



**Airport West
Football Club**

Policy Handbook

2021



Dear Valued Members,

May I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the Airport West Football Club for season 2021

In 2020, we bore witness to an historic year with the corona virus pandemic affecting us all in ways we could never have imagined. I would like to thank the Airport West Football Club community for the way it responded to the government directions and measures around the COVID 19 health crisis. It was a challenging time for all of us; for some it has been more difficult and trying than for others.

The light is at the end of the tunnel now and we are returning to a semblance of normality that will allow us all to bounce back. Whilst it was frustrating and saddening not to have a footy season we knew that we all had a part to play to eradicate the virus. And we all had a part to play to ensure that our footy club is bigger, better and stronger in 2021.

As the elected President, I am excited to report that many new and positive ventures have already begun to ensure that the immediate future of our Club is a great one.

The Airport West Football Club has a long and proud history. The Senior and Junior sections of the club work harmoniously with each other, each respecting the other's contributions to the success of our wonderful Club. To this end, we see ourselves as one entity, working together to achieve our goals.

The Airport West Football Club is a democratic organisation in that all the decisions and ideas for development are passed through the General Committee. The committee is made up of volunteer members who work together for the enhancement of the club. Please feel welcome to approach a current committee member or me if this is an area you would like to become involved in.

The Policy Document that is being provided here is the product of considerable hard work and research by past Committees and the Committee of 2021. It comes with the support of the Executive and General Committee. You can be assured that this policy will be upheld in all matters throughout the upcoming season, so that harmonious and transparent leadership is exercised.

We look forward to much success on and off the field in season 2021. We thank you for your resolute commitment to your Club.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline McShanag

Pauline McShanag
Airport West Football Club President

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1. Mission Statement

The Airport West Football Club shall endeavour to teach each child the skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to conduct themselves as a team player and to experience every facet of football and to participate in a safe, friendly and disciplined environment. We encourage a family-oriented Club, where all families are welcomed and encouraged to volunteer and participate to their capacity. We encourage the values of respect, honesty, integrity, teamwork and community.

2. Club Code of Conduct

2.1 Expectations of Coaching Staff

Preamble

Through Airport West Football Club, we strive to teach and support our youth not only on the football field, but to be strong community citizens. To do this we are committed to modelling best behaviour, underpinned by our values set out in our Mission Statement.

Equality of Opportunity

The spirit of equity is that all players have the same opportunity to develop and enjoy their football. All juniors should have fun playing football at the same time as improving their skill, fitness and teamwork.

Professional Conduct

- We actively promote a positive atmosphere
- We address our players in a controlled and positive manner
- No offensive language or cultural, sexist or racist references will be tolerated
- Coaches are not to involve themselves in negative dialogue with the opposition, coaches, officials, players, spectators or umpires
- Coaches and team managers are responsible for the conduct of their officials, players and parents and should ensure that all behave in a responsible manner, actively respecting umpires and officials, in conjunction with match day officials
- Coaches are required to report to the committee, any official or spectator who they feel is behaving in a manner which is contrary to the ethos of our Club.

Role of the Coach

- The development of all players' skills, knowledge and attitudes.
- To acknowledge that all players are unique and have their particular strengths and weaknesses, which need to be addressed and built upon.
- To positively support and encourage players for their efforts helping to build self-esteem

2.2 Coaches' Code of Conduct

- Abide by the laws and rules of the game
- Teach the rules of AFL (as set out on <http://www.afl.com.au/laws>)
- Group players to best care for their welfare
- Give all players equal opportunity to develop
- Maximise fun
- Maintain that we aim to do our best and be our best whether we win or lose
- Always stress safety first
- Consider maturity level of players
- Devise training programs to suit all
- Develop team respect – opponents, umpires, coaches and each other
- Keep up to date with coaching developments
- Attain Coaching Accreditation and regularly update knowledge and skills
- Avoid derogatory language

2.3 Officials' Code of Conduct

- Remember you are representing your club/league and setting an example to players and parents
- Try to resolve any conflict in a calm, sensible manner (wherever possible, do this in private)
- Be aware of potentially volatile situations at all times and be prepared to deal with them appropriately

2.4 Players' Code of Conduct

- Actively promote the encouragement of team mates
- Play by the laws and rules of AFL
- Do not argue
- Control your temper
- Be a team player
- Be a good sport
- Treat all players fairly as you would like to be treated
- Cooperate with coaches, team mates, opponents, officials and umpires
- Play for fun and improvement
- Respect and show appreciation to coaches and other volunteers

2.5 Parents' and Spectators' Code of Conduct

- Always encourage your child
- Encourage participation but do not force people
- Teach "striving to be our best - not necessarily the best"
- Encourage to always play by the rules and accept the umpire's decision at all times

- Never ridicule mistakes or yell at a child for making mistakes or losing
- Remember, players involvement is for their enjoyment, not yours
- Remember that children learn by example always encourage and applaud both teams
- Recognise positively the contribution of volunteer officials, coaches and administrators
- Never publicly disagree with officials. Raise issues privately
- Never interact with a player or official of any team in an abusive or threatening manner
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse and discrimination. Settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
- Support your club officials to foster high standards of behaviour for your club and the league
- If a Parent/Guardian has an issue they wish to raise with a Club Official, please do so in a manner consistent with Club policy as per section 10.2 Grievance procedures or 10.3 Issue Resolution Policy
- If a parent/spectator acts in a manner inconsistent with this code of conduct the Club reserves the right to take action against the parent/spectator as deemed appropriate

3. Club Policies and Procedures

At the very core of our Club is the maintenance of equality and opportunity to play football. This has a profound impact on the self-esteem of the child, the development of their skills, fitness and understanding of the game. To this end, three significant policies have been developed and implemented that have become mandatory.

3.1 Player Rotation and Selection Policy

24 players are able to play each week (U8, 10, 12, 14, 16). If team lists exceed these numbers, some players will be required to be rostered off each week during the season. If possible, Coaches and Team Managers should give parents and players the opportunity to advise in advance, any times of unavailability to ensure these games missed are counted as games rostered off. It is expected that players will be rotated equitably, with preference given to 2nd year players. Again, an accurate record of player selection is required and dates when players are rostered off.

3.2.1 Team Selection Policy

The ultimate aim of the club is to nurture players who love the game and improve their skills. Each player is encouraged and developed to realise their full potential as a footballer. As part of the process of developing junior footballers it is important that players are selected into teams that best suits their needs.

As such the Club in Under 8, 10, 12, 14 & 16 will be selected into teams on the basis of age. The oldest 24, or complete team, will form the first team the next 24 the second team and so on. This is the principle rule in selection in these age groups however in some circumstances there may be a variation to this rule guided by the coaches and approved by the Junior Committee.

For Under 16 players will be graded by the coach and coaching coordinator with a view to developing players' ability. The Junior Committee will oversee the process based on the development of players and teams.

When the selection process has been ratified the club encourages players and parents not to focus on which team a player is selected into, but rather, on the player's development. It is important parents are supportive of the club and most importantly their children during the selection process.

There will be an ongoing review of the system to assure players remain in their appropriate level.

3.2.2 Women's Football

Airport West Football Club will field an open age Women's team in 2021. We are striving to maximise participation at all levels for Women and Girl footballers. We are committed to ensuring that women and girls are encouraged to play the game and participate at all levels in the club.

3.3 Playing Time

Our aim is to equally share playing time and exposure to a variety of positions. Ideally each player, up to and including the lowest U14 graded team, should receive a minimum of 3 quarters per game. This may vary depending on injuries, issues of player discipline, player availability and player fitness levels.

It may be necessary at the U16 graded level for some players to receive more game time. This may be due to a player being considered for selection for a higher competition or higher grade teams.

Note that this policy is reviewable at the discretion of the Junior Committee.

3.4 Finals Selections

It is generally recognised that finals football is different from the home and away season. The policy will be based on the following principles:

- An opportunity for as many players as possible to experience finals football
- An understanding that player selection and playing time for individual players gives the team the best possible opportunity to do well.
- Positions don't necessarily need to be rotated, this will be left to the coach's discretion.
- Players from the club's other teams will not be used to substitute players who have played in the side for the year.
- Ideally a player will receive a minimum of half a game
- An understanding that the policy will provide coaches in the U16's a greater scope for varying player time than those at the younger levels.

4. Club Committee and Contacts

Refer to the Airport West Football Club website or see the attached sheet for this information

5. Coaches Contacts

Refer to the Airport West Football Club website or attached sheet for this information.

5.1 Club and Team Functions

All functions organised by the Club or a Coach/Team Manager must have the official approval of the Committee. Any Coach planning to take his/her team out for an activity or event other than a game or training must have Club approval.

5.1.1 Individual Team Sponsorship

Any Coach/Parent/Team Manager planning on obtaining individual team sponsorship is very welcome to do so. To ensure that these sponsors are looked after by the club, registered by the Club and all correspondence sent to them, official approval must be given by the Committee, prior to the sponsorship being agreed upon.

5.2 Presentation Day

The presentation day for each division will be held on a date determined by the Committee. All awards will be presented at this function. Date and details of the evening will be advised accordingly.

Awards for all teams, apart from Auskick and Under 8's, are as follows;

5 special awards in addition to participation awards are:

- 1st Best and Fairest
- 2nd Best and Fairest
- 3rd Best and Fairest
- 4th Best and Fairest
- 5th Best and Fairest
- Coaches Award
- Most Improved

Coaches cannot dictate which awards will be provided nor will they have the authority to purchase extra awards.

5.3 Team Photographs

Team photographs are usually done in the early part of the season. It is expected that all players, coach, runner, first aid, assistant coach and team manager should be in attendance. Team and individual photographs are available for purchase. They need to be paid for either through your team manager or through the person assigned to organise Payment information and details will be distributed before the event.

6. Training Arrangements

At the beginning of each season, representatives from the Committee will direct Coaches as to when and where training will take place. The two ovals for use are Etzel St and Hansen Reserve. Coaches are to conform with these training venues and times. If a coach wants to change a training venue for any reason they must seek approval from the Director of Coaching or a representative of the Committee.

6.1 Sharing of Grounds and Timing of Training

The grounds are unavailable for training after 6pm on senior training nights. These nights are generally Tuesday and Thursday. Junior nights will generally be Wednesday and Friday nights between 4pm and 6 pm. Times will be staggered so that there is room for all teams to train.

Pre-season training may be different to these times. Notice and information will be distributed prior to the commencement of pre –season training.

7. Voting and Awards

7.1 Voting Procedure

Calculation of Best and Fairest Awards U10's, U12's, U14's & U16's. The Team Manager will hand out 3 vote cards to parents who wish to participate. It is important that Team Managers advise vote givers the importance of voting procedures and that the votes should go to the best and fairest players on the field that day for AWFC – not the child that played better than expected.

- Completed vote cards to be kept in a sealed envelope by the Team Managers and handed to the Club Secretary as required at the end of each round.
- It is not mandatory but recommended that Team Managers and runners do not vote on a regular basis. Coaches should complete a card each week.
- The five highest vote recipients for the season will receive awards and these are to be kept confidential until announcement at the junior presentation evening.

7.2 Awards to be presented

The best five players for each team will receive special awards on Presentation night. Participation awards will also be handed to every junior player. Thank-you gifts will be presented to Coaches and Team Managers. This, along with two SPECIAL general junior awards is the extent of the club's commitment.

7.2.1 General Junior Awards

The Ian Butler Award (most outstanding junior):

This award is to be discussed and voted upon by the Executive Committee in consultation with the coaches, it is generally awarded to an U16 player.

The Angelo Gentile Award (player playing above their natural ability):

This award is to be discussed and voted upon by the Executive Committee in consultation with the coaches, it is generally awarded to an U14 or U16 player.

7.3 Counting Votes

It is mandatory that the counting of votes is done between the Team Manager, the Coach and the appointed Executive Committee members. Votes are to be kept confidential.

8. Coaching Resources and Development

8.1 Coach Accreditation

To coach within the league, it is mandatory that all coaches are accredited as Level One Coaches. As a club we endorse this policy and expect the club will cover all costs incurred in Level One Accreditation.

Coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue higher levels of accreditation. The club will support coaches in this activity and may assist with the expenses of such an endeavour. Contact the Club Secretary for details.

8.2 Coach Re-accreditation and Professional Development

To remain accredited coaches are expected to be actively coaching, members of CoachAFL and attend professional development meetings. The club sees the coaches as the face of the club and strongly endorses this policy. As such the club may meet the costs involved in these expectations.

Membership to CoachAFL

Annual membership will be covered by the club. Membership entitles coaches to regular coaching magazines, access to resources provided by CoachAFL and seminar nights. Contact the Club Secretary for details.

Seminar Nights

Seminar nights are normally held each year. Presentations are of a very high standard and cover various areas of coaching. All coaches have their entry to these nights covered. It is highly recommended that all coaches attend.

Club Coach Meetings

The club will conduct coaching meetings throughout the year, Coaches shall attend these meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to address issues relevant to coaching at AWFC and share resources amongst the coaches and maintain a level of consistency among the coaches.

8.3 Coach Appraisal

The coaching coordinator will be responsible for giving feedback to the coaches from time to time. AWFC will use its resources to assist coaches with coaching assessments.

9. First Aid and Health and Safety Requirements of Players.

It is a requirement that all first aiders are accredited to level 1 and or the level determined by the affiliated league – (EDFL under direction from AFL Victoria).

Any training required will be covered by the club. If a person benefits from first aid training it would be hoped that person would assist in first aid duties for a number of years or while their child was participating at the club.

The club is responsible for maintaining the first aid kits to the required standard. Any extra first aid needs to be passed on to your appointed first aid person with instructions.

The Junior club has an Asthma management policy and procedure that may be obtained from the committee on request. It is a requirement of all players to wear a mouthguard during a game and recommended they are worn during competitive training.

10. Special Needs/Grievance Procedures

10.1 Dealing with Special Needs of Players

As a coach you may become aware that one or more of your players have special needs, apart from obvious physical needs such as skill deficiencies. The other needs may fall into three categories; educational, emotional and social.

Educational Needs

Not all students learn in the same way or learn at the same rate. Some students have “special learning problems” that makes it very difficult to learn using traditional teaching and coaching methods. It is important to be aware of any learning difficulties that a player in your team may have. Modify your presentation of information in an attempt to accommodate these players learning needs.

Emotional and Social Needs

From time to time players may exhibit uncooperative behaviour that negatively affects training and coaching. Often this can be put down to adolescent behaviour and nothing more needs to be done, however such behaviour could be indicative of a more serious emotional or social problem that the player maybe experiencing. It is in the best interest of the coach to spend time communicating with the player in an environment free from tension to ascertain if there are social or emotional issues that are affecting the child's behaviour. As coaches it is not our role to solve such issues but we play a very important role by being a significant adult in this person's life, prepared to talk and communicate with the child, in a supportive environment where a common interest exists, that being football. The club has access to a large support network for your people who are experiencing difficulties within their lives. Professional advice for our coaches is available online to deal with such situations and many professional services are available.

10.2 Grievance Procedures

At times parents may have issues that concern them and/or their child. The Executive Committee of the club has addressed a number of areas that they believe are significant in the coaching and management of players. This has resulted in the production of policies and procedures associated with team selection, player rotation, game time, and finals selection. These policies have been made very public in an attempt to educate parents and make them fully aware of how coaches are expected to act in regards to these areas.

In the event of a grievance being raised by parents in regard to these areas, or other areas of concern, the following steps should be observed:

- under no circumstances, are parents/guardians to approach a coach on game day to resolve a matter
- A grievance must be raised in writing either in a letter or email addressed to the Executive Committee. In this situation the coach will be informed of the concern raised. It is then hoped that a resolution to the issue will occur, based on the clubs relevant policies and procedures.
- If no resolution is arrived at the President of the Club or his/her committee appointee will be required to mediate and give binding direction to the parties involved.

10.3 Issue Resolution Policy

Airport West Football Club requires that all issues are resolved to the satisfaction of the members and the Committee in a timely fashion. Accordingly, the following issue resolution procedures have been developed to enable this objective to be fulfilled. All members have a responsibility to participate in a reasonable way and behave responsibly in accordance with the club's code of conduct. The procedures below detail the level of involvement for expediting issue resolution.

If the issue is football related the issue should be raised with the team manager or coach, then escalated to the Junior Vice President or Junior Coordinator.

If the issue is of a general nature it should be raised with the Executive Committee.

Where possible the person reporting the issue should make suggestions that may resolve the issue. As soon as possible after an issue has been reported the team manager, the coach and Junior Vice President and the claimant must meet and try to resolve the issue.

Where the initial parties cannot resolve the issue, it shall be referred back to the Executive Committee as soon as possible.

11. League Rules

The EDFL has relevant rules. These can be obtained from the EDFL website: www.essendonaf.com.au

12. Volunteering and Match Day

12.1 Parent/Carer Involvement

The club relies on continual parent support to ensure all official duties are carried out. These positions are either match day officials or official club appointments.

12.2 Match Day Officials

The Team Manager organises the following match day positions:

- goal umpire
- umpires escort
- boundary umpire
- runner
- first aid
- time keeper
- water carriers
- canteen duty – if this or other positions can't be done please inform team manager and organise a swap or replacement.

A roster will be drawn up at the beginning of the season. If a parent wishes to volunteer for a position on a permanent basis that will be accommodated where possible.

12.3 Official Club Appointments

There are four positions that need to be sanctioned by the Executive Committee:

- coach
- team manger
- runner
- first aid

In the event that a team needs to appoint a person to one of these positions the person's details need to be submitted to the Executive Committee prior to the appointment being made. Details include accreditations, certifications and Working With Children Checks.

12.4 Procedure for the Management of Reported Players

It can be a very traumatic experience for a junior player to be involved in a reported incident. The club will endeavour to support the player throughout the event to minimize the impact.

The Coach and team Manager need to manage the situation in a calm and supportive manner. It is the responsibility of the two officials to remove the player from the field and speak to the player in a calm manner while pointing out the outcomes of such an incident.

- a. The officials need to ensure players on the bench remain calm to guarantee an incident is not exacerbated
- b. The officials need to ensure supporters in particular parents of the reported player remain calm and don't incite further incident.
- c. The officials need to ensure all the details of the incident are immediately noted as it may be required at a tribunal
- d. After the game a discussion needs to occur in consultation with the player and parents outlining the timing and actions to be taken.
- e. The Junior Vice President needs to be advised of the report and an Official Advocate be appointed to attend the tribunal and assist with the case
- f. The player will be supported at the tribunal whether they are on report or on the receiving end of a report.

12.5 Match Day Procedures

- Arrive at the ground at least one hour before game time.
- First team of the day must use the Ground check list which is to be signed by the Team Managers of both competing clubs before being handed to the umpires before the commencement of the first game of the day.
- EDFL umpires are instructed not to start play unless this form is signed off.
- Fill out the team sheets if you have not been able to the night before. Make sure it is signed. Mark off the players who will not be playing.
- Engage parents to complete Match DAY JOBS:
 - goal umpire
 - umpire escort
 - boundary umpire
 - runner
 - first aid
 - time keeper
 - water carrier

These duties are easier to complete if a roster is set up at the beginning of the season.

- Fill volunteers' names in on match day sheet

On Home Games, complete the following:

- Take 2 match balls to umpires before the game, original signed team sheet to umpires 15 minutes prior to game
- Swap team sheets with opposition
- Hand out vote cards to three people compile list of voters for each game
- Fill in goal cards after noting goal kickers
- Retrieve match footballs
- Provide time keepers sheet to umpire
- Take I pad/tablet to umpires to complete required on line documentation
- Collect vote cards from three people place in sealed envelope hand to Secretary or place in safe
- Team managers must enter all match results on Gameday by 6.00pm (5.30 Sundays) – goals and best players by midnight

On away games, complete the following:

- Give umpire the team sheet
- Fill in the umpire report sheet
- Swap team sheets with opposition
- Hand out vote cards to three people compile list of names
- Collect vote cards from three people place in sealed envelope hand to Secretary or place in safe
- Team managers must enter all match results Gameday by 6.00pm (5.30 Sundays – goals and best players by midnight

13. Property Management

13.1 Coaches Property

- Training balls – as determined
- Training hats/markers
- Coaches magnetic folder/board
- Tackle bags etc. to be shared among divisions
- If you require other equipment please contact the Director of Coaching
- All property/equipment is the responsibility of the respective coach and team manager to maintain and secure

13.2 Team Manager's Property

Official garments:

- One white coat with flags (goal umpire)
- White bib and whistle (boundary)
- White pants (black bib)
- 1 x Yellow Match Day Official Vest
- 1 x blue vest (umpire escort)
- 1 x yellow vest (runner)
- 2 x green vests (water)

- 3 x red vests (match officials)
- 2 x drink bottle holders
- 1 x football pump

Club jumpers:

- All team jumpers remain the property of AWFC
- Each team should have a set of jumpers
- Keep an accurate record of jumper numbers and update this regularly throughout the season
- No jumpers are to be taken home by players. A jumper washer is assigned at the end of each match. All jumpers go to that person for washing and are returned as a set the following week

First Aid Kit:

- A full and complete first aid kit needs to be kept with the Team Managers property throughout the season.

14. Player List

To ensure that the maximum numbers of players are exposed to the participation of football within the AWFC and in the interests of all players obtaining adequate playing time, there has been a limit placed on team lists. While not expressively wishing to turn players away from playing the game, at AWFC we see the best interests of football being best served by allowing participation in the game.

Criteria of preference will be given to:

- Children who have played the last 2 seasons with AWFC
- Children with older siblings who have a current family participation in the Club
- Children who are past players of AWFC.

15. Personal Medical Insurance

All EDFL Clubs are now required to take out costly public liability insurance which basically covers the Club and its employees. These policies are specifically written for sporting clubs such as ours. The club's policy does not cover out of pocket expenses. However, we believe that it is in your child's best interest to have your own personal medical insurance as a backup. All players play at their own risk and acknowledge that Australian Rules Football is a contact sport where injuries may occur from time to time.

The Club urges all families to seek their own personal medical insurance including Ambulance cover.

16. Working with Children Check

All volunteers working in any capacity with children will need a "Working with Children Check". These can be obtained on line at <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/> Team Managers need to ensure that all volunteers have a Working with Children's Check. These details need to be provided to the Secretary.

17. Child Safety Standards

Each AFL Victoria Affiliate is required to nominate a Child Safety Officer who would be the initial point of contact for any report. This will be communicated via our regular social media platforms and children will be informed that the Child Safety Officer is someone to speak to if they feel unsafe. Details about the 2021 Child Safety Officer will be posted.

The Club will ensure that it upholds the AFL Victoria Child Safe Standards which can be found at: <http://www.aflvic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/2017-AFL-Victoria-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf>

AWFC Junior Football Policy (edited for season 2021)

