club pathways for AFLW players.

### 2.2. BLACKBURN JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB

- (a) Our junior competition was established in the 1988 with just a single boys team. The Club has continued to flourish since then and we now have over 630 players within 31 boys and girls teams, from U8s to U18s. We are a proud family-based Club with a strong focus on participation and development. Our Club's success can be attributed to the fantastic support we receive from our parents and supporters.
- (b) While the Club operates autonomously under our own Committee, we enjoy a strong relationship with the Senior Club. The Junior Club president also sits on the Blackburn Football Club Executive Committee.
- (c) The Club also formed a very close relationship with the local Auskick Centres. As a result, BJFC now runs these centres, which currently run on a Saturday and Sunday morning at Kalang Park. Many of our players come from these centres. The Club supports the development of these centres and arranges 'back to Auskick' days for our players, and hosts grid games enabling Auskickers to play a game and enjoy a sausage and drink at the half time break of our Senior games.
- (d) The Club hosts a range of social activities throughout the season of which include family nights, a fun parent social night and appreciation nights for our volunteers. These provide a great opportunity for our players and parents to get together. The junior teams are provided the opportunity to have an indoor training session over winter to get to know teams mates and their families even better in a new environment.

### 2.3. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- (a) BJFC is managed by an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee are responsible for:
  - i. the overall governance of the Club;
  - ii. setting Club policy;
  - iii. appointing coaches;
  - iv. endorsing team selections; and
  - v. dealing with complaint matters that require consideration by the Executive Committee.
- (b) Our Executive Committee is determined by the President and can consist of the best possible roles from the Committee. The Executive Committee and current key personnel of BJFC are outlined in Annexure B of this Policy Handbook. The Executive Committee is supported by a General Committee, responsible for:
  - i. Providing advice to the Executive Committee
  - ii. Undertaking operational activities.
  - iii. Overseeing a specific area of responsibility for BJFC (e.g Apparel, Welfare, Registrar, Grounds)

(c) The current list of Executive and General committee positions can also be found on the BJFC website.

#### **2.4. PLAYER WELFARE**

- (a) The Club has adopted a Member Protection and Integrity Policy, outlined in Section 12 of this Policy Handbook, which we expect all members of BJFC (players, parents, administrators, volunteers and spectators) to comply with. We have appointed a Welfare Manager to act as our Child Protection Officer. This policy is overseen by our appointed Welfare Manager who is currently also a member of the Executive Committee.
- (b) Player welfare is of prime importance to the Club. Any concerns will be dealt with in accordance with our Dispute Resolution Policy, outlined in Section 14 of this Policy Handbook.

#### **2.5. GRIEVANCES**

- (a) Any person who feels aggrieved by the interpretation of the policies or possible failure to comply with the policies, may refer the matter to the Executive Committee via the Club Secretary for consideration in accordance with the Club's Dispute Resolution policy.

# SECTION B - REGISTRATION, SELECTION, COACHING, TRAINING & GAME DAY

## 3. PLAYER REGISTRATION POLICY

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to maintain a fair registration process for both existing and new players.**

### 3.1. REGISTRATION PROCESS

- (a) BJFC adopts and follows the registration and player transfer procedures set out in Section 4.1 of the EFNL By-Laws, as complemented by the Club-specific process outlined below.
- (b) The Club will:
  - i. begin registrations on 1 November, or date set out as the EFNL's registration window on PlayHQ;
  - ii. post the registration details on our website [here](#);
  - iii. set a final registration deadline, after which date any registration/s received will be deemed a late registration (See Section 3.2 of this Policy Handbook);
  - iv. notify all current registered players from the previous season arrangements for the upcoming season via email and with postings on our social media channels (i.e., Instagram and Facebook); and
  - v. advertise the registration arrangements at local schools and Auskick centres.
- (c) To register on time, players will need to:
  - i. register and pay online on or before the final registration date or
  - ii. register and pay online at the Club's registration day (if the Club holds an onsite day).
- (d) Registrations will be managed by the Club, with the Executive Committee retaining discretion over all registrations. Preference will be given to returning players. Other factors such as prior Club involvement, Auskick participants, BJFC family connections, Skill level and alignment with cultural values will be considered for registration by the executive committee.
- (e) Age eligibility is determined in accordance with the EFNL Junior Operations Handbook (see Annexure A).
- (f) The Executive Committee may, at its discretion, apply fee discounts for Players, such as those participating in higher-level competitions (e.g. Coates League or Vic Metro).

### 3.2. LATE REGISTRATIONS

- (a) Registrations received after the registration deadline will be deemed late and there will not be a guaranteed spot available. This will depend on how many of the available places have been taken by returning players and transfers (as per 3.3 New Players).
- (b) In extenuating circumstances, the Executive Committee may elect to grant an exemption to a player if the deadline is missed for registration.

### 3.3. NEW PLAYERS

- (a) Registrations from new players may not be processed until the Club has been able to allocate a place to all the previous year's players who registered on time. The Executive Committee, in consultation with the relevant coach, will determine which new players should be offered a place.

### **3.4. MINIMUM AGE**

- (a) As pursuant to the EFNL By-Laws on minimum age, a player must attain at least the age of seven (7) by 30 April during that person's first year of registration with the EFNL.

### **3.5. CORRECT AGE GROUPS**

- (a) For safety and developmental reasons, all players will be registered in their appropriate age group in accordance with the EFNL By-Laws, unless otherwise approved at the sole discretion of the BJFC Executive Committee.
- (b) BJFC understands that children will often want to play with school friends and will consider this when deciding upon the age group applicable each year.
- (c) Any player who has previously been allowed to play in an older age group will not automatically be permitted to play up in a subsequent year.

### **3.6. GENDER**

- (a) BJFC aims to have teams in every age group for male and female players. We actively encourage girls to play football. Refer to Section 11 – Our Female Football Program.

### **3.7. MIXED ABILITIES**

- (a) BJFC actively encourages people of mixed abilities to play football where it is safe to do so.

### **3.8. TOO MANY PLAYERS PER AGE GROUP**

- (a) BJFC is likely to have multiple teams in each age group. Depending on the number of players we may have to consolidate into a single team.
- (b) Should this be the case, the Club will endeavour to accommodate all players (e.g. it may invite players to play in another age group). New players may not be accepted into the higher age group team until this process has been completed. If there are still too many players from the previous season, the players may be selected based on the following criteria:
  - i. Players whose parents have made a significant contribution to the Club in past years (i.e. coach, assistant coach, team manager, runner, trainer, committee person or other persons deemed by the Executive Committee to have made a significant contribution to the Club in past years);
  - ii. Players who have a sibling/parent registered to play with the Club;
  - iii. Players who have played the most years with the Club.

The decision on playing spots ultimately will be made by the Executive Committee at its discretion.

- (c) We are incredibly lucky to have a community that attracts players to our Club. It is likely that BJFC will have more players wanting to play than 2 teams can accommodate, with no reserves. We need to be able to balance the needs of the existing player base with the desire of players and coaches to join BJFC, while ensuring team sustainability and maintaining Club success.
- (d) The Club may set a Registration Cut-Off Date, by which time all prior registrations by existing players, will aim to guarantee a place on the team. This enables the Club to understand what spots might be available. After that date we may confirm spots for players who desire to transfer to BJFC, based on team numbers and at the Executive Committee's discretion, including considering those that have registered interest in transferring.
- (e) Once guaranteed registrations have closed, there may be instances where more players desire to play for BJFC, than we could play with all players available. For example, 49 players would be 2 teams of 24 with 1 player in reserve. Recognising the popularity of the Club, the desire to retain the Blackburn community and the aspirations of coaches to improve teams, the Executive Committee may approve additional player placements if additional spots are approved by the EFNL. In these rare cases
  - i. all players play in 70% of the games in a season, where they are available for all games;

- ii. no player misses 2 consecutive games when fit.
- (f) Once the age groups are decided, the coaches of the Blacks and Reds (and Whites if necessary) will look to group the players into approximately equal sized teams. This may not result in perfectly equal numbers due to differing player abilities, but no team will have less than 24 players, where the other team(s) have more than 24 players.
- (g) After team selection, players in higher-grade teams who are considered close to selection in a lower team will be offered the opportunity to move to the lower team to receive more game time and a more meaningful role. Players may also choose to join a lower-grade team for social reasons or to play with friends.

## 4. FINANCIAL MEMBERS

**Blackburn Junior Football Club expects all players to be financial members of the Club.**

### 4.1. PAYMENT

- (a) Players must be financial members of the Club and pay their playing (registration) fees prior to playing in their first game of each season. Players are also required at the time of Registration to pay a compulsory Insurance Fee set by the EFNL.
- (b) A request for a discount (other than a family discount) should be sent to the Club Secretary at [secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au) and will be considered by the Executive Committee. PlayHQ also offers a progressive payment option in four instalments.
- (c) Club Playing Registration fees:
  - i. The EFNL sets the insurance fee and the Club sets the playing fees prior to Opening registrations. The Club fee covers:
    - Club operating costs and games costs (e.g. venue hire, umpires, training equipment, medical supplies, Council curation costs etc.).
    - the provision of a jumper which is provided on loan and must be returned at the end of the season.
    - the provision of a helmet which is provided on loan to players in all teams where the Club has mandated use of helmets and must be returned at the end of the season.
  - ii. No additional game fees will be charged.

### 4.2. DISCOUNTS

- (a) The Club may offer a reduced fee to families who have two or more siblings playing at the Club in the same season. The discounts will be set prior to Opening registrations.
- (b) The Club may reduce or waive the fee in exceptional circumstances (e.g. genuine financial hardship). The Executive Committee will notify the registrar of such discount, so that it may be applied to a particular player.
- (c) The Club may offer a reduced fee to players who register later in the season, to reflect less game

### 4.3. REFUNDS

- (a) The Club may provide a registration refund in exceptional circumstances.
- (b) A request for a refund should be sent to the Club Secretary or Registrar and will be considered by the Executive Committee at its absolute discretion on a case-by-case basis.
- (c) Refunds will not be provided to players who are rostered off or are not available to play.

### 4.4. CLUB EQUIPMENT

- (a) The Club provides each player specific equipment as set out in Section 4.1. All borrowed items must be returned to the Club within one week of the player having played their last game for the season.
- (b) Damaged items or any items not returned to the Team Manager at the end of the teams season will be considered 'lost' and the player liable to pay for its replacement at the following rates:
  - i. Jumpers - \$100
  - ii. Helmets - \$60
  - iii. Other items - at cost plus \$20

- (c) The Club may require Under 17.5 male players and Under 18 female players to pay a deposit with their registration fees for the jumper. The deposit shall be fully refundable provided that the jumper is returned in good condition by September 1st of their Under 17 (male) or Under 18 (female) year.

#### **4.5. NON-FINANCIAL MEMBERS**

- (a) A player who has not paid their fees will be considered a non-financial member of the Club.
- (b) A player who has not paid outstanding fines imposed by the EFNL will be considered a non-financial member of the Club.
- (c) A player who has not returned Club equipment (e.g. jumper, helmet etc.) at the end of the season or on notifying the Club of their resignation, will be considered a non-financial member of the Club.
- (d) Non-financial members will not be rostered on to play.
- (e) The Club will not provide a clearance to any player who has an outstanding debt to the Club or who has not returned Club property.

## 5. COACHING POLICY

**Blackburn Football Club seeks to appoint the best available coaches to lead its teams.**

### 5.1. COACHING APPOINTMENTS

- (a) BJFC adopts the coaching requirements set out in the AFL Community Handbook, as referenced in Annexure A. This includes compliance with accreditation and eligibility standards applicable to coaches at community football level.
- (b) At the end of the season, the Club will declare all coaching positions vacant and encourage existing and new coaches to apply for coaching positions in the following year.
- (c) Coaching appointments will be advertised on the Clubs social media platforms, (i.e. Facebook and Instagram) and emailed out to the contacts from the prior year. Coaching appointments may also be advertised on the EFNL website as deemed necessary.
- (d) Coaches must be able to demonstrate that they have the right attributes to coach relevant to the applicable age group and be prepared to undertake or renew their coaching accreditation standards.

### 5.2. TENURE

- (a) A coach shall be appointed for one season. They may be appointed to coach the same team for a second season if they are deemed the most suitable applicant for the position.
- (b) No coach can be appointed for a third or greater consecutive season unless approved by the Executive Committee.

### 5.3. COACHING ATTRIBUTES

- (a) Our coaches are expected to:
  - i. Be qualified and in doing so:
    - must have a Level 1 qualification or in receipt of a Level 1 coaching qualification before the 1<sup>st</sup> game in the year that they are coaching (Note: the Club will reimburse the Coach for the registration fees for their Level 1 course where applicable).
    - must have a valid working with children check (WWCC) prior to commence pre-season training and for the duration of the season.
    - must attend Club coaches' nights and other events unless they are unavailable under justifiable circumstances.
  - ii. Act responsibly and in doing so:
    - adhere to the EFNL's Code of Conduct.
    - adhere to the Club's policies.
    - not speak to the media without the consent of President or Vice President.
    - not enter into any commercial arrangements, or make purchases, on behalf of the Club without the consent of the President, Vice President or Treasurer.
  - iii. Display a sense of professionalism and in doing so:
    - wear appropriate attire, including Club polo/hoodie/jacket to all games.
    - promote the 'BJFC' brand of football embodied in our values.
    - make decisions which are in the best interests of our players and the Club.
  - iv. Display fairness and in doing so:
    - respect all players.
    - adhere to the Club's policies.
    - maintain records of the number of games played for each player and the amount of game time they receive.
  - v. Demonstrate commitment to their team and the Club and in doing so:

- arrive promptly and well prepared for training and games.
  - attend family nights and other key events.
- vi. Show leadership and in doing so:
- display sincerity, integrity and honesty.
  - base actions on reason and not emotions.
  - set goals and share a vision with your team.
  - display confidence and inspire players.
  - be fair to all players and responsive to their sensitivities.
  - seek out and listen to the opinions of others to help you succeed.
- vii. Build an appropriate support network and coaching team of assistant coaches. Assistant coaches are strongly encouraged to obtain a Level 1 coaching qualification and are required to have a valid and current WWCC as per clause 5.3(a)(i) above.
- viii. They may be required to enlist a team manager and runner, and who are prepared to act in accordance with this Policy Handbook and the values of the Club.

#### **5.4. COACHING SUPPORT**

- (a) The Club's aim is to help our coaches prepare our teams as well as is possible for life on and off the football field. As such, from time to time, the Club may invest in our coaches. This may take the form of workshops, courses, skills training or any other such form as deemed appropriate by the executive.
- (b) Coaches with a desire to undertake training, or other development opportunities, should raise the request with the Executive who will consider the request.

## 6. TEAM SIZE AND SELECTION POLICY

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to maintain a fair, transparent and equitable team selection process.**

### 6.1. TEAM SELECTION

- (a) BJFC is committed to fairness, transparency and equity.
- (b) The Club adopts an approach which recognises that teams vary in size, skill and ability but that all players are entitled to be treated fairly. Our teams are managed to be competitive irrespective of their grading.
- (c) The teams should aim to have an equal number of players to ensure that all players in the age group have access to equal playing opportunities. However, in consideration of the EFNL's grading system when registering two teams (one team in A grade and one team in D grade), each team may require flexibility to ensure players participate in the most suitable divisions for their ability level.
- (d) It is the Club's intention to field at least two teams per age group, contingent upon the number of registrations.
- (e) Age groups will be graded upon entering a competitive competition, defined as Under 11 and above for Boys, and Under 12 and above for Girls.
- (f) Where a team age group is graded and there are enough players to form two or more teams in that age group, the following process will apply (**Grading Process**):
  - i. The players will be graded based on their skills, size, confidence and football maturity.
  - ii. The higher graded team shall be referred to as the 'Black team', the second team shall be referred to as the 'Red team', a third team the 'White team' and a fourth team the 'Grey team'.
  - iii. The teams will operate as separate teams (i.e. the Red and White teams shall not be considered 'reserve' teams). Notwithstanding this, it is expected that the teams will train at the same time and that the coaches will cooperate during the selection process and in the sharing of players throughout the season should a team be short of players within EFNL guidelines.
  - iv. Culturally, it is expected teams socialise and mix as one whole age group, negating the barriers between what is seen as a top and bottom sides and encouraging the one Club philosophy.
  - v. In order to determine the formation of multiple teams, the coaches should:
    - observe all players during the pre-season 'try-out' period;
    - take into account the player assessments prepared by the previous year's coaches;
    - liaise with the previous year's coaches (if necessary);
    - liaise with the BJFC Football Director;
    - provide brief comments to justify the proposed grading for each player;
    - agree with the proposed composition of the two teams, and
    - forward the team lists to the Executive Committee for approval.
  - vi. All players shall be assessed on their merits. The coaches shall fairly and objectively consider the proposed composition of teams. To avoid doubt there shall be no presumption that any player shall be automatically selected in any team.
  - vii. When teams are announced by the coaches, the coaches are to ensure all players are aware that movement of players may occur within the first four (4) weeks of the season if they believe players are better suited to play within another team.

- (g) The coaches should not disclose the composition of the recommended teams to any players or parents until the teams have been approved by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will review and approve all team lists.
- (h) Ideally, the teams should have an equal number of players though each team may require flexibility to ensure players participate in the most suitable divisions for their ability level.
- (i) The following team selection rules will also apply to the corresponding age group:

| Age Group                     | Team Selection Rules                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Under 8s, 9s &amp; 10s</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Team composition may change from year to year depending on player numbers and EFNL team size requirements. As such there is no guarantee that players will remain in the same team.</li> <li>ii. Team selection will occur after registration day, although generally the Club will try to place all the players from the one school or friends in the same team.</li> <li>iii. Team splits will consider overall team numbers as well as social dynamics.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Under 11s to 15s</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Where there are enough players to form two or more teams in the one age group, the players will be graded as pursuant to the Grading Process outlined in 6.1(e).</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Under 16 &amp; 17.5s</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Where there are enough players to form two or more teams in the one age group, the players will be graded as pursuant to the Grading Process outlined in 6.1(e).</li> <li>ii. The normal pathway for players will be to play in the age that they qualify for. Certain players based on their skills, size, confidence, football maturity and desire to ensure their football development may request to join the Under 17.5 team. This requires Executive approval and should not be considered the typical pathway. This may mean that players who are eligible for Under 16s may play in Under 17.5s. Expectation for Executive exemption should be participation in Talent League Pathways (particularly if bottom age), consistent performance in Interleague and SSV squads. A desire to play with older aged friends in not considered a reason for an exemption.</li> <li>iii. All coaches are required to assess all players from the other team(s) at training for a minimum of two (2) training sessions within the first four (4) weeks of in-season training. Movement of Players is at the discretion of the Executive in consultation with the coaches.</li> </ul> |

## 6.2. TEAM SIZE

- (a) BJFC adopts the rules pertaining to team size and maximum player lists contained in the EFNL Operations Junior Handbook, Junior Rules Summary.
- (b) Any variation to EFNL team sizes must be approved by the EFNL prior to implementation.

## 6.3. TRY-OUT PERIOD

- (a) As pursuant to the Grading Process, outlined in 6.1 (e) which applies to age groups from Under 11s – Under 17s, the following Try-Out Period applies:
  - i. Each team should attempt to have up to 3 intra Club match simulation sessions to assist with grading players.
  - ii. Prior to the try-outs, the coaches will be given player assessment guidelines to assist them with the team selection process. These Guidelines will be approved by the Executive Committee to assist with the appropriate grading of players.
  - iii. Players should attend as many pre-season try-outs as possible. Pre season attendance will be considered when selecting the higher graded teams. Coaches will try and run tryouts as early as possible, so that the players can be properly graded.
  - iv. However, a player may be exempt from this requirement in exceptional circumstances that limit

attendance. In some circumstances players may be selected to a team subject to the referral of the coach and approval of the Executive Committee.

#### **6.4. END OF SEASON ASSESSMENTS**

- (a) At the end of the season, the coaches must provide the Club with a simple player assessment addressing: size; skills (kicking, marking, handball; positioning and reading of play); confidence (to attack the ball under pressure, tackle players etc.); maturity; and the recommended team for the following year.
- (b) These assessments will be used in subsequent years to assist in the selection of teams where we have multiple teams in the Under 11s - 17s.
- (c) The assessments are confidential documents and will not be released to players or parents.
- (d) Once the teams have been selected our Football Director will review the teams against the previous year's assessments.

#### **6.5. TEAM SUPPORT STAFF**

- (a) The Club greatly appreciates the time and effort of our many volunteers, including the coaches and their support staff (i.e. assistant coaches, team managers, runners and trainers).
- (b) Where a single side exists in an age group, the support staff should be confirmed as soon as possible and definitely before pre-season training commences.
- (c) Where multiple teams exist, support staff roles should not be finalised until the teams are selected. Players should not be selected based on the roles their parents may undertake in the Club, or indicated they will undertake within a specific team; rather they should be selected based on the team most suitable for their skills and ability.

#### **6.6. TIMING**

- (a) The Club's aim is that the teams will be finalised three weeks prior to the first game but the Club will take extra time when required to ensure the right allocation of players to teams.
- (b) Coaches may have the Executive Committee sign off on majority of the Blacks team prior to the season and use practice games or early season games to assess players for the remaining positions. These remaining spots should be filled as soon as practicable, being mindful that coaches may require several weeks to make their final decision.

#### **6.7. GRIEVANCES**

- (a) Team selection is not an exact science and requires consideration of a range of factors to ensure that players are placed in the most appropriate teams having regard to their size and skill level.
- (b) Where requested, the coaches will provide feedback on areas of improvement to all players in the second side within two weeks of the announcement of the teams.
- (c) Any person who feels aggrieved should raise the matter with the relevant coaches and/or team managers. If the matter can't be resolved, the matter may be referred to an Executive Committee member prior to Round 3 for consideration in accordance with the Club's Dispute Resolution Policy, outlined in Section 14 of this Policy Handbook.

## 7. PLAYER DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to develop all of our players to the best of their abilities.**

### 7.1. DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS & TRAINING

- (a) BJFC is committed to the development of its players
- (b) The Club adopts a pathway approach encouraging children to participate in Auskick, then developing them through their junior years (Under 8s – 18s) with the hope that they will then go on to play senior football for the Club.
- (c) The underlying aim is to have fun and develop players to the best of their ability.
- (d) The expected training time per age group for junior AFL footballers can vary depending on factors such as the player's age, skill level, and the requirements of their team.
- (e) The following are some general guidelines for expected training time per age group:
  - i. Under 8s - 9s: 1 hour per week, with an emphasis on developing basic skills and having fun.
  - ii. Under 10s - 11s: 1-1.5 hours per week, with a focus on skill development, teamwork, and learning the Laws of the Game.
  - iii. Under 12s -13s: 2-3 hours per week, with an emphasis on skill development, game sense, and fitness.
  - iv. Under 14s -15s: 3-3.5 hours per week, with a focus on skill development, game sense, fitness, and team tactics.
  - v. Under 16+: 4-5 hours per week, with an emphasis on developing advanced skills, fitness, game sense, and team tactics.
- (f) It's important to note that these are just general guidelines, and the training time can vary depending on the player's individual needs and goals, as well as the specific requirements of their team or Club. Coaches and parents should work together to ensure that the training program is safe, appropriate, and effective for each player's needs. Training time has been cited as a reason some players have left football. As a Club we have tended to operate closer to the minimum expectations as a group to ensure enjoyment of the game and maximise ground usage opportunity.
- (g) We do not have a separate training plan for Boys and Girls, both are given age appropriate training times. Historically our girls have had more success with training attendance and availability training for a longer period over one night, rather than over two nights. Each team and age groups training time and days are reviewed per age group and team for maximum capacity to develop as a team. Some of the training times for players is individual sessions away from team training environments.
- (h) The Club does not provide first aid officers at training. Training may also be cancelled due to excessive heat, inclement weather or poor ground conditions.
- (i) The coaches will advise the location, timing and duration of training. Parents are expected to remain at training and are also encouraged to assist the coaches with training.
- (j) Player must wear mouthguards at training and in games. Where applicable below, a helmet may also be compulsory.

| Age Group                     | Development                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Training                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Under 8s, 9s &amp; 10s</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Many players are still in the early stage of learning basic skills.</li> <li>ii. Emphasis is on participation and enjoyment. Additional goals are the acquisition of football skills and the nurturing of physical and emotional development and wellbeing.</li> <li>iii. Players should be provided equal game time and the opportunity to play in all positions, although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. We believe this to be the best way to provide young footballers with all round development regardless of their level of ability.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Training should be up to one night a week. Our desire is for this training to occur on a Friday to support ground availability and ease or availability for younger players.</li> <li>ii. Players must wear helmets at training.</li> <li>iii. Players are encouraged to attend training and to participate in a co-operative manner. Non-attendance at training will not affect a player's selection or game time.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Under 11s and 12s</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Many players in the Under 11s and 12s have developed good skills and are able to perform at a faster pace, which places them at a more competitive level in a match situation. However, some players are still in the early stages of understanding the game and developing their skills. In many ways this is a transitional period as the players' progress into a more competitive environment.</li> <li>ii. In these age groups the emphasis is placed on participation and enjoyment. Additional focus is placed on skill development and teamwork supplemented through set plays and positioning.</li> <li>iii. The Club believes strongly in providing equal opportunities to players in the Under 11s and 12s. Players should be provided equal game time, although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. While some players at this age become naturally suited to set positions, we encourage players to try various positions. We believe this to be the best way to provide young footballers with all round development regardless of their level of ability.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Training may be one or two nights a week. BJFC generally recommends 1 night a week for Under 11's and up to 2 nights a week for Under 12's.</li> <li>ii. Players must wear helmets at training.</li> <li>iii. Players are encouraged to attend both training sessions where there are two provided, but we understand other commitments can make this a challenge. Coaches will advise if one session is considered the main session for the week. Players are expected to attend at least one training session per week and to participate in a cooperative manner.</li> <li>iv. Non-attendance at training shall not affect a player's selection or game time. However, a player who is not able to regularly attend training may be selected in the Red team where the coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice their skill development and the ability to effectively compete at a higher level.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Under 13s – u15s</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Many players in the Under 13s and 15s have developed good skills with some even playing representative football while others are still developing.</li> <li>ii. This can be a difficult time as players mature at different rates: individual players can grow rapidly leading to significant differences in size, ability, confidence and maturity.</li> <li>iii. In these age groups there is still an emphasis on participation and enjoyment but with an increasing focus on development as the players mature.</li> <li>iv. The Club believes strongly in providing equal</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Teams shall train for up to two nights a week.</li> <li>ii. Players are encouraged to attend both training sessions where there are two provided, but we understand other commitments can make this a challenge. Coaches will advise if one session is considered the main session for the week. Players are expected to attend at least one training session per week and to participate in a cooperative manner.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                            | <p>opportunities to players in the Under 13s – 15s. Players should be provided equal game time, although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. Players are still encouraged to try various positions while recognizing that this is a time when players can begin to specialize as they develop and mature.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>iii. Non-attendance at training shall not affect a player's selection or game time. However, a player who is not able to regularly attend training may be selected in the Red team where the coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice their skill development and the ability to effectively compete at a higher level.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Under 16, 17.5 and Under 18s</b></p> | <p>i. Most players will have developed good skills and a sound understanding of the game.</p> <p>ii. While the coach has overall responsibility for the development and well being of the team we expect players to become more accountable and take greater responsibilities for their training and performance.</p> <p>iii. This is a watershed period: some players have developed very good skills and have been selected by Oakleigh Chargers/Eastern Rangers. Others are aspiring to play senior football at Blackburn while others are less driven to play senior football. Hence it can be a difficult period with boys having various aspirations. Our aim is to help the players develop to the best of their abilities and while the Club will seek to achieve this, it will very much depend on the desires of the players and their individual commitments to not only training but their own development.</p> | <p>i. Teams shall train up to two nights a week.</p> <p>ii. Players are encouraged to attend both training sessions where there are two provided, but we understand other commitments can make this a challenge. Coaches will advise if one session is considered the main session for the week. Players are expected to attend at least one training session per week and to participate in a cooperative manner.</p> <p>iii. Non-attendance at training may affect a player's selection or game time where the coaches believe that the player's failure to regularly attend training could prejudice the player's skill development and the ability to effectively compete on game day.</p> |

## 8. GAME TIME (ROSTERING & ROTATION) POLICY

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to provide all players with similar opportunities to play football.**

### 8.1. COMMITMENT STATEMENT

- (a) The EFNL Junior Operations Handbook and By-Laws outlines key game management procedures, including player limits and game time regulations. BJFC adheres to the provisions of these documents, where applicable.

### 8.2. UNDER 8S, 9S AND 10S

#### (a) PLAYER NUMBERS

- i. The EFNL currently sets out rules on the number of players on the ground.
- ii. In Under 8s and 9s, 2 games will be conducted so each team will split in half to play. In Under 10s the team will play on one oval.
- iii. In uncompetitive competitions, teams should lend or borrow opposition players as needed to ensure as many players are on the field as possible at one time.

#### (b) GAME TIME

- i. Subject to injury or other extenuating circumstances each player:
  - should be afforded the same amount of game time over the course of the season.
  - selected on game day will play a minimum of half a game (or equivalent time over the duration of the game).
- ii. No player should play a full game until all players have had the opportunity of playing at least half a game (or equivalent time over the duration of the game).

#### (c) POSITIONING

- i. Players should be provided with the opportunity to play in all positions (i.e. backline, centre/on ball, forward line and bench), although this may need to be averaged out over several weeks. We believe this to be the best way to provide young footballers with all round development regardless of their level of ability.
- ii. Players should rotate their position on the ground at least once during the game, to maximize exposure to the game.

### 8.3. HOME AND AWAY: UNDER 11s – UNDER 15s

#### (a) PLAYER NUMBERS

- i. The EFNL currently limits the number players per game. By way of clarity:
  - Boys (U11- U15): Maximum number of 18 players on the field and 6 on the bench.
  - Girls (U12 and U14): Maximum number of 16 players on the field and 8 on the bench.
- ii. Where sufficient players are available a team of 24 players should be selected to play, based on EFNL current guidelines. Train on players may be selected for their team, where that team does not have sufficient players to fill the maximum players.
- iii. Coaches may liaise with other coaches in their age group and the coaches in other age groups to ascertain whether any other teams are short of players and whether player(s) may be required to play in another team.

#### (b) GAME TIME

- i. Subject to injury or other extenuating circumstances each player:
  - should be afforded the same amount of game time over the course of the season.
  - selected on game day should play a minimum of three quarters (or equivalent time over the duration of the game).

#### (c) POSITIONING

- i. While some players at this age become naturally suited to set positions, the Club encourages

players to try various. We believe this to be the best way to provide young footballers with all round development regardless of their level of ability.

#### **8.4. FINALS: UNDER 11s – UNDER 15s**

- (a) As detailed within the EFNL By-Laws, a player must play a minimum number of home and away matches to qualify to play in the finals series for their Junior Club.
- (b) It is generally recognised that finals football is different from home and away games. The policy will be based on the following principles:
  - An opportunity for as many players as is possible to experience finals football.
  - An understanding that player selection and playing time for individual players gives the team the best possible opportunity to win.
  - An understanding that the policy will provide Coaches in the Under 13s – 15s greater scope for varying playing time for individual players than Under 11s and 12s.
- (c) **PLAYER NUMBERS**
  - i. Where sufficient players are available a team of 24 players should be selected to play.
  - ii. Any player rostered off should be considered an 'emergency' and can attend the game to replace a player who may not be available or to assist the team (e.g. water carrier etc.).
- (d) **PLAYER SELECTION**
  - i. Where a team will play two or more finals then every player on the team list must be selected in at least one of the first two finals.
  - ii. Where a team is not guaranteed to play more than one final then team selection is at the discretion of the coach. It is expected that a fair and reasonable selection process will be undertaken should the team continue to progress (i.e., the Committee expects that all players should be given the opportunity to play in finals).
  - iii. Where a team plays three or more finals, it is expected that a fair and reasonable selection process will be undertaken to give all players equal opportunity to play in finals.
- (e) **GAME TIME**
  - i. Subject to injury or other extenuating circumstances, every player selected in a finals game will play a minimum of half a game.
- (f) **POSITIONING**
  - i. Players should be positioned having regard to their abilities and the needs of the game.

#### **8.5. HOME AND AWAY: UNDER 16,17.5 & 18s**

- (a) **PLAYER NUMBERS**
  - ii. The EFNL currently limits the number players per game. By way of clarity:
    - Boys (U16 & U17): Maximum number of 18 players on the field and 6 on the bench.
    - Girls (U16 & U18): Maximum number of 16 players on the field and 8 on the bench.
  - iii. Where sufficient players are available a team of maximum allowed by the EFNL at the time.
  - iv. Subject to injury or other extenuating circumstances each player should be afforded the opportunity to play the same number of games as their teammates.
  - v. Any player rostered off should be considered an 'emergency' and should attend the game to replace a player who may not be available and/or to assist the team during the game (e.g. water carrier etc.).
- (b) **GAME TIME**
  - i. Subject to injury or other extenuating circumstances each player selected may play a minimum of half a game (or equivalent time over the duration of the game).
  - ii. Coaches may, however, apply some discretion to the selection of players and the amount of game time they play in any particular week having regard to:
    - the preparation of the player (incl. attendance and commitment at training)

- the performance of the player (incl. commitment to the game)
- the calibre of the opposition
- the safety of the player concerned
- the status of the game

(c) POSITIONING

- Players should be positioned having regard to their abilities and the needs of the game.

## 8.6. FINALS: UNDER 16,17.5 & 18s

- As detailed within the EFNL By-Laws, a player must play a minimum amount of matches with their affiliated Junior Club in the home and away matches to qualify to play in the finals series for their Junior Club.
- It is generally recognised that finals football is different from Home and Away games. This Policy will be based on the following principles:
  - An opportunity for as many players as is possible to experience finals football.
  - An understanding that player selection and playing time for individual players gives the team the best possible opportunity to win.
  - An understanding that the policy will provide Coaches in the older age groups greater scope for varying playing time having regard to player commitment and the needs of the game.
- PLAYER NUMBERS
  - Where sufficient players are available, the maximum amount of players should be selected to play.
  - Any player rostered off should be considered an 'emergency' and should attend the game to replace a player who may not be available and/or to assist the team during the game (e.g. water carrier etc.).
- PLAYER SELECTION
  - Where a team plays two or more finals then every player on the team list must be selected in at least one of the first two finals.
  - Where a team is not guaranteed to play more than one final then team selection is at the discretion of the coach. It is expected that a reasonable and fair selection process will be undertaken should the team continue to progress (i.e. the Committee expects that all players should be given the opportunity to play in finals).
  - Where a team plays three or more finals, it is expected that a fair and reasonable selection process will be undertaken.
- GAME TIME
  - Subject to injury or other extenuating circumstances, every player selected in a finals game will play a minimum of one quarter (or equivalent time over the duration of the game).
- POSITIONING
  - Players should be positioned having regard to their abilities and the needs of the game.

## **8.7. MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS BETWEEN TEAMS AND AGE GROUPS**

- (a) There may be occasions where a team has insufficient players for a game and coaches may seek players from other teams.
- (b) Where there are two teams in the same age group, coaches should seek players from the other team in their age group in the first instance. Where additional players cannot be sourced from the same age group, coaches should seek players from the age group below.
- (c) The two relevant coaches should satisfy themselves that any child nominated to play up is capable of playing in the higher competition.
- (d) The coach has total discretion about the amount of game time a substitute player may play if they have already played a game that day.
- (e) Movement of Players between teams and age groups is governed by the EFNL By-Laws. The EFNL poses severe limits on players playing up age groups and within age groups (e.g. number of games allowed, final's qualifications etc.). Coaches should consult with the Football Director before a player participates in a higher age group or another team.
- (f) Players may qualify for finals in both juniors and seniors. Limits may also apply to the number of games that can be played between teams and age groups as imposed by the Executive Committee.
- (g) Any game played shall not qualify a player for a different team in finals unless authorised by the Football Director.

## **8.8. PLAYER AVAILABILITY & GAME TIME RECORDS**

- (a) The Team Manager must:
  - i. keep the records of games played each week for each player
  - ii. provide the records to the Executive Committee with 48 hours of receiving a request from a member of the Executive Committee.

## 9. CAPTAINS

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to provide strong leadership for all of our teams and to reward players who clearly lead by example and reflect the values of the Club.**

### 9.1. UNDER 8s, 9s and 10s

- (a) The coach shall appoint a captain or co-captains each week. A player shall not be reappointed until all players have had the chance of being a captain.

### 9.2. UNDER 11s to 16s

- (a) Ideally a captain should be appointed for the season. Alternatively, the team may elect to appoint a leadership group.
- (b) Where a captain is appointed, the team may also appoint a vice captain/(s).
- (c) The coach may appoint the captain or invite the players to vote for whom they believe should be the captain. The coach should ensure that the Captain demonstrates maturity, leads by example, has the respect of the players and, most importantly, complies with the Club's Member Protection and Integrity Policy at section 12 of this Policy Handbook.
- (d) A player in the Under 11s – 16s teams should not be appointed as a captain for more than 1 season. A team captain should be eligible to captain a team twice but not in consecutive seasons.

### 9.3. Under 17.5s and Under 18s

- (a) Only a single captain should be appointed for the boys Under 17.5s teams and girls Under 18s teams. The teams should also appoint a vice captain/(s).
- (b) The coaches may invite the players to vote on who they believe should be the captain. The coach should ensure that the captain demonstrates maturity, leads by example, has the respect of the players and, most importantly, complies with the Club's Member Protection and Integrity policy.
- (c) The captain of the Under 17.5s Reds team may be reappointed as the Blacks Under 17.5s captain the following season.

### 9.4. CLUB CAPTAINS

- (a) Each season the Club shall appoint 2 Club Captains, consisting of one boy's captain and one girl's captain. The criteria for appointing these captains shall include leadership skills, community participation and values, and communication skills. It shall be their last year eligible to play in the Junior Club.
- (b) The boys captain shall be appointed from the Under 17.5s teams and the girls captain shall be appointed from the Under 18s team.
- (c) The captains shall, in consultation with their coach, arrange for each top age Under 17.5 boy's player and top age Under 18 girl's player to attend at least one Under 8, Under 9 or Under 10 boys or Under 10 girls training session to assist with coaching.

## 10. AWARDS & MILESTONES

The Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to celebrate the achievement and development of our players.

### 10.1. WEEKLY AWARDS

- (a) Weekly encouragement awards should be distributed evenly to all players over the year to recognise their efforts and achievements.
- (b) These awards are granted at the discretion of the Coach.

### 10.2. UNDER 8s and 9s - HOME & AWAY SEASON

- (a) All Under 8s and 9s players will receive a participation trophy or medallion at the end of the season.

### 10.3. UNDER 10s – 18s - HOME & AWAY SEASON

- (a) The following awards will be presented at the end of the season for the Under 10s – Under 18s:
  - i. Best and Fairest (by votes). Multiple winners are allowed and each receives a trophy (i.e. no count backs).
  - ii. Runner up Best and Fairest (by votes). Multiple winners are allowed and each receives a trophy (i.e. no count backs).
  - iii. Most consistent, Second runner up in Best and Fairest (by votes). Multiple winners are allowed and each receives a trophy (i.e. no count backs).
  - iv. Coaches Award which is selected at discretion of coach and support staff. This is a single award only.
  - v. Most Improved selected at discretion of coach and support staff. This is a single award only.

### 10.4. BEST & FAIREST VOTING

- (a) The 'Best and Fairest', 'Runner Up' and Third Best and Fairest will be determined by a combination of coaches and parent/guardian votes.
- (b) Each round there will be two voting cards. One is to be completed by the Coach (or his nominated team official (i.e. assistant coach or runner) and one is to be completed by the rostered parent/guardian (not being the coach, assistant coach or runner). All votes carry equal weight and all votes will be recorded in a players end of season tally.
- (c) Before and during the match the parent/guardian and the coach (or his nominated official) may consult but at the conclusion of the game there is to be no further discussion between the two parties. The nominated parent/guardian is required to listen to the coach's pre match, half time and post-match addresses to ensure they understands the requests the coach has given to the playing group. The coach (or his nominated official) and the parent each then allocates their 5 votes. 5 votes for B & F down to 1 vote for 5th B & F of the match.
- (d) Both the Coach (or their nominated official) and the parent will fill out separately one voting card each after the match. Votes are then to be placed in an envelope which is then sealed and given to the Team Manager immediately after the game. The envelopes must remain sealed until the end of the season. A running tally of the votes must not be kept during the season.
- (e) Votes must be based on the players' performance on the day and their contribution to the team; they should not be given as encouragement awards or to reflect improvement unless they were genuinely one of the best five players on the day.
- (f) All votes must remain confidential with the winners to be announced at the Club's annual presentation day. If two or more players are tied on the same number of votes, they should be declared joint winners. The same applies to the two runners up.

### **10.5. UNDER 11s – 18s – AWARDS FOR FINALS**

- (a) A Best Finals Player award will be provided for each team who participates in two\_or more finals.
- (b) The method used to identify the 'best and fairest' player of the home and away season will also apply to the finals series.

### **10.6. AWARD PRESENTATIONS**

- (a) The awards outlined in Sections 10.2 and 10.3 will be awarded at the Club's Annual Presentation Day. Team officials should not disclose the award recipients prior to presentation day without the Executive Committee's approval.

### **10.7. MILESTONES**

- (a) BJFC will recognise the outstanding achievement of a player reaching 50,100 or 150 junior games with a Club recognition trophy.
- (b) The EFNL will recognise those Players that reach 100 games with a medallion and mention in the Eastern Footballer.
- (c) The EFNL will recognise those Players that reach 150 games with a mention in the Eastern Footballer.
- (d) The Club's Registrar keeps a list of games played at the end of each season with BJFC. This list is provided to all team managers at the start of each season.
- (e) Players who transfer from another Club, should advise their team manager of the number of games played.
- (f) The Team Manager will advise the Milestones committee member when a player is approaching their milestone, so trophies/medals can be ordered.
- (g) Ideally trophies/medals are to be presented at the next Club Family night. If this is not suitable for the coach and/or player/family, the trophy/medal can be present by the coach before or after the milestone game played, at the Clubs Trophy Presentation Day or at the team's end of season team break up celebration.

# 11. GENDER INCLUSION AND FEMALE PROGRAM

**Blackburn Junior Football Club** are serious about continuing to develop a strong girls football program.

## 11.1. OVERVIEW

- (a) BJFC's commitment to gender inclusion began in 2012 with our mixed junior teams. We were one of the first clubs (one of only three) in the EFNL to establish a dedicated girls' football program. We are proud to have one of the largest programs in the EFNL.
- (b) Since the AFL's establishment of a national women's competition in 2017, BJFC has remained committed to providing equitable participation opportunities regardless of gender. Our program extends beyond simply fielding teams:
  - i. In 2017, we celebrated our 11th year of actively promoting girls playing football and our 6th year of female teams.
  - ii. In 2015 we launched Blackburn Girls Auskick the only Auskick centre exclusively for girls in the City of Whitehorse.
  - iii. We have been running a series of primary school clinics including those for Blackburn, Blackburn Lake, St Thomas', Laburnum, Mt Pleasant, Kingswood and Orchard Grove Primaries, as well as Blackburn, Box Hill and Forest Hill Secondary Colleges.
  - iv. We run school holiday skill clinics just for girls.
  - v. In 2014 we hosted the Blackburn District Primary School Sports Association Girls Footy Day. This was expanded further in 2016 to include the Nunawading District Primary School Sports Association with more than 400 primary school girls all playing footy at Morton Park in 2016 and 2017.

## 11.2. APPLICATION

- (a) The rules set out in this Policy Handbook apply equally to all participants, regardless of gender identity, gender expression or sex.
- (b) BJFC is committed to supporting and developing participation of all genders in Australian Football through dedicated pathways that reflect legal obligations and best practice inclusion principles, as guided by the AFL's Gender Diversity Policies.
- (c) BJFC female teams are governed by the EFNL and its policies.
- (d) BJFC adopts the EFNL's female registration rules, including section 4 of the EFNL By-Laws, which provides:
  - i. "Females are permitted to play in matches authorised or conducted by the EFNL however, females who reach the age of 14 years as at 1st January in the year of play are specifically excluded from playing in any competition that is not a female competition."

Note: BJFC understands that such requirements may evolve and is committed to implementing updates in line with AFL and EFNL policies concerning gender-diverse players.

## 11.3. LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

- (a) BJFC actively encourages the participation of all genders in football and upholds the principles of inclusion and equality.
- (b) BJFC adopts the AFL Community Football Gender Diversity Policy (2020) and the Gender Diversity Policy – Companion Guide (2020), as amended from time to time, found [here](#).
- (c) In accordance with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (VIC) s 72:
  - i. people aged under 12 years of age cannot be excluded on the basis of sex or gender identity from participating in a competitive sporting activity.
  - ii. A person may exclude people of one sex from participating in competitive sporting activities in which the strength, stamina and physique of competitors is relevant to the activity.

- (d) These legal provisions guide all Club decisions relating to team selection, eligibility and participation.

#### **11.4. COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING**

- (a) All persons associated with the Club must comply with these requirements.
- (b) Any breach of this policy should be reported to the relevant Team Manager or to the Club Secretary at [secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au).
- (c) Reports will be managed in accordance with the Club's Dispute Resolution Policy (see Section 14 of this Policy Handbook).

## SECTION C – BEHAVIOUR AND SAFETY

### 12. MEMBER PROTECTION AND INTEGRITY POLICY

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to provide an enjoyable football environment where we play fairly and respect our teammates, players, coaches, opponents, umpires, parents and visitors.**

#### 12.1. COMMITMENT STATEMENT

- (a) BJFC adopts the AFL Community Handbook provisions on Member protection pursuant to Annexure A in full and holds a strict stance against violence, discrimination, sexual harassment, bullying and abuse in any form, including online, as unacceptable.
- (b) 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, all members (i.e. participants in Australian Football) have the right to be protected from unacceptable conduct whilst participating in our sport.
- (c) 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.

#### 12.2. CODE OF CONDUCT

- (a) BJFC has adopted a Child Safe Code of Conduct (see Annexure C) and Child Safe Policy. This section is to be read in conjunction with those complementary documents.
- (b) The EFNL has adopted a Code of Conduct for players, coaches, administrators/officials and parents/spectators pursuant to Annexure A.
- (c) BJFC fully supports the EFNL's Code of Conduct and the general Codes of the AFL Community Handbook. All persons associated with the Club, including players, coaches, administrators/officials and parents/spectators must comply with the EFNL's Code of Conduct and the AFL Community Handbook Codes.

#### 12.3. VILIFICATION AND DISCRIMINATION

- (a) BJFC adopts the EFNL's Vilification and Discrimination policy and the anti-vilification provisions in AFL Community Handbook, as pursuant to Annexure A.
- (b) The EFNL is committed to fostering and maintaining a sporting environment which promotes understanding, accepts the unique differences of all persons affiliated with or interested in Australian Football, and recognises the need to prohibit certain discriminatory or vilifying conduct.
- (c) No EFNL Participant or Club Official shall engage in conduct which may reasonably be considered to incite hatred towards, contempt for, ridicule of or discrimination against a person or group of persons on the ground of their:
  - i. Race
  - ii. Religion
  - iii. Gender
  - iv. Colour
  - v. Sexual preference, orientation or identity; or
  - vi. Special ability or disability

- (d) In the first instance any breaches should be reported to the team manager or Club Secretary at [secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au) and will be managed in accordance with the Dispute Resolution Policy. Where applicable, complaints will also be addressed in accordance with the EFNL's Resolution Process, as outlined in the Vilification and Discrimination Policy.

#### **12.4. VICTIMISATION**

- (a) No person in their capacity as a participant, coach, administrator, official, volunteer, parent or spectator in the Club in the course of carrying out their duties or functions as or incidental to being a participant in the Club should victimise another person.
- (b) A person will victimise another person (the victim) if:
- i. the person subjects or threatens to subject the victim to any detriment because the victim (or a person associated with the victim) intends to or has lodged a complaint in contravention of this Policy; or
  - ii. the person assists, requests, induces, encourages or authorises another person to subject the victim to any detriment because the victim (or a person associated with the victim) intends to or has lodged a complaint in contravention of this Policy.

#### **12.5. GENDER**

- (c) BJFC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all participants, regardless of gender identity or expression, including members of the LGBTIQ+ community.
- (d) For Obligations regarding gender inclusion see Section 11 (Gender Inclusion and Female Football program) of this Policy Handbook.

#### **12.6. REPORTED PLAYERS (Including Yellow and Red Cards)**

- (a) It can be a very traumatic experience for a junior player to be reported or to be the victim of a reportable incident. The Club will endeavour to ensure that the distress associated with this event is minimised.
- (b) To ensure this happens, the Coach and Team Manager need to manage the situation in a calm and supportive manner. Often a report may occur because of a heated incident. It is the responsibility of the two Club officials to ensure:
- i. The player is removed from the ground for the Coach to be able to talk to the player about the incident and point out the outcomes of such an incident.
    - That the bench and player/s remain calm, ensuring that no further incidents grow out of the particular case.
    - That supporters, and in particular, the parents of the reported player remain calm and do not incite a further incident.
    - Ensure that all details (including witness details) of the incident are immediately noted, as this may be needed as evidence at the tribunal.
  - ii. After the game, the Coach and Team Manager, in consultation with the player and parents (if they are able to contribute in a positive manner) will discuss the timing and actions to be taken.
  - iii. The Club Secretary ([secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au)) needs to be notified of the report and the decision of the Coach, Team Manager and player regarding accepting the set Penalty. If the case goes to the tribunal, the Club Secretary will then contact the Club President who will liaise with the Clubs Tribunal Advocate and Player Welfare Manager.
  - iv. The Advocate will then take charge of the defence. It would be expected that the Coach would still take a very active role in the moral support for the player.
  - v. In the event of one of our players being required to give evidence, then all steps will be followed except those related to the set Penalty.
  - vi. In the event that a set penalty is handed down, there is no grounds for appeal, so no further evidence can be given.
  - vii. A player who has been on the receiving end of a reportable incident and is required to give evidence needs to be well supported, especially morally.

- (c) It should also be noted that the Club in certain circumstances might impose disciplinary action and/or penalties or suspensions outside the findings of the League / Tribunal with respect to misconduct or bringing the game or the Club into disrepute. This action may be taken even in a report has not been made. These decisions will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
- (d) All incidents / outcomes should be recorded on an incident report form and should be filed by the Club's Secretary.

#### **12.7. EFNL PENALTIES & FINES**

- (a) A player who is suspended is not eligible to be selected to play for the duration of the suspension. A suspended player should not be considered as rostered off.
- (b) Players (and their parents) are liable for the payment of any fines imposed on them by the EFNL. If the EFNL issues the fine to the Club it is expected that the player/parents will fully compensate the Club. An unpaid fine will be considered a debt to the Club:
  - i. The player cannot play for the Club until the fine is paid.
  - ii. The Club will not re-register a player in future season until the fine is paid.
  - iii. The Club will not approve a transfer to another club until the fine has been paid.

#### **12.8. COMPLIANCE AND REPORTING**

- (c) All persons associated with the Club must comply with these requirements.
- (d) Any breach of this policy should be reported to the relevant Team Manager or to the Club Secretary at [secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au).
- (e) Reports will be managed in accordance with the Club's Dispute Resolution Policy (see Section 14 of this Handbook).

## **13. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

### **13.1. POLICY COMMITMENT**

- (a) BJFC is subject to the Senior Club's social media Policy, as amended from time to time and available on the Senior Club's website. Additional social media commitments specific to BJFC are outlined below.
- (a) BJFC fully adheres to the national standards set out in the AFL Community Football Handbook (refer Annexure A), including the provisions in Section 12 and the AFL Social Media Guidelines for Local Clubs (see also Annexure A).
- (b) BJFC recognises the importance of promoting a safe, respectful, and positive online environment for all members of the Club, particularly children and young people.

### **13.2. GENERAL EXPECTATIONS**

- (a) All members of BJFC, including players, coaches, official, volunteers, parents and committee members are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and responsible on all social media platforms.
- (b) Social media must not be used to post, share or comment on content that is:
  - i. Discriminatory, harassing, or vilifying;
  - ii. Defamatory or threatening;
  - iii. Sexually explicit, offensive or violent;
  - iv. Confidential or misleading; or
  - v. Harmful to the reputation of BJFC, the EFNL, or AFL.

### **13.3. COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN**

- (a) No adult associated with the Club shall engage in private, individual social media communication or social friendships with children, including players on personal platforms (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat).
- (b) No adult shall exchange personal contact information (e.g. phone numbers, email addresses, personal accounts) with a child unless it is necessary for football-related purposes, such as training availability, and always with transparency except where necessary for a football related purpose such as availability to play or train.
- (c) Multiple adults including an Executive or General Committee member should be part of the contact list and included in any social media communication with players on behalf of or regarding the Club.

### **13.4. CLUB SOCIAL MEDIA ADMINISTRATION**

- (a) BJFC will appoint a designated Club Delegate to act as the Social Media Administrator, responsible for managing all official Club social media platforms. This delegate must actively monitor posts, comments and interactions to ensure compliance with this Policy.
- (b) Parents and guardians must be given the opportunity to opt out of having their child's name or image used in social media content. This process will be clearly outlined at the time of registration.

### **13.5. MANAGING INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**

BJFC takes all online safety concerns seriously. The following procedures are to be read in conjunction with the Dispute Resolution Policy outlined in Section 14 of this Handbook, where applicable.

- (a) Evidence Collection
  - i. Preserve all offending content (e.g. via screenshots) before removal for investigation and documentation purposes.
  - ii. Do not share this content further.
- (b) Content Removal
  - i. Immediately delete inappropriate content from any BJFC-managed platform.
  - ii. Request the removal of offensive material by members on third-party platforms (e.g. personal

- accounts or Club discussion forums).
- iii. Contact other page administrators (e.g. opposition clubs) to request content takedown when appropriate.

(c) Escalation

- i. All serious matters should be communicated to the EFNL, who will provide additional guidance (e.g. cyberbullying, image-based abuse involving minors). BJFC will liaise with the EFNL and where appropriate the matter may be escalated to:
  - Office of the eSafety Commissioner; and/or
  - Victoria Police or child protection authorities, where necessary.

(d) Documentation

- i. All incidents and actions taken must be recorded in BJFC's records for review and accountability.

## 14. DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to ensure that any issues raised are resolved in a timely and amicable manner to the satisfaction of all parties.**

### 14.1. GUIDING PRINCIPLE

- (a) BJFC is committed to ensuring all concerns and complaints are handled in a respectful, timely and transparent manner. Where appropriate, matters will be escalated to the EFNL's complaints officer.

### 14.2. RAISING A CONCERN

- (a) Any person wishing to raise a concern should do so as follows:
  - i. Team related matters– Raise the concern with the Team Manager or Coach;
  - ii. General nature – Raise the concern with a Committee Member, preferably the Club Secretary at [secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au).

### 14.3. INTERNAL CLUB COMPLAINTS

- (a) Parents/Players - Concerns About Coaching
  - i. Our coaches are not paid. They volunteer a lot of time and effort to provide a positive learning environment for our children. Parents are asked to fully support and, where possible, assist coaches when required.
  - ii. Raise the matter first with the Team Manager, and if appropriate, with the Coach (not during games or training).
  - iii. If unresolved, escalate to the Club Secretary, who may refer it to the Football Director or Executive Committee.
- (b) Coaches - Concerns About Parents
  - i. If a coach has a concern with a parent they should try to establish and maintain an open line of communication and talk to the parent about their concern, ideally in the presence of the Team Manager. Do not let the situation become heated.
  - ii. If the matter is not able to be resolved in this manner, it should be referred to the Club Secretary who in turn may refer it to the Executive Committee, including the Welfare Manager, for resolution.
- (c) Coaches - Concerns About Players
  - i. If a coach has a problem with a player they should talk to the player and express their concerns. Discussions are always best undertaken in the presence of a parent.
  - ii. If they are unable to resolve the matter at that level they may refer it to the Club Secretary for consideration.
  - iii. Serious or repeated concerns may be referred to the Football Director for consideration of suspension or further action.
- (d) Player-to-Player Concerns
  - i. If a player has an issue with another player, they (or their parents) should not take matters into their own hands but rather refer the matter to the coach in the first instance.
  - ii. If they are unable to resolve the matter at that level they may refer it to the Club Secretary for consideration.

#### 14.4. INTER-CLUB COMPLAINTS

(a) Complaints Against Another Club

- i. If a Club member has concerns about the behaviour of a player, team official or spectator, they should first raise the matter with the relevant Team Manager who should address it by speaking to the opposing Team Manager.
- ii. If they are unable to resolve the matter, they may refer it to our Club Secretary for consideration.
- iii. All complaints or incidents involving other clubs must be reported to the Club Secretary, who will determine whether escalation to the EFNL is appropriate.

(b) Complaints From Another Club

- i. If a representative of another club wishes to raise a concern, they should do so in the first instance with the relevant BJFC team manager.
- ii. If they are unable to resolve the matter, they may refer it to our Club Secretary for consideration.
- iii. All such complaints should be documented and noted by the Club Secretary, with further escalation to the EFNL if required.

#### 14.5. ROLE OF THE CLUB SECRETARY

- (a) The Club Secretary shall act as the Club's Complaints Office and central point of contact.
- (b) In consultation with the Club President, the Secretary will refer matters to the appropriate Club Official for investigation and resolution:

| Matter                                                                   | Investigating Officer |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Player selection, game time etc.                                         | Football Director     |
| Coaches and other team officials' behaviour                              | Football Director     |
| Player behaviour                                                         | Welfare Manager       |
| Matters involving allegations of vilification, discrimination & bullying | Welfare Manager       |
| Parent / Spectator behaviour                                             | Welfare Manager       |
| Matters involving the EFNL and/or other clubs                            | Welfare Manager       |
| Matters involving Social Media                                           | Welfare Manager       |

- (c) Depending upon the nature of the issue the matter may be referred to a third party either internally or externally to the Club (e.g. Child Protection Officer).
- (d) The Club President, Vice President and Secretary are the only representatives of the Club who may lodge an official complaint with another team, the EFNL or any other organisation.

#### 14.6. COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCESS

(a) In attempting to resolve the issue, all parties should take into account the following factors:

- i. The extent of the issue, i.e., is it likely to have a wider effect in the Club;
- ii. The number of players or teams affected;
- iii. Whether appropriate temporary measures are possible or desirable;
- iv. The expected time before the issue can be addressed; and
- v. What resources may be needed to resolve the issue.

(b) The investigating Officer shall:

- i. Inform the respondent of the complaint and give them an opportunity to respond;
- ii. Gather relevant evidence and witness statements;
- iii. Attempt resolution through conciliation with an agreed independent conciliator within 5 working days;
- iv. Ensure all parties agree on the terms of settlement;
- v. Limit public comment to agreed statements by the President.

#### **14.7. DISCIPLINARY OUTCOMES AND SANCTIONS**

Where a complaint is substantiated and a Club member is found to have breached Club policy, the Club may apply sanctions in line with the seriousness of the conduct:

##### **(a) Committee Members**

- i. Committee members must ensure that their behaviour sets an example for others to follow. Possible consequences may include:
  - Written Warning (By Executive Committee / Delegated Committee Representative).
  - Written Caution: Issued by Executive Committee - after appearing before an appropriately constituted panel - to be comprised of at least two of: Football Manager and two other relevant officials, approved by the Executive Committee.
  - Suspension from duties : Issued by Executive Committee.

##### **(b) Players**

- i. Part of learning how to play the game is learning how to conduct themselves both on and off the field. BJFC demands high standards of behaviour. Possible consequences may include:
  - Formal Verbal or Written Warning (issued by the Coach): The Coach is responsible for addressing and managing on-field misconduct or minor behavioural issues.
  - Written Caution: Issued by Executive Committee - after appearing before an appropriately constituted panel - to be comprised of at least two of: Football Manager and two other relevant officials, approved by the Executive Committee.
  - Suspension: Issued by Executive Committee.
  - Deregistration: (by Executive Committee).

##### **(c) Coaches**

- i. A coach is mentor, role model, teacher and counsellor to players. Parents and players therefore should expect that the behaviour and demeanour of coaches is not only exemplary but beyond reproach. Possible consequences may include:
  - Written or Verbal Warning: Issued by Football Manager / Executive Committee Representative.
  - Written Caution: Issued by Executive Committee - after appearing before an appropriately constituted panel - to be comprised of at least two of: Football Manager and two other relevant officials, approved by the Executive Committee.
  - Suspension: Issued by Executive Committee.

##### **(d) Parents/Spectators**

- i. Parents of players at BJFC have the right to expect that the Club will provide a safe, harmonious and enjoyable environment for their child to play football. The Club in return expects that parents will ensure that their behaviour does not bring the Club into disrepute. Possible consequences of breaches of the Code (graded):
  - Written or Verbal Warning: Issued by Team Manager / Executive Committee representative.
  - Written Caution: Issued by Executive Committee - after appearing before an appropriately constituted panel - to be comprised of at least two of: Football Manager and two other relevant officials, approved by the Executive Committee.

- Suspension: Issued by Executive Committee.

Note: Care needs to be exercised to ensure that players are not penalised for the behaviour of others.

#### **14.8. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- (a) Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the complaints process. All parties to a complaint must all agree to the maintenance of confidentiality. No person involved in the complaints process should publicly comment on any aspect of the complaints process without the prior written agreement of all parties.

## 15. PLAYER SAFETY POLICY

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to provide a safe playing environment for its players and spectators.**

### 15.1. MEDICAL NOTIFICATION

- (a) At registration, each player (or parent/guardian) must complete medical information as part of the Club's online Registration form.
- (b) The player (or parent/guardian) must advise of any conditions that would place the player at risk or could impede their ability to safely participate.
- (c) Medical information is securely retained by the team's Trainer for the duration of the season and destroyed at the end of the season.
- (d) Players (or parent/guardians) must immediately notify their coach and/or trainer of any changes in circumstances (injury / health problem etc.) that could place the player at greater risk.

### 15.2. INJURY MANAGEMENT

- (a) The health and safety of the Club's players, personnel and spectators is the Club's most important priority and overrides any other consideration including competition outcomes.
- (b) Each team must have a qualified Trainer (See Section 15.8). At least one parent/ guardian of each child is expected to remain at training and during the games, to attend to any off-site medical attention that their child may need.
- (c) Prior to a match, fitness to play is a decision for the parent/guardian, in consultation with the player, coach and Trainer if required. Although the relevant Trainer and Coach may be consulted concerning this issue, any decision must ultimately be made by the player's parents/guardian.
- (d) During a game the Trainer together and parent/guardian are responsible for player safety.
- (e) In the event of an injury, coaches and team staff must be guided by the Trainer and the player's parents/guardians concerning the player's capacity to play the game. Any decision concerning this issue must ultimately be made by the player's parents/guardian together with the Trainer.
- (f) No medication, spray or medical treatment (excluding basic first aid such as ice or stretching) should be administered without the express consent of a parent/guardian, unless in the case of an emergency. To avoid doubt this does not include minor and routine assistance to a player such as stretching/rub down/ice assistance for a muscle strain or similar type of injury which may be provided as a matter of course and without the need for consent of the player's parents/guardian.
- (g) The cost of transportation and/or medical treatment is the responsibility of the parent/guardian.
- (h) Any player who is sent to an hospital for treatment as a result of an incident at a game or training, must provide a medical certificate stating that they are fit to play, prior to resuming training / playing.
- (i) All injuries are to be reported to the Trainer in the first instance and all serious injuries (i.e. those that may require medical treatment) should be reported to the Team Manager who should then inform the Club Secretary at [secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au](mailto:secretary.junior@blackburnfc.com.au) within 24 hours.

- (j) Team managers are provided with accident forms in their kits. If the Coach or Trainer is concerned about a player's fitness they may require the player to provide a medical certificate stating that they are fit to play, prior to resuming training / playing.

### **15.3. CONCUSSION**

- (a) BJFC adopts a conservative, medically guided approach to concussion management and strictly aligns with the EFNL's Concussion Policy, which adopts the AFL's national policy: Management of Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football (See Annexure A).
- (b) In particular, the Club adopts the key AFL concussion management principle, namely "If in doubt, sit them out." The most important element in the management of concussion is the welfare of the player in the short and long term.
- (c) Any player who suffers a concussion or suspected concussion as a result of an incident at a game or training, must not return to the field and must follow the Concussion protocols contained in the AFL's Concussion management Policy (See Annexure A).
- (d) If a coach or trainer suspects a player may have suffered a concussion at a game or training, they must require the player to provide the teams trainer a medical certificate stating that the player is fit to play, prior to resuming training / playing. The trainer will be required to advise the coach.
- (e) Any player who suffers a concussion or suspected concussion away from the field must provide the coach or trainer with a medical certificate stating that the player is fit to play, prior to resuming training / playing.
- (f) The priority for players is the successful return to learning and school before returning to playing.

### **15.4. MOUTHGUARDS**

- (a) Players must wear a properly fitted mouth guard at all training sessions and matches.
- (b) The Club organises for mouth guards to be fitted and purchased prior to each season. This is usually held on Junior Clubs Registration Day.
- (c) Team managers are supplied with one 'boil and bite' mouthguard. Any player who forgets their mouth guard may use it , provided they agree to replace it with a new mouth guard prior to the next game.

### **15.5. HELMETS**

- (a) Helmets are mandatory for players in the Under 8s – Under 12s teams.
- (b) In Under 13s to Under 18s, helmet use is optional. Players "playing up" an age group are strongly encouraged to wear helmets.

### **15.6. EXTREME WEATHER**

- (a) TRAINING
  - i. When weather is inclement the coach will decide if training is to proceed and coaches will always defer to player safety. The coach should cancel training if they believe that weather conditions are unsuitable.
  - ii. If lightning is present at the commencement of training then training will not proceed until the lightning dissipates and it is considered safe. Parents should feel free to withdraw their children at any time.
  - iii. In conditions of extreme cold, heat, or inclement weather, parents are encouraged to exercise discretion in deciding whether their child should participate in training. The final decision rests with the parent or guardian.
  - iv. Selection in the team for matches will be in accordance with the Club's Team Size and Selection Policy at section 6 and Game Time (Rostering and Rotation) Policy at section 8 of this Handbook.

- v. Cancellation of training or non-attendance due to severe weather conditions shall not be a factor in selection.
- vi. Parents are encouraged to remain at training and games, especially in times of extreme weather.

(b) GAME DAY

- i. BJFC adheres to the guidelines in the AFL Handbook and the Match Cancellation – Adverse Weather Conditions guidelines as detailed within the EFNL By-Laws (See Annexure A).

## **15.7. GROUND SAFETY**

(a) GROUND SAFETY AT TRAINING

- i. The Coach is responsible for assessing field and weather safety.
- ii. If conditions are not safe, i.e. due to poor ground conditions, excessive heat or inclement weather, alternative arrangements (e.g. indoor training in a clubroom) can be made, or training may be required to be cancelled.
- iii. Parents are expected to remain at training for all junior teams.

(b) GROUND SAFETY ON GAME DAY

- i. The Coach is responsible for assessing field and weather safety.
- ii. If conditions are not safe, they should first consult with their Team Manager and then the Coach and Team Manager of the opposing team to discuss the matter.
- iii. If the Coach still considers that the conditions are not safe, they should immediately raise the matter with the Field Umpire  
Note: The EFNL does not give the umpires the responsibility of determining whether an oval is fit for play.
- iv. If unresolved the Coach or Team Manager should immediately contact the Club President or a member of the Executive Committee who will liaise with the EFNL.
- v. The Club will fully support a Coach who determines and can demonstrate that the conditions are unsafe for football.
- vi. A parent or guardian may determine that the conditions are not safe for their child and withdraw them from the game without fear of recrimination.

## **15.8. TRAINERS AND DRINK CARRIERS**

- (a) In accordance with Section 14 of the EFNL By-Laws (refer to Annexure A), each team must have one (1) qualified trainer present for the full duration of all matches. The minimum accreditation requirements for each age group are contained in the EFNL By-Laws.
- (b) All other trainers are required to complete a recognised senior first aid course (e.g. Sports First Aid, St Johns or Red Cross). Details regarding the qualification of trainers can be obtained from the Eastern Football & Netball League Trainers Association.
- (c) Each team is permitted to have a maximum of three (3) drink carriers. The minimum age for any person acting as a drink carrier is 15 years of age.
- (d) Further obligations in relation to the accreditation and conduct of Trainers and drink carriers, including on-field access and safety protocols, are detailed in Section 14 of the EFNL By-Laws (see Annexure A).

## 16. SMOKING & ALCOHOL POLICY

**Blackburn Junior Football Club seeks to provide a safe and healthy environment for its players and spectators.**

### 16.1. NO SMOKING POLICY

- (a) BJFC is strongly opposed to smoking at all Football activities and is committed to the Smoking rules as pursuant to the EFNL's By-Laws.
- (b) In accordance with the EFNL By-Laws, smoking is strictly prohibited:
  - i. while inside the playing arena, change rooms, clubrooms or coach's box while a match is in progress;
  - ii. within 10 metres of the playing arena during all matches; and
  - iii. while coaching, officiating, volunteering or in the presence of children at club activities.
- (c) BJFC strongly discourages smoking at all junior football matches and events. While the Club respects individual choice, it prioritises the wellbeing of children and members by minimising exposure to passive smoke.
- (d) All persons associated with the Club must comply with these requirements. Breaches will be managed in accordance with the Club's Dispute Resolution Policy (see Section 14 of this Handbook).
- (e) The Club may adopt the following response to enforcement:
  - i. Initial Approach: It will be assumed the person is unaware of the policy. A Team Manager or Committee Member will politely request they stop smoking and inform them of the policy.
  - ii. Verbal Warning: If the offence continues, then a member of the Committee will verbally warn them and remind them again of the Club's No Smoking policy. The offending patron must also be made aware that if they don't stop smoking then they will be required to leave the Club's facility.
  - iii. Removal: If the offence continues then the patron will be escorted out of the facility by a Committee Member/Senior Club Official.
  - iv. Disciplinary Action: The Club may suspend any Club official, volunteer or Committee Member who continues to breach the policy and they will be subject to disciplinary action.

### 16.2. ALCOHOL POLICY

- (a) BJFC is strongly opposed to the consumption of alcohol at junior football activities, including games and training sessions. We are committed to enforcing alcohol related rules under the EFNL By-Laws and the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998, as regulated by the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation.
- (b) In accordance with these obligations, alcohol consumption is strictly prohibited:
  - i. anywhere within the reserve during junior games while matches are in progress;
  - ii. while on the ground during training nights held at BJFC facilities or at any other venue; and
  - iii. while fulfilling a duty of a coach, official or volunteer; and
- (c) BJFC permits the service of alcohol only at approved social events, and strictly under the following conditions:
  - i. in accordance with liquor licensing requirements;
  - ii. not served to persons under 18 years of age or those intoxicated; and
  - iii. in a manner that upholds the responsible service and community safety.

- (d) All persons associated with the Club must comply with these requirements. Any breaches should be reported and will be managed in accordance with our Dispute Resolution Policy (see Section 14 of this Handbook).
- (e) The Club may adopt the following response to enforcement:
- i. Initial Approach: Assume that the person is unaware of our Alcohol Policy. A Team Manager or a member of the Committee will approach the person breaching the policy and politely ask them to refrain from drinking alcohol and advise them of our Clubs Alcohol Policy.
  - ii. Verbal Warning: If the offence continues, then a member of the Committee will verbally warn them and remind them again of the Club's Alcohol policy. The offending patron must also be made aware that if they don't comply then they will be required to leave the Club's facility.
  - iii. Removal: If the offence continues then the patron will be escorted out of the facility by a Committee Member/Senior Club representative.
  - iv. Disciplinary Action: The Club may suspend a team official, match day official or committee member who continues to breach the policy.

## ENDORSEMENT

|                            |                                                         |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>POLICY REVIEWED BY:</b> | Mr Simon Henry– BJFC President                          |
| <b>Review Date</b>         | July 2025                                               |
| <b>POLICY RATIFIED BY:</b> | Blackburn Junior Football Club Executive Committee 2018 |
| <b>RATIFICATION DATE:</b>  | 20th November 2018                                      |

## EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the Policy Owner will:

- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, policy, research and best practice.
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy.
- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness.

# ANNEXURE A – SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

## 1. Policies and Guidelines

- [\*AFL Laws of the Game\*](#)
- [\*AFL Community Football Handbook\*](#)
- [\*AFL Concussion Management Resources\*](#)
- [\*Australian Football League Rules\*](#)
- [\*AFL Community Football Gender Diversity Policy\*](#)
- [\*AFL Gender Diversity Policy – Companion Guide\*](#)
- [\*AFL Social Media Policy/Guidelines for Local Clubs\*](#)
- *BJFC Child Safe Policy*
- [\*EFNL Incorporated By-Laws\*](#)
- [\*EFNL Code of Conduct\*](#)
- [\*EFNL Football Operations Junior Handbook\*](#)
- [\*EFNL Vilification and Discrimination Policy\*](#)

## 2. Applicable Legislation

The following legislation is specifically referenced within this Policy Handbook. This list is not exhaustive and does not limit the application of any other State or Commonwealth legislation that may govern conduct of BJFC members, officials, players or volunteers:

- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998* (Vic)

## ANNEXURE B – BJFC CURRENT KEY PERSONNEL

Currently the Executive is made up of the following:

| Role                       | 2025          | Function                                        |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| President                  | Simon Henry   | Leadership, Policy                              |
| Vice President             | Matt Rowe     | EFNL negotiations, TM Support, President backup |
| Community Engagement       | Sharyn Berry  | Child Protection officer, Welfare Manager       |
| Treasurer                  | Sally Webb    | Finances                                        |
| Secretary                  | Sarah Fulton  | Committee operations & meetings, Club contact   |
| Football Director – Junior | David Fakhry  | Football Management & Strategy                  |
| Head of Team Managers      | Aleesa Altube | Team Management                                 |

## ANNEXURE C – BJFC CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct outlines appropriate standards of behaviour by adults towards children. By applying to volunteer or coach with BJFC, I acknowledge that I have read, understood and agree to always abide by the Child Safe Code of Conduct.

The Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for abuse or harm to occur. It also helps staff and volunteers by providing them with guidance on how to best support children and how to avoid or better manage difficult situations. This Code of Conduct applies to all people involved in the activities of the Blackburn Junior Football Club, including coaches, officials, administrators, volunteers and parents/guardians.

All coaches and volunteers are responsible for promoting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by:

- Adhering to our [Player Safety policy](#), Child Safeguarding Policy and the EFNL's Code of Conduct and all relevant policies as detailed within this document.
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- Treating everyone with respect, including listening to and valuing their ideas and opinions.
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers and being inclusive.
- Respecting cultural, religious and political differences and acting in a culturally sensitive way, particularly when interacting with children who are Aboriginal or otherwise culturally or linguistically diverse and those with a disability.
- Modelling appropriate adult behaviour.
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately.
- Reporting and acting on any breaches of this Code of Conduct, complaints or concerns appropriately and treat them seriously and with respect.
- Complying with our guidelines on physical contact with children.
- Working with children in an open and transparent way – other adults should always know about the work you are doing with children.
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families, and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know.

Coaches and volunteers **MUST NOT:**

- Seek to use children in any way to meet the needs of adults.
- Ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- Use prejudice, oppressive behaviour or language with children.
- Discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, culture, vulnerability or sexuality.
- Initiate unnecessary physical contact with children or do things of a personal nature that children can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes.
- Develop 'special' relationships with specific children or show favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
- Exchange personal contact details such as phone number, social networking site or email addresses with children, except where necessary for a football related purpose such as availability to play or train.
- Have unauthorised contact with children and young people online or by phone.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to the Blackburn Junior Football Club.