

Age policy

Minimum age – playing

NAB AFL Auskick Program – To participate in the AFL Auskick program children must turn 5 years of age in that calendar year.

AFL Junior – To participate in a fixtured AFL junior match children must turn 7 years of age in that calendar year.

Minimum age – umpiring

NAB AFL Auskick Program – Children should be provided with the opportunity to learn about and experience the role of the umpire. Developing a sense of fair play, respect for laws of the game and others is important and should be encouraged and practised by parents and AFL Auskick volunteers.

AFL Junior – In general the minimum age a child should umpire is 13. In addition, they should be supported where possible by a mentor who has completed the AFL's Umpire Mentor Program.

Competition age range

Where player numbers do not permit conducting a competition in every age group the AFL policy recommends that children participate in competitions with a two-year age span e.g. staggered age groups 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18. The AFL policy recognises in regional and rural areas the opportunity to conduct competitions with a two-year age span is not always possible. Where leagues and clubs have trouble fielding teams reducing player numbers is recommended (9-12 a side).

If a league has no alternative than to conduct competitions that involve players participating outside the recommended two-year age span they must firstly seek approval from their state football body. In these instances, coaches should endeavour to match players by age and ability level.

Playing down an age level

Junior leagues may at their discretion grant a player permission to play down an age level where a legitimate reason exists such as physical capacity or disability. Players seeking exemption need to provide relevant medical evidence for assessment by the controlling body. If no relevant medical evidence can be provided, the controlling body will determine the application for exemption as it sees fit, fully considering the circumstances presented.

Playing up an age level

The AFL policy acknowledges the principal role of the parent or guardian in determining if a player should play in a higher age competition than the one determined by the player's chronological age. Players should only be permitted to play up an age level when their physical capacity and social sense enable them to compete adequately at the higher age level. The decision whether a player should play up beyond the two-year age span should be based on the advantages to be gained by the player.

Prior to a player participating in a competition outside the recommended two-year age span, the player's parent or guardian must sign a consent form.

