

WEST PRESTON LAKESIDE FOOTBALL CLUB

**JUNIOR POLICY
&
HANDBOOK**

Approved by WPLFC Committee on 13 December 2016 and thus to be implemented and adhered to from that date until changed by the Committee.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION, OUTLINES & MISSION STATEMENT

1. WPLFC CODE OF CONDUCT

Roles and expectations of Coaches, Players, Parents, Spectators

2. WPLFC JUNIOR PLAYER MANAGEMENT

Selection and Rotation Policies

Reports & Investigations

3. WPLFC JUNIOR TEAM MANAGEMENT

Team Entries

Training Guidelines

4. WPLFC JUNIOR PLAYER REGISTRATION POLICY

5. EQUIPMENT & PROPERTY

6. AWARDS

7. PLAYER HEALTH & SAFETY

Medical Notifications, Injuries & Treatment

Parental Responsibilities

Insurance

8. ALCOHOL & DRUG POLICIES

9. WPLFC COMMITTEE, TEAM & EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Club Contacts

NFL Contacts

Appropriate Contact Procedure with NFL

10. BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS, DIFFERENCES & SUPPORT

11. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

12. WPLFC OFFICIAL APPOINTMENTS

13. MATCH DAY PROCEDURES & DUTIES

14. VARIATIONS OF HANDBOOK GUIDLINES & POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

The West Preston Lakeside Football Club (WPLFC) provides an opportunity for the Youth of the Reservoir and Preston area, 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, their Parents & Guardians, Relatives, Friends and Supporters.

We have developed a strategy which is designed to achieve this aim. It is built around FOUR Key Themes :

- Participation
- Development
- Governance
- Community

Underpinning this are our Core Values :

- Fun
- Fairness
- Respect
- Commitment

The Club has developed a set of Policies & Practices that are designed to reinforce these Values and ensure that the Club continues to develop as one of the best Clubs in the Northern Football League (NFL).

The Policies ensure that the Club operates in a fair and transparent manner.

These Policies should be read and adhered to in conjunction with the Constitution of the WPLFC, the Rules of the NFL, and the Rules and Ordinances of Local, State and Federal Governments.

By registering to play with the WPLFC a Player, along with their Parents, Guardians and Supporters agree to abide by the Club's Policies. In accepting their various Official Positions, all Coaches, Team Managers & Club Officials agree to abide by the Club's Policies.

While the Policies provide a comprehensive management framework, it is possible that matters may arise which are not covered by existing Policies. In these cases, the WPLFC Committee shall exercise the right to adjudicate and rule on such matters.

Any variation to the Policies requires the approval of the WPLFC Committee. Any suggestions regarding the Policies should be referred to the Club Secretary.

WEST PRESTON LAKESIDE FOOTBALL CLUB JUNIOR MISSION STATEMENT

At WPLFC our stated mission is to :

- Provide a Safe and Friendly Environment for Junior Footballers to Learn the Fundamentals of Playing Football as a Member of a Team, and to Improve Both as Individuals and as a Team.
- Provide an Environment Where Junior Players Enjoy Playing Football
- Develop Team, Club and Community Spirit.

Remember

*We are all responsible for our behaviour, words and actions. Whilst we cannot control what others do, **we can control what we do** - and this should be the underlying premise of everything that we do and how we react to the situations and events that arise.*

The WPLFC is a multi-cultural Club and it welcomes and encourages people of all ethnic groups, all genders and of all abilities to be part of our Club. We aim to provide a safe, caring and enjoyable environment where people of all abilities, genders and ethnic group can play football and be involved in the Club and local community.

1. WPLFC CODE OF CONDUCT

PREAMBLE

The WPLFC has along and proud history in Junior Football. Through our Club we endeavour to teach and support our Youth not only on the football field, but also in their daily lives. In order to achieve this we need to be committed to **modelling** the types of behaviours and qualities that we espouse.

Club Expectation of Coaching Staff

- To most Players & Parents, Coaches are the “face” of the Club and must therefore act in a manner that that is fitting of such a position.
- Coaches need to be fully aware of the Club, League and Governmental Policies & Procedures and to follow these Policies & Procedures.
- At a minimum, Coaches must be Level One Qualified.
- **Coaches are not to coach the same group of players, or the same age group for more than three years.**
- Coaches must model exemplary behaviours at all times.
- Attend any meetings as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Junior Football Coordinator and/or the Club Committee.
- Should expect to undertake an appraisal process with the Coaching Coordinator and/or Junior Football Coordinator. It is expected that this will include feedback and be a positive and enhancing process.

The Role of the Coach as a Teacher

- To develop the skills, knowledge & attitudes of all Players
- To provide a healthy, disciplined atmosphere that focuses on continual Individual & Team Improvement.
- Acknowledge that all players are unique and have their particular strengths and weaknesses which need to be addressed.
- Positively support and encourage Players for their efforts in order to build self esteem.
- To teach Players how to work within a Team Plan, follow instructions, be disciplined and responsible.
- To implement a range of training drills that are relevant to the age group and skill of the players.

Code of Conduct - WPLFC Coaches

Coaches of WPLFC Teams -

- Must always address Players in a controlled and positive manner.
- Must not use sexist, racist or culturally offensive language.
- Must not involve themselves in negative dialogue with opposition coaches, officials, players, spectators or umpires.
- In conjunction with Team Managers, are responsible for the Conduct of their Players & Officials.
- Are required to report to the WPLFC Committee, any Player, Official, Parent or Spectator who they believe are behaving in a manner that may reflect badly upon the WPLFC as soon as is possible after the event.
- Must abide by, teach and promote the Laws & Rules of the Game and our Club.
- Are to prioritise enjoyment before winning.
- Should avoid overplaying talented players just to win.
- Must ensure the safety and welfare of all Players under their charge.
- Are encouraged to keep things in perspective and encourage others to do so as well-remember the age of the Team.
- Must model appropriate behaviours in respect of opponents, umpires & officials.
- Should endeavour to communicate with Players' Parents about their child's progress and areas that require improvement with suggestions as to how this can be attained.
- Must not consume alcohol prior to, or during training or matches.
- Must not smoke during during or matches.
- Should endeavour to keep up with current & new practices and to attend Development Course & Seminars.
- Should keep a training log, and a record of games/quarters played by each player.

****** All WPLFC Coaches must sign the Club's Code of Conduct for Coaches.**

Club Expectation of Players

- Players must always act in a manner that reflects positively upon themselves, their family & friends and the WPLFC.
- Players need to be fully aware of the Club, League and Governmental Policies & Procedures and to follow these Policies & Procedures.
- Players must show the appropriate respect for Club Coaches, Team Managers & Officials at all times when they are associated with the Club.

Code of Conduct - WPLFC Players

WPLFC Players -

- Must play by the rules of the game.
- Are not to argue with Coaches, Team Managers, Team-mates, Officials, the Opposition or Umpires.
- Are to comply with all Rules & Policies of the WPLFC & the NFL.
- Must aim to improve their skills and contribute to the improvement of their team.
- Are to treat all other members of the WPLFC in a Fair & Respectful manner.
- Must comply with any instruction given by an Official of the WPLFC.

****** All WPLFC Players must sign the Club's Code of Conduct for Players.**

Club Expectations of Parents, Guardians & Spectators

- Parents, Guardians & Spectators must always act in a manner that reflects positively upon themselves, their family & friends and the WPLFC.
- Parents, Guardians & Spectators need to be fully aware of the Club, League and Governmental Policies & Procedures and to follow these Policies & Procedures.
- Parents, Guardians & Spectators must show the appropriate respect for Club Coaches , Team Managers & Officials at all times when they are associated with the Club.
- Be in attendance at all training sessions and matches.
- Take an active role in their child's participation by taking on official and supporting roles for their team.

Code of Conduct - WPLFC Parents, Guardians & Spectators

WPLFC Parents, Guardians & Spectators should -

- Encourage participation but not force it
- Teach that honest effort is the victory, not the winning.
- Encourage an understanding of the Rules by showing a genuine interest.
- Never ridicule mistakes or defeats
- Remember that you are there to support your child's enjoyment.
- Leave playing instructions to the Coaches.
- Lead by example and respect all Coaches, Players, Spectators, Officials & Umpires.
- Personally recognise all volunteers.
- Never publicly criticise Coaches, Officials, Players or Umpires. Raise any concerns calmly & in the appropriate setting.
- Use appropriate language as deemed by WPLFC & NFL Policies.
- Remember that we are setting examples for children in all we do and act appropriately.

******* All WPLFC Parents & Guardians must sign the Club's Code of Conduct for Parents & Guardians.***

2. WPLFC JUNIOR PLAYER MANAGEMENT

PREAMBLE

The WPLFC believes in the Spirit of Equity, wherein every Player has the the same opportunity to develop and enjoy their Football. Whilst implementation of this spirit may vary from age-group to age-group, **it is inherent that every effort be made to ensure that all players have the opportunity to play as much football as possible in relation to the number of games played, the time spent on the ground and the position(s) played whilst on the ground.** All players must be on the ground prior to half time and preferably by the beginning of the second quarter. Players should be rotated through different positions to facilitate their involvement and development. It is inherent in this policy that, especially in the younger teams, the team should be managed so that all players have equal game time on the ground.

Match Day Selection Policy

- Teams are to be selected in accordance with NFL & WPLFC Rules and Policies.
- Where Team numbers exceed the number that can play, the Coach & Team Manager are to develop a Roster whereby all players are rotated equitably. A record of this roster should be kept by the Coach and/or Team Manager.
- A suspended player should not be considered to be “rostered off.”

Match Day Rotation Policy

For U9, U10, U11 & U12 Teams -

- Every effort should be made to ensure that all players have the opportunity to play as much football as possible.
- It is mandatory for all players to play at least three quarters on the ground each week.
- Should there be more than 24 players allowed to play, it is mandatory for all players to play at least two quarters on the ground.
- All Players must be on the field by half time and preferably by the beginning of the second quarter.
- Players should be rotated through differing positions each quarter in order to expand their knowledge of the game and positional play, as well as giving all players an opportunity to be equitably involved in the game.
- In cases where equity is not possible every week (eg less than 24 players), The on-ground equity should be accomplished over a period of two-three games.
- In order to facilitate and formalise this approach, Coaches and/or Team Managers should keep a record of the number of quarters and games played by each player.
- It is important to keep these records in order to quickly resolve any grievances that may arise in implementation of this policy.

For U13, U14, U15, U16 & U17 Teams -

- Every effort should be made to ensure that all players have the opportunity to play as much football as possible.
- It is expected that all players to play at least three quarters, or close to, on the ground each week.
- All Players must be on the field by half time and preferably by the beginning of the second quarter.
- Players should be rotated through differing positions in order to expand their knowledge of the game and positional play, as well as giving all players an opportunity to be equitably involved in the game.
- In cases where equity is not possible every week (eg less than 24 players), The on-ground equity should be accomplished over a period of two-three games.
- In U16 & U17 age groups the Coach will have greater discretion in relation to playing times whilst acknowledging that a degree of equity is still desirable.
- In order to facilitate and formalise this approach, Coaches and/or Team Managers should keep a record of the number of quarters and games played by each player.
- It is important to keep these records in order to quickly resolve any grievances that may arise in implementation of this policy.

Finals Selection & Rotation Policy

It is generally recognised that finals football is different to the normal season and that it is reasonable, within certain guidelines, for Teams to aspire to some success in the Finals and for Coaches to select and manage their Team accordingly.

For Teams in Finals the following Guidelines will apply -

- The opportunity for as many players as possible to experience Finals Football.
- An understanding that player selection, position and playing time gives the team the best opportunity to win.
- An understanding that the Guidelines will provide Coaches in U13-U17 a greater scope for varying the playing time of individual players than for U10-U12.
- In the event of a Team playing in one Final, 24 players will be selected.
- In the event of playing in two or more Finals, all players will play in at least one Final game.
- In U10, U11 & U12 Finals, all players will play at least two quarters, and be on the ground prior to half time.
- In U13 - U17 Finals the Coach will have greater discretion in relation to playing times whilst still acknowledging that a degree of equity is still desirable.

NFL Reports & Investigations

It can be a very traumatic experience for a Junior Player to be reported or to be the victim of a reportable incident or to be involved in an official NFL Investigation. The Club will endeavour to ensure that the distress associated with such an event is minimised and will provide as much appropriate support as it can. To ensure that this happens, the following needs to occur :

The Coach and the Team Manager need to manage the situation in a calm and supportive manner. Often a report may occur as a result of a heated incident. It is the responsibility of our two Club Officials to ensure :

- The Player is removed from the playing arena so that the Coach is able to talk to the Player 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 at hand.
- The reported Player must leave the ground, and should be escorted from the ground by the Team Runner.
- That supporters, and in particular the Parents of the reported Player, remain calm and do not incite a further incident.
- Ensure that all details of the incident are immediately noted as this may be needed as evidence in a subsequent tribunal appearance.
- After the game, the Coach and the Team Manager, in consultation with the Player and Parents (if they are able to contribute in a positive and constructive manner) will discuss the timing and actions to be taken.
- **Unless the Coach and Team Manager feel that the report is trivial or unfair, it is highly recommended that the Player accept the Set Penalty offered by the Umpire(s). The reasoning for this recommendation is that the vast majority of reports are proven at the Tribunal and the penalty is greater than the Set Penalty.**
- The Club Secretary needs to be notified of the report and the decision of the Coach & Team Manager regarding the acceptance of the Set Penalty.
- If the case is to go to the Tribunal, the Secretary will then contact the Junior Football Coordinator, who will then commission the services of the Club's Official Advocate.
- The Advocate will then take charge of the defence. It is expected that the Coach will still take an active role in support of the Player.
- It is an NFL Rule that Parents are not to attend Tribunal Proceedings.
- In the event of a WPLFC Player being required to give evidence, then the outlined procedures will take place (with the exception of the Set Penalty).
- A Player who is required to give evidence also needs to receive the appropriate support from the Club and It's Officials.
- WPLFC Players, whether reported or witnesses, are expected to act in an honest and respectful manner.

In addition to NFL sanctions :

- Disciplinary Action may be imposed by the Club upon any individual/player associated with the Club if found guilty by the NFL or the Club Committee with respect to misconduct or bringing the game into disrepute.
- This action may be taken even if a report has not been made.
- In certain circumstances the Club may impose penalties or suspensions outside or in addition to the the NFL Tribunal. These decisions will be at the discretion of the Committee.
- **All incidents and outcomes should be recorded and filed by the Club Secretary.**

NFL Penalties & Fines

- A player who is suspended is not eligible to be selected for play for the duration of the suspension.
- A player who is suspended should not be considered as rostered off.
- **Players and their Parents are liable for the payment of any fines imposed on them or the relevant Team by the NFL.**
- If the NFL issues the fine to the WPLFC it is expected that the Player and/or Parents will fully compensate the Club.
- An unpaid fine will be considered as a debt to the Club.
- The Player cannot play for the Club until the fine is paid.
- The Club will not re-register a Player in a future season until the fine is paid.
- The Club will not approve a transfer to another Club until the fine has been paid.
- A Player who has been reported is ineligible to receive a match day award or any votes for the Best & Fairest on that day.
- A suspended Player is ineligible to receive an end of season Club award.

3. WPLFC JUNIOR TEAM MANAGEMENT

- The Primary aim of playing football in the U9-12 age groups is to learn to play the game and enjoy doing so, to improve individually and as a team and to learn the values and ethos of being in a Team and a member of a Club.
- Winning or losing is secondary to the development of children as footballers, people and Team members.
- If there are enough players for two or more teams, players will be divided into two teams under the directions of the Club Committee and Junior Football Coordinator taking into account the abilities of individuals and the group as a whole, any relevant family issues, as well as the grading policies of the NFL.
- It is a Club priority to field teams in the U15 & U17 divisions.
- The Committee of the WPLFC may impose a limit on the number of registrations accepted by the Club in any age group in accordance with its Policies of participation, equity and taking into account the manageability of its Teams.

Training

- It is expected that all Players will attend training sessions and endeavour to do their best and to treat each session as an opportunity to improve.
- Coaches are expected to implement and develop varied and relevant training drills that enhance the opportunity of both the Team and Individuals to improve and perform at their best.
- It is recommended that U9-U12 Teams should train once per week. Pre-season training should commence no earlier than six weeks before Round One.
- U13-U17 can train up to twice a week at the discretion of the Coach.
- U13 & U14 should not commence pre-season training earlier than eight weeks before Round One
- Pre-season training for U15-U17 Teams may commence at a date determined by the Coach in association with the Junior Football Coordinator.
- Arrangements for training days, venues and times will be negotiated by the Junior Football Coordinator and the Team Coaches.
- Training may be cancelled or the venue changed if the Coach, Junior Football Coordinator, Club Committee or Local Council deem that it is dangerous or undesirable to use the facilities.
- Coaches may organise alternative training activities and venues as they see fit. However they must take into consideration the age of the players and any inherent dangers that may arise and cater for these concerns. The Coach should seek Committee approval for any such alternative arrangements.
- It is expected that each Junior Team will have Senior Players allocated to it to assist with training and be part of a Mentoring Program. The arrangements and style of this program will be made at the direction of the Club Committee. All Teams are required to cooperate with this initiative.
- **It is expected that Parents/Guardians will be in attendance for training (and matches). Ultimately it is the Parents/Guardians responsibility for the safety of their children.**
- Whilst the Club and its Officials accept responsibility for the safety of registered Players, it is unreasonable to expect that this responsibility extends any longer than ten minutes prior to the commencement of training (and Games) and ten minutes after the conclusion of training (and Games).

Team Functions

- The WPLFC Committee may provide funding for Team Functions as it sees fit.
- These arrangements should be made clear to all Coaches, Team Managers, Players and Parents as soon as is practicable in the season.
- If Teams wish to organise their own functions, they should take into consideration the age of the players, the appropriateness of the activity and any inherent dangers that may arise and cater for these concerns. In addition they must seek approval of the Committee.
- A Presentation Day/Evening will take place at the end of the Season at a time and date set by the Club Committee.

Team Photos

- Team Photos will be taken at a date and time deemed appropriate by the Committee.
- This date and time should be arranged in order to attain maximum attendance.

Team Sponsorship

- As a general rule, individual Teams cannot receive sponsorship that sees it have more funds or resources available than other Club Teams.
- Offers of sponsorship must be directed to the Sponsorship Committee/coordinator.
- Under exceptional circumstance the Committee may vary this part of the Club Policy.

4. WPLFC JUNIOR PLAYER REGISTRATION POLICY

Player List & Maximum Team Numbers

- To ensure that the maximum numbers of Players are exposed to a fair and equitable participation time, the WPLFC has placed a limit on the number of registrations that it will accept in any age group. **This number is set at 26 Players.**
- Whilst not seeking to turn children away from the WPLFC, the Club sees the value in each Player being able to have a realistic chance of playing every match and playing the amount of time specified in this Policy.
- In order to implement this Registration Policy the following criteria of **Priority Registrations** shall apply :
 - First Preference will be given to Players who played with WPLFC in the previous season and who register by the advertised date for this criteria. This date should be advertised and be prior to the Club Registration Day.
 - Children with siblings already playing with WPLFC and Children whose Parents are Past Players or Volunteers of the WPLFC who register by the date advertised for this criteria.
 - Anyone who wishes to register with WPLFC.
- After the expiration of Priority Registrations, further registration applications will be taken in order of application irrespective of the criteria above until the set limit has been reached.
- If numbers exceed the designated limits, the Committee will make decisions based upon the above criteria and the location of the Child's residence.
- Registrations received in excess of the set limits will be deemed to be "late registrations" and placed on a waiting list in order of lodgement.
- Notwithstanding the above, the Committee may vary this Policy in exceptional circumstances as it deems fit.
- The Committee may also vary this Policy if it realistically anticipates enough registrations to field more than one Team in an age group.
- The Committee will set dates for Priority Registrations as soon as is applicable each year.

Membership Fees & Finance

- Membership and game fees, levees and bonds will be determined by the WPLFC Committee on an annual basis.
- Players are ineligible to play for WPLFC unless they are financial members.
- Flexible payment strategies can be arranged at the discretion of the Committee.
- Discounts may be offered at the discretion of the Committee.
- Players will not be eligible to play until they are financial members of the WPLFC.
- A player who has not paid any fines imposed by the NFL or the WPLFC will be considered unfinancial and thus ineligible to play.
- The WPLFC will not provide a clearance to any player who has an outstanding debt to the Club.

Registration Process

- The Committee will establish dates for priority and subsequential registrations as it deems fit and appropriate.
- The Committee will open registrations as soon as is practical after NFL opens registration process.
- The registration process will be posted on the Club's media outlets.
- The Committee will set Registration dates for Priority Registrations - previous season's players, players with siblings already at Club, and family of past players/volunteers. These dates should expire before the Club's Registration Day.
- Previous season's players should be notified of the registration arrangements for the coming season and the cut off date of priority registration. All other information should be posted on the Club's media outlets.
- **In order to register on time, all players will need to register & pay on line.**
- Registrations will be processed in the order that they are received until the limit is reached.
- Registrations will only be accepted by the Club Secretary or the Club Registration Officer.
- Registrations from new players will not be processed until the expiry of the Priority Registrations. The Committee, in consultation with the relevant Coach, will deem whether new players will be offered a place.

Age Groups, Gender, Mixed Abilities.

- In accordance with NFL Rules a player must attain the age of seven years by the 30 April of the playing season in order to register with the Club.
- **For safety and developmental reasons, all players must register in their correct age group.**
- **Any player who has previously played in an older age group will not automatically be permitted to play in an older age group in a subsequent year.**
- Players will only be allowed to play in an older age group under exceptional circumstances and at the invitation of the Committee.
- The Committee will review applications to play in an older age group and make decisions based on a case by case situation. The Committee decision is final.
- The WPLFC actively encourages young people of both genders to play Football.
- The WPLFC actively encourages children of mixed abilities to play football when it is safe to do so.

5. EQUIPMENT & PROPERTY

- All Players are responsible for taking care of the Club's facilities and equipment and are liable for any damage incurred.
- Whilst the WPLFC takes great care in providing for safety of Players personal belongings, it is the responsibility of Players to take care of their own equipment and property. Equipment and property should not be left unattended in change rooms or any other facility.
- The WPLFC will provide each Player with a Club jumper. This jumper must be cared for and returned to the relevant Team Manager by Presentation Day. Lost and unreasonably damaged jumpers will incur a replacement cost.
- The Club may require a fully refundable deposit for jumpers if it deems this to be necessary.
- Premiership Players may be able to **purchase** their jumper from the Club at replacement cost.
- At the discretion of the Committee, other items such as training tops and Club shirts, may be provided to Players.
- All Club property must be returned by the Presentation Day at the end of season.

6. AWARDS

- Club Awards need to be fair and reflect and reward effort.
- In U9 & U10 awards will be given for participation, effort and encouragement inline with the Club's Policy and at the discretion of the Coach.
- In the U11 - U17 age groups Awards will be given to the first, second and third in the B&F count.
- In addition, three other awards may be given at the Coach's discretion. These awards should reflect the qualities being recognised in the player and be consistent with the Club and Team objectives.
- An award may be made to the best player in the finals.
- Voting for the B&F Player shall be 5-4-3-2-1, 5 being for the best player.
- Two vote cards will be completed each game. One by the Coach and the other by a responsible adult.
- Note that votes must be given to the best players, not some one who has played better than normal. i.e. the best five players for the team get the votes.
- The counting of votes should take place after the last normal season game and results forwarded to the Secretary.
- The Committee may make special awards and presentations as it deems fit.
- Coaches & Teams may have weekly awards. These should reflect the objectives and outcomes of the Club and the relevant Team. Funding **may** be available at the Committee's discretion.

7. PLAYER HEALTH & SAFETY

The WPLFC seeks to provide a safe playing environment for its players and spectators. This is an important responsibility and requires the cooperation of Club Officials, Players and Parents/Guardians. All have a role to play in the provision of a safe and bring environment, and all have responsibilities for this provision.

Medical Notification

- At the start of each season every Player must submit a medical form.
- The Player & Parents/Guardian must advise of any conditions that would place the player at risk or that could impede the ability to participate.
- The medical forms are to be retained by the Team Manager and destroyed at the end of the season.
- Players & Parents/Guardian must notify the relevant Coach, Team Manager & Trainer of any changes in circumstances that could place the Player at risk.

Parental Responsibility

- **At least one Parent/Guardian of each Player is expected be in attendance at training and during games in order to attend to any off site medical attention that their child may need. The welfare of Players is ultimately the responsibility of Parents/Guardians.**
- If Parents/Guardians cannot be in attendance, they should ensure that another designated and responsible adult is in attendance that will take care of their Child. The Coach, Team Manager & Trainer need to be made aware of this arrangement and it is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to inform them.
- Parents need to be aware that whilst a qualified trainer is present during games, this is not the case at training.
- Coaches and Team Managers must make sure that Patents?Guardians are aware of these requirements.

Injuries - Processes, Prevention, Responsibilities

- There may be occasions during the season when injuries occur.
- **All Teams must have a Qualified Trainer in compliance with NFL Rules.**
- The cost of transportation and medical treatment is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian.
- Any Player who is sent to a hospital as a result of an incident in a game or at training must provide a medical certificate stating that they are fit to play in order to be eligible for selection.
- All injuries are to be reported to the Trainer in the first instance. Serious injuries (those that may require medical treatment) should be reported to the Team Manager who should in turn inform the Club Secretary.
- If a 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 or train.
- Any Player who suffers a **concussion** as a result of an incident at training or during a game must not return to the field.
- If a Coach or Trainer suspects that a Player may have suffered a concussion at training or during a game, they must require the player to provide a medical certificate stating that the Player is fit to train and play.

- Any Player who suffers a concussion or suspected concussion away from the football environment must provide the Club with a medical certificate stating that they are fit to play and train.
- In order to lessen the chance of injury, Coaches have the responsibility to ensure that all Players are adequately warmed up and prepared for training and matches.
- **Players are recommended to wear a mouthguard at all training sessions and during games.** The Club insurance policy does not cover injuries incurred if a mouthguard is not worn. The Club will endeavour to organise for the fitting and purchase of mouthguards.
- The Club will provide First Aid kits to all Teams. Trainers may purchase replacement and top up items and will be reimbursed by the Club.
- The WPLFC will cover the cost of attaining any relevant Training Qualification Levels.

Extreme Weather

- When the weather is inclement the Coach will decide if training is to proceed and will always defer to player safety.
- A Coach should cancel training if s/he believes that weather conditions are unsuitable.
- If lightening is present at the commencement of training then training will not proceed until the lightening dissipates. Players & Coaches should seek shelter. Parents/Guardians should take their children home if they think this is the safest option.
- When the weather is extremely cold or inclement, or extremely hot, Parents/Guardians should decide if they want to subject their children to training in such conditions. The decision ultimately rest with the Parents/Guardians.
- Parents/Guardians should always be present in cases of inclement weather.
- Selection for teams will not be influenced by such decisions.

Ground Safety

- The Coach and Team Manager should satisfy themselves that the ground and weather conditions do not pose a threat to the safety of the Players.
- If the Coach or Team Manager considers that conditions are not safe, they should consult firstly with the Coach and/or Team Manager of the opposing Team to discuss the matter. An attempt to find a solution should be made.
- If the Coach or Team Manager still feels conditions are not safe, the issue should be raised with the umpire.
- If the matter still cannot be resolved, the Coach or Team Manager should contact the Club President who will lease with the NFL.
- The WPLFC will fully support a Coach or Team Manager who determines and can demonstrate that conditions are unsafe for football.
- Parents and Guardians may determine that conditions are not safe for their child and withdraw the Player from the game without fear of recrimination.

Insurance

- The WPLFC has some limited cover.
- In the case of an injury the Player should inform the Coach or Team Manager immediately.
- **All Players, Parents/Guardians are encouraged to have their own medical cover and insurance that also covers the cost of an ambulance.**

8. ALCOHOL & DRUG POLICY

- The WPLFC totally supports the Policies of the NFL and Local, State and Federal Governments in regards to the consumption of alcohol at Junior Football and the use of other drugs in the Football environment.
- The WPLFC has disciplinary procedures in its Constitution that may be used to deal with persons who do not cooperate with the implementation of these Policies.
- It is the responsibility of every one connected with the WPLFC to be aware of the Policies.

In particular it is noted that :

- The Victorian Government has banned smoking at outdoor sporting venues during Under Age events and within 10 metres of playgrounds and Sporting Buildings/Facilities.
- A total prohibition on alcohol consumption at all Under Age Football venues applies during all Junior games and up to thirty minutes after the conclusion of the last game.
- There is a total prohibition of alcohol on and around the ground during Junior training sessions.
- The use of illegal drugs will not be tolerated.

In addition, the following guidelines apply :

- Coaching staff must not smoke whilst they are engaged in coaching the Players.
- Support Staff must not smoke whilst in the presence of children on the ground.
- Parents & Supporters are encouraged to refrain from smoking whilst at Junior Games & Events.
- Smoking is not allowed in the clubrooms, change rooms, coach's box or on the ground.
- The use of alcohol by Coaches as outlined in the Coaches Policy applies, and should also apply to any other Club Official.
- Alcohol may be served responsibly and in accordance to Liquor Licensing Rules at Social Events.

9. WPLFC COMMITTEE, TEAM OFFICIALS & EMERGENCY CONTACTS

The Club will publish, and keep up to date, a list of Committee Members, Team Coaches & Officials, and Emergency Contacts on its media outlet sites.

In regards to making any contact with the NFL or its representatives the Committee will deem who is/are the appropriate people to deal with and make contact with the NFL. No one associated with the WPLFC is to make contact with the NFL without the knowledge and approval of the WPLFC Executive.

Parents, Coaches and Players are not to initiate any contact with the NFL without WPLFC Executive approval, which will only be given in exceptional circumstances.

If there is an issue, it is most important to go through the appropriate and properly designated member(s) of the WPLFC Executive.

10. BEHAVIOURAL NEEDS, DIFFERENCES & SUPPORT

- The WPLFC is aware that many of its Players may have special needs in terms of their behaviour & learning, their social and emotional well being and their physical and mental abilities and health.
- The Club aims to provide a safe, caring and enjoyable environment for all its Players and Supporters.

With this in mind :

- Everyone should be aware that not all players will learn and progress at the same rate or under the same conditions.
- Consequently drills and practices should be varied & modified to cater for all Players needs.
- It is important that all Coaches and Players are aware of the needs of their Team mates and act and cooperate accordingly.
- There may be occasions when players exhibit uncooperative behaviour(s) that negatively effect their development and training & coaching. Often this behaviour may be “normal” adolescent behaviour and can be dealt with accordingly.
- In some cases however, such behaviour could be indicative of a more serious problem that the Player may be experiencing. Coaches and Officials should make time communicating with the Player in an environment free of stress in an attempt to ascertain if more serious issues are evident.
- Whilst it is not the Coach/Official’s role to solve these issues, they certainly have a role to play in alerting other relevant persons (eg parents) and in playing a supportive and leading role.
- The Club has a large social network and connections that can be used to assist in these matters.

11. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

- The WPLFC seeks to ensure that any issues or concerns raised are resolved in an open, honest, timely and amicable manner to the satisfaction of all parties wherever possible.
- The WPLFC has specific resolution procedures in its Constitution.
- Whilst it is desirable to reach outcomes and resolutions that are of satisfaction to all parties, it is acknowledge that this may not always be the case. The decisions and rulings of the WPLFC Committee or its Representative(s) are final.

Raising a Concern

- Any person wishing to raise a concern should direct the concern as follows -
 - Football Team Related : direct the concern to the Coach, Team Manager or Junior Football Coordinator.
 - Issues of a General Nature : direct the concern to a member of the WPLFC Committee.
- The following procedures are guidelines, and acknowledge that in some instances personal knowledge and relationships, and common sense also have an important role to play.

Football Team Related

- If there are any concerns regarding the Coach (or any other official), Parents/Guardians should inform the Team Manager and where possible speak directly to the Coach about the concerns in a calm and reasonable manner.
- No one should confront a Coach whilst training or a match is in progress.
- If the issue unable to be resolved to all persons satisfaction, the issue should be referred to the Junior Football Coordinator.
- If a Coach or Official has a concern relating to a Parent/Guardian they should try to establish and maintain an open line of communication. It is advisable that this be done in the presence of the Team Manager. Do not let the situation get heated.
- If the issue is unable to be resolved to all persons satisfaction, the issue should be referred to the Junior Football Coordinator.
- If a Coach has an issue with a Player they should talk directly with the Player and express the concerns. Sometimes these concerns are best raised in the presence of a Parent/Guardian.
- If the issue unable to be resolved to all persons satisfaction, the issue should be referred to the Junior Football Coordinator.
- In all issues, the age of the Players should be taken into account when raising and solving concerns.

Concerns Involving Other Clubs

- If a Player, Parent/Guardian, Spectator or Official has a concern about the behaviour of a Player, Official or Spectator from another Club, they must first raise the issue with the relevant WPLFC Team Manager, who will attempt to address the concern by speaking to the Team Manager of the other Club.
- If the issue cannot be resolved, it should be referred to the Secretary of the WPLFC for consideration and appropriate action as deemed by the Secretary and/or Committee.
- Irrespective of the outcome, all complaints should be officially noted to and by the Club Secretary.
- Likewise, if a representative of another Club wishes to raise a concern about any Player, Official or Spectator from WPLFC, it must be raised to the relevant Team Manager, who will attempt to address the issue with the Team Manager of the opposing Club. No one else should respond to any concerns raised by connections of other Clubs.
- If the issue cannot be resolved, it should be referred to the Secretary of the WPLFC for consideration and appropriate action as deemed by the Secretary and/or Committee, and provided for in the WPLFC Constitution.
- Irrespective of the outcome, all complaints should be officially noted to and by the Club Secretary.

Concerns/Issues of a General Nature

- Issues of a General Nature can be directed to any Member of the Committee, who may - if they feel able - attempt to resolve the issue in an informal manner. Regardless of the outcome, the Secretary of the Club should be notified.
- The Club Secretary shall act as the Club's Complaints Officer.
- All issues and concerns not informally resolved should be referred to the Secretary who will act in accordance with the provisions of the Club Constitution.

12. OFFICIAL WPLFC APPOINTMENTS

In each team the following positions need to be appointed and sanctioned by the WPLFC Committee

- Coach
- Assistant Coach(es)
- Team Manager
- Medic/Trainer

Other Match Day Officials can be appointed by the Team Manager, and should be suitable and responsible persons who can carry out the role in a competent manner.

13. MATCH DAY PROCEDURES & DUTIES

The Team Manager

- The role of the Team Manager is paramount to the smooth running and success of every team. It is the pivotable role for every team and carries many responsibilities. It is the duty of the Team Manager to ensure that all appropriate match day appointments and procedures are carried out.
- It is recommended that people do not act in the capacity of Team Manager for more than three years.
- The duties will be clearly outlined in writing to Team Managers but can include the following:

Before the Game

- Appoint Match Day Officials & issue appropriate identification and equipment
- Collect or print out Official NFL Team Sheet. Ensure all Players sign the sheet and pay the weekly match fee. Ensure all Officials are listed.
- Liase with Opposition Team Manager
- Distribute B&F Vote Cards
- Deliver Team Sheet to Umpire(s)
- At home games, provide two footballs to the umpire(s)
- At home games, ensure Umpires have drinks during breaks.

During the Game

- Keep record of goal kickers
- Ensure smooth functioning of Coach's Box and bench.

After the Game

- Collect all equipment from Officials
- Obtain "all clear" from Umpires
- Complete appropriate paper work and ensure it reaches the correct location
- Liase with Opposition Team Manager

Match Day Officials

- It is expected that all Parents/Guardians will assist in Official Capacities and other roles during the season. Sometimes this may be on a rostered basis. Parents/Guardians must remember and acknowledge that they are not only parents in these situations, but representatives and ambassadors of the WPLFC and should act in the appropriate and outlined manner.

Match Day Officials & Duties can include, but not necessarily confined to the following :

- Team Manager
- Umpire Escort
- Goal Umpire
- Boundary Umpire
- Time Keeper
- Scoreboard Attendant
- Medic/Trainer
- Water Persons
- Runner

The duties of these Officials is reasonably self explanatory (detailed descriptions are available from NFL). These Officials are to wear the appropriate identification as prescribed by the NFL.

If in any doubt as to the duties and responsibilities, refer to the NFL regulations and/or consult with a member of the WPLFC Committee.

14. VARIATION OF HANDBOOK & POLICY GUIDELINES

As indicated throughout this Handbook, the WPLFC Committee has the authority to vary aspects of the Guidelines and Policies if under exceptional and/or appropriate circumstances it deems it appropriate to do so.

However, any variations must be minuted by the Committee with an explanation for the variation. In addition, any variation must have a stated time caveat that cannot extend beyond the season in which the variation was made.