

St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club



Policies and Guidelines

August 2025

St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club (SPMJFC) Incorporated

ABN 16 896 263 931

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Contact details

Club name: St Paul's McKinnon Junior Footy Club (SPMJFC)

ABN: 16 896 263 931

Postal Address: PO Box 718, Bentleigh East, Vic 3165

Ground and clubrooms: McKinnon Reserve, Corner Tucker and McKinnon Roads, McKinnon

Email: secretary@stpaulsjfc.com.au

Website: www.stpaulsjfc.com.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stpaulsmckinnon>

Twitter: @stpaulsmckinnon

Definitions

Committee: The elected committee members of the St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football club (see full listing on club website)

Football Manager: Manage the operations of the Football Department

Football Department: Administer the day-to-day running of the Club's on field activities and to provide support and training for all Club coaches and officials

Modified Rules: Competition played by age groups U8 - U10 with modified rules

SMJFL (The League): South Metro Junior Football League

The Club: St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club (SPMJFC)

Club philosophy

Our Club exists to provide opportunities for all local children to improve their health and enjoy playing Australian football with their friends, in a safe and inclusive environment. Every member of our Club - players, coaches, parents and/or guardians, and volunteers - strives to contribute to a positive atmosphere.

Our Club will only be as good as all of us make it. SPMJFC does not only develops our children's physical and football skills but also teaches important social skills that could last a lifetime, such as teamwork, confidence, facing new challenges, and respect for others.

We understand that children and their teams will develop these skills at different rates, and their progress depends on the cooperation from everyone at the Club. Every player at our Club will be given plenty of game time if they attend training and show commitment to improvement.

We appreciate that without the support of club volunteers, umpires, league officials and people from other clubs, we will have no games to demonstrate these skills.

SPMJFC also provides opportunities for parents and/or guardians and family members to be positively involved in their children's social lives, build their local community and their own circle of friends.

Club policies

The Club policies contained in this document have been approved by the St Paul's McKinnon JFC Committee for the 2025 season and will be reviewed annually (or as required) for future seasons.

Code of Conduct Policy

MANDATORY AND ENFORCEABLE CODES OF CONDUCT FOR PLAYERS, PARENTS AND/OR GUARDIANS, SUPPORTERS AND OFFICIALS

The St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club fully supports the Codes of Conduct as introduced by the AFL and AFL Victoria.

Players' code of conduct

- Play by the rules - the rules of your club and the laws of the game.
- Never argue with an umpire or other official - without these people, you cannot play football.
- Control your temper - verbal abuse of officials and sledging other players does not help you enjoy or win any games.
- Be a team player - it is a team game; treat it that way.
- Treat all players as you would like to be treated - fairly.
- Co-operate with your coach, the umpires, and teammates.
- Play for your own enjoyment and to improve your skills.
- Do not make comments based on race, religion, cultural background, gender, sexuality, appearance, disability or football ability. You will let down your coach, teammates, family, and yourself if you do and many such comments are illegal.

Parents and/or Guardians and Supporters code of conduct

- Remember that you are there for the participants to enjoy the game.
- Encourage participation, but do not force it.
- Teach that enjoyment is more important than winning.
- Never ridicule mistakes or losses - supporters are there to support, not degrade.
- Lead by example and respect all players, coaches, umpires, and spectators - physical or verbal abuse or intimidation will not be tolerated.
- Recognise all volunteers who are giving up their valuable time.
- Never publicly criticise umpires; raise personal concerns with club officials in private.
- Do not make comments based on race, religion, cultural background, gender, sexuality, appearance, disability or football ability. You will let down your family and yourself if you do and many such comments are illegal.
- Direct all concerns about behaviour or the team through the Team Manager and, if required, through the Club committee - not directly to the SMJFL (follow the proper channels).
- A parent and/or guardian will always be in attendance, or they will appoint a responsible adult to act on their behalf (who accepts this responsibility) to always supervise the care of their children, including training, game days, and social functions.
- The parent(s) and/or guardians are responsible for their children's behaviour, welfare, and make decisions about their treatment in the event of an injury, in consultation with medical/first aid personnel.

- Agree that the parent(s) and/or guardians (or the adult responsible for the care of your children) will undertake rostered duties on game and training days as required by the Club.

By registering with the St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club, we agree to abide by these principles. We support the Club in its undertakings and encourage the Club to take any necessary disciplinary actions, including the suspension and banning where warranted, of any players, parents, guardians and/or spectators for repeated or serious breaches of these Codes of Conduct. (See Clause 7 of our Constitution, available on our website, for potential consequences of breaching this Code of Conduct, e.g. fines, suspension or expulsion.) We agree to reimburse the St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club for any fine levied on the Club attributable to actions in breach of this Code of Conduct. The Club will also adhere to the SMJFL's official Compliance procedures when managing serious breaches of the Code of Conduct, to ensure consistency with league standards.

Player name:	(Print name)	(Signature)
Parent/guardian name:	(Print name)	(Signature)
Date:	____/____/____	____/____/____

Jumper Return Policy

At St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club all football jumpers that are worn on game day are the property of the Club and are loaned to registered and financial players for the duration of the season.

Effective management of our stock of jumpers is financially critical to the Club and so it is vital that each and every jumper is returned at season end.

Each player / family member is therefore responsible for returning the jumper at season end.

If you fail to return your allocated jumper the player / family member will incur a fine of up to \$80 to cover the purchase of a new jumper.

By signing the below, you are agreeing to the St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club Jumper return policy.

Jumper number	
Team	

Player name:	(Print name)	(Signature)
Parent/guardian name:	(Print name)	(Signature)
Date:	____/____/____	____/____/____

Coaches' agreement policy

MANDATORY AND ENFORCEABLE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES

I (print name), _____, in applying and accepting a coaching position with the St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club (SPMJFC), acknowledge that I will abide by the following:

- I will in my role as an SPMJFC coach, respect the rights, dignity and worth of all individuals including refraining from any discriminatory practices on the basis of race, religion, ethnic background, or special ability / disability.
- I will abide by and support the AFL Laws of the Game, the Rules of the South Metro Junior Football League (SMJFL) and the Rules and Policies of the SPMJFC.
- As a SPMJFC coach I am required to:
 - maintain team discipline and instruct players to play within the rules.
 - instruct players to comply with the Codes of Conduct and / or behavior for Players published by the Australian Sports Commission and Football Victoria, and all SPMJFC Policies.
 - comply with the Codes of Conduct and / or behavior for Coaches published by the Australian Sports Commission and Football Victoria.
- I have read and will adopt the AFL Victoria Vilification & Discrimination Policy prescribed by the Football Victoria, the SMJFL and SPMJFC.
- I am to follow all coaching Guidelines and Policies as set down by the SPMJFC Football Department and the SPMJFC Committee from time to time.
- I will attend and participate in all coaches' meetings conducted by the SPMJFC.
- I understand the importance of refraining from the use of offensive language and behaviour when addressing SPMJFC and opposition players, officials, parents, guardians, and spectators or SMJFL officials and umpires.
- I am to communicate to parents and guardians of players in my charge the philosophy and objectives of both the club and myself.
- I am to encourage parents and guardians of any children in my charge to approach me directly at reasonable times (not during scheduled games) to discuss any issues pertaining to the team or their child.
- I will comply with all requirements of the SMJFL and the club in relation to coaching level accreditations.
- I will maintain a valid Working With Children Check (WWCC) and ensure that I have listed SPMJFC as an organisation on my WWCC, in line with the Club's Child Safety policies.
- I will be liable for dismissal or penalty, at the sole discretion of the SPMJFC Committee if I am found at any time to be in breach of any of the requirements of this Agreement.

Coach name:	Signature:	Date:

Social Media Policy

Introduction

For the purpose of this policy, “Members” refers to SPMJFC players, parents, guardians, and volunteers.

Social media offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest to create, share, or consume content. As a community organisation, SPMJFC recognises the benefits of social media as a tool for engagement and enrichment of the Club and the broader community.

Purpose

This policy provides guiding principles to follow when using social media. Its intent covers any online posting or sharing of information that might affect SPMJFC, its members, officials, players, match officials, sponsors, or the League.

(This policy does not apply to personal use of social media platforms by members that makes no reference (explicit or implied) to the Club or League.)

Scope

This policy applies to all SPMJFC members or any individual representing themselves as associated with SPMJFC.

It covers all forms of social media, including but not limited to:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat or TikTok).
- Content sharing platforms including YouTube (video sharing).
- Message sharing platforms such as WhatsApp and Telegram
- Comments on blogs, forums, social posts or any other public platform for personal or club purposes.
- Personal or club websites.
- Posting reviews or ratings on sites.
- Taking part in online polls or votes.
- Public and private web forums or message boards.
- Editing a Wikipedia page or similar knowledge forums.

Agreement

All Players in age groups Under 13 and up are required to read and sign this policy before the commencement of each season.

Guiding Principles

The web is not anonymous. SPMJFC members should assume that everything posted online can be traced back to them. There is often a blurred line between a member’s professional/volunteer role and their

personal life, so it's essential to be clear when you are speaking as a Club representative and when you are not.

When using the Internet for personal or professional pursuits, all members must respect the Club's intellectual property and relationships (including with sponsors and stakeholders), and ensure the Club and League are not brought into disrepute.

Usage

When using social media, SPMJFC members ****must not****:

- Comment on or publish information that is confidential, defamatory, insulting or in any way sensitive to the Club, club officials, players, match officials, sponsors, other clubs, or the League.
- Engage in cyber bullying or harassing behaviour towards another member of the Club, any other Club, or the League. **This includes harassment, threats, intimidation, teasing, vilification (e.g., racist, sexist, or homophobic comments), ridiculing someone, use of offence nicknames or images, publishing embarrassing or sexually explicit images of someone, or otherwise insulting a person via electronic media.**
- Bring the Club or the League into disrepute. For example, do not use social media to criticise the Club, other Clubs, League, officials, volunteers, or umpires in any public forum.

Club members also must not use the SPMJFC brand to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political candidate, unless authorised by the Club. If expressing personal views, it should be clear they are personal and do not represent the Club.

If any instance of cyber bullying or inappropriate online behavior is identified and originates from a club-related context (e.g., a team group), the person responsible (e.g., the account holder) will be held in breach of this policy.

Official SPMJFC websites, social pages and online forums

By registering with the Club, parents and/or guardians consent to images and names of their children being used in Club-issued materials (e.g., newsletters, official club social media, website, etc.). If a parent/guardian does not want their child's image used, they must advise the Club Secretary in writing. If any parent or guardian requests removal of a particular image or name, the Club will promptly comply.

When creating an official SPMJFC website, social networking page or forum for club use, approval must be given by the Club President and Secretary.

For official SPMJFC websites, blogs, and social pages:

- Posts must not contain or link to pornographic or indecent content. (Be mindful of hosted ads or "pop-ups" on platforms - use platforms where we can control content. If an open platform might display objectionable ads, it should be avoided for official use.)
- SPMJFC members must not use official club pages to promote personal projects or ventures. All content posted must respect third-party copyright.

Consideration toward others when using social networking

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of people. Members should recognise that it may not be appropriate to share certain content (photos, videos, comments) online, especially if it includes other people. For example, understand that photographs taken at a club event should not be posted publicly if those in the photo have an expectation of privacy or have asked that it not be shared.

Members should:

- Consider the privacy and feelings of others before posting images or comments.
- Not post images or information about someone if they've been asked not to, or if consent has not been sought and given (especially for images of children other than your own).
- Remove any information about another person if that person requests it (this includes text and images).

Caution shall be used when posting photos of children. Even though we have general consent through registration and via this Policy, respect any parent and or guardian's wishes regarding their child's photos.

Breach of policy

Any breach of this policy should be reported to the Club Child Safety Officer, President or Secretary. A breach may result in disciplinary action by the Club and/or the League. The Club (and SMJFL Tribunal, if applicable) may impose penalties ranging from warnings up to suspension or expulsion from the Club, depending on severity.

Where a breach is sustained at the SMJFL level, the League tribunal may also impose penalties including suspension and/or fines.

Consultation or advice

This policy has been developed to guide SPMJFC members and volunteers in responsible social media use. If you are unsure about any aspect of online conduct or have questions about what is appropriate, please seek clarification from the Club Secretary (in writing if possible). We encourage open communication to prevent issues before they arise.

Player name:	Signature:	Date:
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Playing Time Policy

The Committee of SPMJFC acknowledges the challenge of balancing match-day competitiveness with fair distribution of playing time to ensure skill development for all players. The following guidelines are representative of common practice at other junior football clubs. Unless the Committee deems that exceptional circumstances exist, all Coaches and Team Managers must ensure that each player on the team list who has attended training regularly is given at least the playing time outlined below.

Under 8's to Under 10's

- All players are to be given the opportunity to play a minimum of three quarters of each game during the normal season. A maximum number of 24 players are permitted to take part in any home and away football match.
- Playing lists with more than 24 players are required to rotate or "roster off" players throughout the season. Rostering off should be shared equally over the season across all players.
- Over the season, an emphasis should be placed on rotating all players through a variety of positions or ground areas during matches. This may involve adopting a rotation of groups of 6 players through the front, middle and back third of the ground. The practice of rotating players through different areas of the ground and positions and the off-the-interchange bench enables the development of a solid foundation of all players before specialisation at older age levels.
- During the Lightning Premiership - all players are to be given the opportunity of a minimum of half a game across all scheduled games (typically 3 games) or half in each game.

Under 11's to Under 12's

- All players are to be given the opportunity to play a minimum of three quarters of each game during the normal season. A maximum number of 24 players are permitted to take part in any home and away football match.
- Playing lists with more than 24 players are required to rotate or "roster off" players throughout the season. Rostering off should be shared equally over the season between all players.
- During finals game time - where players do not exceed 24, each player should be given an opportunity to play a minimum of 2 quarters during finals.
- During finals, game time - where player lists does exceed 24, all players to be given an opportunity to play a minimum of 1 quarter during finals.

Under 13s to under 15s

- All players are to be given the opportunity to play a minimum of two quarters of each game during the normal season. A maximum number of 24 players are permitted to take part in any home and away football match.
- Playing lists with more than 24 players are required to rotate or "roster off" players throughout the season. Not all players are required to be "rostered off" throughout the season in order to help maximise the chance of the team qualifying for finals participation. The coach, in conjunction with the Head of the Football Department or Senior Committee Member (President, Vice President, Secretary, can nominate up to 8 players, whose performances and/or influence over team success over preceding seasons, or current season, warrants selection each week.

- Where possible, coaches must give due consideration to the upcoming opposition team's position on the ladder when determining which players are to be "rostered off". For example, when playing lower ranked teams, more influential players are to be rostered off to ensure more opportunity provided to players who are still developing to assist their development, engagement, and sense of well-being.
- During finals with respect to game time - where player list does not exceed 24, each player to be given an opportunity to play a minimum of 2 quarters during finals (except Grand Final).
- During finals with respect to game time - where player lists does exceed 24, all players to be given an opportunity to play a minimum of 1 quarter during finals (except Grand Final).
- Grand final, regardless of team list size, all players to be given an opportunity to play a minimum of 1 quarter.

Under 16s to under 17s

- All players are to be given an opportunity to play on average, two quarters a game during the home and away football season. This does not mean two quarters in every game.
- If a player misses out on game time in one game, coaches and team managers need to note this and make the difference up in other games. This allows for some flexibility for the coaching staff to manage player playing time throughout the season.
- During finals game time (except Grand Final) - all players are to be given the opportunity to play a minimum of one quarter of each game where possible.
- Grand final, regardless of list size, all players are to be given an opportunity to play a minimum of one half of a quarter.

Awards and Representation Selection Policy

Doggie of the Month

The Doggie of the Month (DOTM) medal is a special award that is held in high regard by our Club. Coaches should select DOTM recipients bearing in mind the following criteria:

- The award is essentially a team spirit award - not focused on rewarding game-day performance or stats.
- Award winners should demonstrate core behaviours of respect, teamwork, and encouragement of others. They should be good trainers during the week and abide by the Club's Code of Conduct.
- Consideration should be given to the individual's development as a player and teammate.
- Ideally, no player would receive two DOTM awards in their junior playing years (U8 - U13) unless truly warranted; give preference to longer-serving players who meet the criteria above.
- DOTM awards should not be given to new players in the first half of their first season (except U8 players).
- Ideally, DOTM winners should be players unlikely to poll Best & Fairest votes regularly. (This helps spread recognition across a team; players who often feature in the top 5 each week will be recognised in Best & Fairest, so DOTM can acknowledge others.)

It is envisaged that the Club will hold 3 DOTM events over the season. Each coach can nominate one player to receive the award at each DOTM event. The Club will maintain a database of all DOTM winners for coaches to reference when making selections.

Best and fairest voting

The Club ensures a consistent approach to Best and Fairest voting and awards across each age group:

- Each week's Best & Fairest voting recognises - in the voters' opinion - the best five players on the ground. **These votes are to remain confidential.**
- Under **no circumstances** are the votes to be used as "encouragement awards." (Separate weekly encouragement awards, often vouchers, are provided for U8-U13 teams and can be given at coaches' discretion, ensuring every player gets one by season's end. U14-U17 teams may use encouragement awards at their discretion, ideally spread across the list throughout the season.)
- The following process applies to **every** SPMJFC team, all age levels:
 - At season start, the Coach and Team Manager nominate a pool of people (including themselves, runners, trainers, player parents/guardians) who have solid football knowledge to serve as vote givers.
 - The **Coach** for the match should always be one of the three vote givers each game. The Coach and Team Manager then select two others from the pool to cast Best & Fairest votes for each match. (It's not mandatory to rotate who votes each week, but it should be planned.)
 - All selected vote givers must be aware before the game that they will be casting votes.
 - After the match, each voter independently completes a voting slip (without consulting others) awarding: 5 votes for best on ground, 4 votes for 2nd best, 3 votes for 3rd, 2 votes for 4th, and 1 vote for 5th best.

- Each completed voting slip is placed into a sealed envelope and given to the Team Manager, with the voter's signature across the seal.
- A player shall be disqualified from receiving a top five trophy should they be found guilty of an offence that warranted a match suspension imposed either by the ****SMJFL**** or the ****Club****. The player in question may still accumulate best and fairest votes through the season. The Incident Committee, comprising at least President, Vice President Child Safety Officer, and Secretary, have the discretion to overturn B&F ineligibility under special circumstances.
- Best & Fairest voting concludes at the end of the home & away season. (For U8-U10, no votes are cast during Lightning Premiership; for U11-U17, no votes are cast during finals.) The Coach and/or Team Manager should ****not**** keep a running tally of votes throughout the season.

End of season award process

Each team will have 6 trophies to award at season's end.

At the end of the season, the Coach and Team Manager will count the votes in conjunction with the Football Department at a scheduled vote-count night.

- **U8-U10:** Awards go to the top three Best & Fairest vote-getters. Three further trophies are awarded (usually to 4th-6th place in votes, unless an exception is approved by the President, VP, or Secretary - e.g., disciplinary reasons). The Coach, in consultation with the Team Manager, will name these awards appropriately (e.g., Best Team Member, Most Courageous, Coach's Award, Most Improved).
- **U11-U17:** Because Best & Fairest results heavily influence representative nominations, the top 5 vote-getters receive awards. The top 3 are labelled "Best & Fairest Winner", "Runner Up B&F", and "Third B&F". 4th and 5th can have labelled awards (e.g., Best Team Player, Most Courageous). A 6th trophy (Coach's Award) is given at the Coach's discretion, in consultation with Team Manager, to recognise a player for a specific reason.

In case of a tie in votes for any placing, there is **no countback**. (If 2 players tie for Best & Fairest, both are recognised as winners, etc.)

Best Finals Player

Coaches will use their discretion to determine a "Best Finals Player" for the team. If a player is suspended during a final, they still remain eligible for the Best Finals Player award.

Representative squads

The process for nominating players to SMJFL representative squads can vary and is subject to SMJFL and Club procedures. The following criteria are used by SPMJFC for nominating players:

- The most recent Best & Fairest vote count is heavily considered.
- Input from the player's most recent Coach is gathered by the Football Department.
- If a player missed games (injury or other reasons) and thus didn't poll as well but is known to be of high ability/standing, the Coach should note this for Football Department consideration.

- If a player is playing for a nominated age group **other than** their default age group, they will be considered for Representative nomination in their **default age group**.

The final nominations for representative squads are made by the SPMJFC Football Department, considering all the above.

Playing Registration and Team Formation Policy

Under 8's, 9's and 10's

We will accept any and all children from our local community who register with SPMJFC and pay prescribed registration fees before and up until the end of SPMJFC's Registration Day/Event.

After the Registration Day/Event, the Committee shall, in its absolute discretion, determine whether a player will play at SPMJFC, taking the following matters into account:

- Has the player previously played at SPMJFC?
- Does the player have any siblings already playing at SPJFC?
- Is there some other family connection or history with SPMJFC?
- Does the player live locally?
- Current registered numbers of players in the team or squad to which they are applying to participate.

If, as a result of the above policy, the Club reaches **32 or more** registered and paid players in these age levels, by the date in which SPMJFC are required to submit team nominations to the Southern Metro Junior Football League, the Committee will nominate **two teams** in that age group and use all SPMJFC's resources and best endeavors to further increase registrations and the participation of two teams in that age level. The Club recognises that fielding two teams with less than 36 registered players is not an easy task but would prefer to err on the side of providing more playing time and less rostering off for children in these age levels than managing one team with 32 players on the team roster.

Age group U11 to 17's

Existing players will have the opportunity to re-register with the SPMJFC prior to the Clubs official Registration Day/Event. Existing players will be strongly encouraged to register prior to this event.

We will accept all children who have previously been a registered player with the SPMJFC and have paid prescribed registration fees before and up until the end of SPMJFC's Registration Day/Event. The Club places a high level of import on retaining children who have played with the Club previously and where playing numbers become problematic in these age levels (i.e. > 24 and < 36) will give preference to returning players (paid and registered) in determining squad and team numbers).

To maximise each player's game time, SPMJFC prefers **no more than 24 players per team**. This number still provides coverage for absences (injury, illness, holidays) and is the maximum SMJFL bench for these age groups. Having more than 24 risks volunteer roles (Coach, Team Manager) become exceedingly onerous.

New players

New players can provisionally register before the official Registration Day but may not be confirmed on a team list until after that day. New players will be accepted as space allows, given our preferred cap of 24 players per team for U11-U17. Once 24 players have registered and paid in an age group, additional players will only be added in consultation with the coach(es) and if it appears feasible to form two teams or manage a larger squad.

If there is not a position at the club

If the Committee determines there is not a position available for a new player, the Club will inform the player and their parents/guardians as soon as practicable and refund any fees paid. The Club will also assist with advice in finding another local junior club for the player.

Managing two teams – U11 to U17

The Club acknowledges that fielding two teams with fewer than 36 total players is difficult. The Club and coach may choose to manage one larger squad (with provisional registrations beyond 24) until it's clear whether two teams are viable. When final decisions on team numbers are made, all families will be notified of the approach (one squad vs two teams, and how players will be managed - see below) and may withdraw if they feel it's not in their child's best interest.

Registration fees

Players who have not paid their registration fees will not be permitted to take the field in pre-season or regular season matches (due to insurance and liability), unless approved by the Committee in exceptional circumstances. If such approval is given, typically a payment plan must be arranged with the Treasurer.

Players may withdraw up to and including Round 3 and obtain a refund of their Registration Fee minus \$30 (administration cost). After Round 3, the registration fee is non-refundable.

Registrations after commencement of season – juniors

No new junior registrations will be accepted after the season commences without the express consent of the Age Group Coach. If a team already has at least 24 players, additional players will not be registered unless there are extenuating circumstances. In such a case, the Coach must present reasons for consideration by the Committee.

Team Selection and Management Policy

Under 8's, 9's and 10's

In these age groups, emphasis is on participation, enjoyment, teamwork, and skill development, while nurturing the physical and emotional wellbeing of all players.

If more than one team is fielded in an age group, the Committee/Football Department (with full engagement of the Coaches) will form teams primarily based on social/friendship groups and player development needs. The Club is open to innovative approaches proposed by coaches to manage teams/players to achieve the objectives of participation, fun, teamwork, and skill development.

Age groups U11 to U13

In these groups, emphasis remains on participation, enjoyment, and player development - continued skill acquisition, team involvement, and nurturing physical and emotional wellbeing.

If two or more sides are in the same age group, teams will be formed by the Committee/Football Department (with full input from coaches) to create squads that we expect to be appropriately competitive in their SMJFL division. The aim is to place players in a division commensurate with their skill level, while also considering friendships. The Club remains open to innovative management of teams/players (e.g., rotating players between two teams in early rounds, within SMJFL player movement by-laws). Thus, team squads may not be finalised until after SMJFL grading, or even later in the season.

Age group U14 to U17

The Club aspires to provide players the opportunity to play at the highest appropriate level in the league. SMJFL grading is influenced by team performance in previous seasons. Therefore, in these ages, there's greater emphasis on individual skill and team performance.

- If there is a single team in the age group: selection of the side is the responsibility of the appointed Coach/Coaching Panel. The coaching focus must balance being competitive with ensuring enjoyment and development for all players.
- If two sides are formed in the age group in different divisions: coaches are empowered to select teams based on playing ability, judged by skill, potential development, attitude, commitment, and team balance needs. The Committee/Football Department will assist coaches in forming the sides when required.
- Teams might not be finalised until league grading is done. Coaches should delay finalising support staff (assistants, etc.) until after sides are finalised.
- SMJFL policy allows limited movement between teams week-to-week, giving some flexibility throughout the year.
- SMJFL rules allow up to 24 players to play in an under-age match in these age groups.
- **League requirement:** all players should be permitted to play a minimum of half a game as far as practicable. Coaches must endeavour to give as many players as possible an opportunity to participate in each game.

Managing two teams (general principles)

When an age level has two teams, the following principles apply (regardless of specific approach):

- The process/approach for forming two teams will be communicated to families as early as possible.
- Any process for moving or rotating players between teams will be explained before the season and reinforced as needed.
- The respective coaches of the two teams will meet regularly to discuss player rotations, development opportunities, joint squad activities, etc., and will present a united front to all players and families at that age level.
- The age level should be managed as one squad as much as possible. For example:
 - Training: teams train at the same time and venue.
 - Warm-up and basic drills at training are done as a whole squad (e.g., at least 1/3 of each session together).
 - Any extra training sessions are open to all players in the age group.
 - Team photos: take a whole squad photo in addition to individual team photos.
 - Players from both teams are encouraged to attend and support the other team's games whenever possible.

Age Group Nomination Policy

By default, players will be registered to the team in which their birthdate matches, per league guidelines. This means that, for example, a player will be registered to the U10s group in the year they turn 10.

Where a player wishes to nominate for an older age group, for instance to play with the same school year level friends, they may do so by contacting the football department and a decision will be made based on both the individual player and registered team's best interests.

Filling in for other age groups

Players may, from time to time, be asked to fill in for an age group above them, or in the case of player nominating a year level above, an age group below, where it is within league rules to do so. Players should prioritise their nominated age group for matches and training sessions where there are clashes. Filling in outside your nominated age group is at the sole discretion of the Coach of the age group requesting fill in players. Fill in players will not be requested when team numbers are 24 or more. Fill in players in an age group are not subject to the *Playing Time Policy* when playing outside of their nominated age group., and may play less than the specified time when playing as a fill in.

Awards and Representation

Players may **only** accumulate votes for the Best and Fairest in their nominated age group. In the event votes are cast for a player playing as a fill in, these votes will be discarded. Coaches shall be made aware of this voting policy wherever it is relevant, and shall make all vote casters aware of this restriction for any player that is a fill in.

Players may only be considered for Doggie of the Month in their nominated age group.

Players that nominate an older age group as their nominated team will be considered by the Football Department for Representative nomination in their **default age group**. For example an Under 12 aged player that nominates and plays Under 13s **will be considered** for Under 12s Representative nomination.

Child Safety Policy

MANDATORY & ENFORCEABLE CODES OF CONDUCT FOR COACHES, PLAYERS, PARENTS AND/OR GUARDIANS, SUPPORTERS AND OFFICIALS

SPMJFC Child Safe Commitment: *St Paul's McKinnon JFC is committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child in our club.* We comply with the eleven Victorian **Child Safe Standards (2022)** and the SMJFL **Safeguarding Children & Young People Policy** to ensure that children are safe, feel safe, and are heard.

The Club fosters a culture where children and young people feel safe and welcome, and we have **zero tolerance** for any form of child abuse or harm.

The Club has appointed a dedicated **Child Safety Officer (CSO)** to champion child safety within the club. The CSO is responsible for promoting child-safe practices, maintaining compliance with these standards, and serving as a point of contact for any child safety concerns or reports

All Club officials, coaches, volunteers and members must abide by the SMJFL **Child Safe Code of Conduct**, which outlines appropriate and inappropriate behaviour with children. Any concerns or allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and reported in accordance with the SMJFL **Child Safe Incident Reporting Procedure** and to relevant authorities as required.

The Victorian Government established the Working with Children Check (WWCC) to screen persons working with children (volunteers or paid). The government does not release an individual's criminal history to organisations without consent, and information from Victoria Police is strictly confidential. SPMJFC maintains a WWCC register via PlayHQ. The WWCC is an ongoing check, and any relevant changes in an individual's record are reported to the Club if the person's card is linked to SPMJFC. WWCC cards are valid for five years (unless revoked due to changed circumstances or surrendered).

Policy

It is the policy of SPMJFC that all persons providing coaching or other services to SPMJFC's activities must obtain a Victorian WWCC **prior to commencing** as an employee or volunteer. Each prospective volunteer or staff member is responsible for applying for and obtaining a current WWCC card.

SPMJFC requires that the following people must obtain (or have applied for) a WWCC before commencing work with children:

- All Committee Members
- Canteen Manager/Supervisor
- Coach
- Assistant Coach
- Team Manager
- Trainer
- All match-day volunteers (Runner, Timekeeper, Water Carrier, Boundary Umpire, Goal Umpire, Umpire Escort)
- Any adult attending an overnight trip with players under 18

Exemptions: SPMJFC and the SMJFL recognises the following exemptions per WWCC legislation (with proof required):

- Persons under 18 years of age.
- Full-time students aged 18 or 19, working with children as part of their studies.

If a person is required to apply for a WWCC and has not done so, it is an offense for that person to perform child-related work and an offense for the Club to engage them in such work. (Offenders may face substantial fines and/or up to 2 years imprisonment.) Therefore, the Club will **strictly** enforce this policy.

- It is the individual's responsibility to notify the Services Victoria whenever their personal details change (address, etc.) and to update their WWCC details, including adding SPMJFC as an organisation. (For example, if someone has a WWCC for another club or school, they must go online and **add SPMJFC** to their WWC Check.)
- It is the individual's responsibility to re-apply/renew their WWCC when it is due to expire (renewals can be done from 3 months prior to expiry). They must update PlayHQ with the new card so the Club's records can be updated.

Key volunteers, including the Child Safety Officer, Executive Committee, and Coaches, are required to complete **Child Protection Training** (an online module provided by the Australian Sports Commission/AFL) as part of our commitment to child safety

This training is also recommended for all team officials to further understand Child Safety obligations.

Procedure for obtaining a WWCC (volunteer status)

To obtain a WWC Check:

- Complete an online WWCC application form (for volunteers) at Services Victoria. <http://service.vic.gov.au/services/working-with-children>
- The application must include SPMJFC as an organisation in the application. (Our Club can be listed as "St Paul's McKinnon JFC".)
- Submit the form online as instructed. (There is no fee for volunteers.)

Results of checks

If the check is successful, the applicant will receive a **Notice of Assessment** and a WWCC card. The Club should be linked to the card and will be notified of the outcome. If an applicant is barred (negative notice), they and any listed organisations will be informed (details of offenses are not disclosed to organisations). Any subsequent changes (e.g., new offenses) are monitored by the Department of Justice, and relevant organisations will be notified if a WWCC is suspended or revoked.

WWCC cards are valid for five years from issue. SPMJFC will maintain the register of all current WWCCs for its staff and volunteers.

All volunteers are required to provide their valid WWCC details when registering as a volunteer via PlayHQ.

Alcohol Management, Doping and Anti-Drug Policy

Alcohol Management Policy

This policy provides the basis for the responsible use of alcohol by the St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club (SPMJFC) and is seen as fundamental to the aims of the Club.

The Club recognises the importance of holding a liquor license, enabling it to generate income and hold social functions. In doing so however, we accept the responsibilities and expectations of the community in adhering to liquor licensing laws and the criteria of the Good Sports program.

To ensure the aims of the Club are upheld, and that alcohol is managed responsibly by the Club and its members, the following requirements will apply when alcohol is served at the Club or during a Club function.

Serving alcohol

Alcohol will be served according to the legal and moral requirements of the Club's Liquor License with the safety and wellbeing of patrons as their priority.

- The Club maintains a current appropriate Liquor License
- Only RSA trained personnel will serve alcohol
- Bar personnel do not consume alcohol when on duty
- People under 18 will not serve alcohol
- The Club does not encourage excessive or rapid consumption of alcohol
- When serving non-pre-packaged alcohol, standard drink measures will be served at all times
- Information posters about standard drink measures will be displayed at the bar
- The Club's Liquor License and all legal signage will be displayed at the bar
- Names of RSA trained bar personnel will be displayed
- An incident register shall be maintained and any incident recorded

Intoxicated patrons

- Drunk patrons will not be permitted to enter the premises
- Alcohol will not be served to any person who is intoxicated or drunk
- Bar personnel will follow RSA training procedures when refusing service
- Drunk patrons will be asked to leave the premises (after appropriate safe transport options are offered)

Underage drinking

- Alcohol will not be served to people aged under 18
- Bar personnel and committee members will ask for proof of age whenever necessary or whenever in doubt
- Only photo ID's will be accepted as 'proof of age'

Consuming alcohol

- Alcohol must not be consumed at any time by a Spectator or Participant in the Club during junior football training, practice matches, or league-sanctioned matches
- The Club will not serve alcohol at any time during junior football training, practice matches, or league-sanctioned matches

Alcohol alternatives

The Club recognises that alcohol is not the only revenue stream available and actively encourages the sales of alternative products to that of alcohol.

- Tap water is provided free of charge (where available)
- One low-alcoholic drink and at least four non-alcoholic drink options are always available and are at least 10% cheaper than full-strength alcoholic drinks
- Substantial food is available when the bar is open for more than 90 minutes or more than 15 people are present

Smoke free

The Club has a (separate) Smoke Free Policy that is reviewed regularly in conjunction with this Alcohol Management Policy.

Non-compliance

All Club Committee members will enforce the alcohol management policy and any non-compliance, particularly in relation to Licensing Laws and will be handled according to the following process:

- Explanation of the Club policy to the person(s) concerned, including identification of the section of policy not being complied with
- Continued non-compliance with the policy should be handled by at least two Committee members who will use their discretion as to the action taken, which may include asking the person(s) to leave the Club facilities or function

Committee Policy Management

The presence of Committee members is essential to ensure the operation of the bar and compliance with this policy.

At least two Committee members who are RSA trained are required to be present at all Club functions when the bar is open.

Key responsibilities of the duty committee members are to:

- Meet visiting police, cooperate, and assist with any inquiries
- Compliance in respect of people under 18 years of age on premises
- Recording any incidents in the incident register
- Ensuring strict compliance with all sections of this policy in accordance with legal requirements and the Good Sports program

Policy promotion

The Club will promote the alcohol management policy regularly by:

- Putting a copy of the policy in Club Communications, e.g. newsletters, website and printed member/player information
- Displaying a copy of the policy in the Club social room
- Periodic announcements to members at functions

The Club recognises the importance of educating Club members, particularly players, about the benefits of an alcohol management policy and will endeavor to provide information to assist this process.

The Club will actively participate in the Australian Drug Foundation's Good Sports program with an ongoing priority to maintain Level 3 accreditation.

Doping and Anti-Drug Policy

The Club, players, team officials and all members are to comply with the Doping Policy and rules relating to the use of drugs produced by the Australian Institute of Sport and the AFL. Members who breach the Clubs Doping and anti-drug policy may be disciplined in accordance with the procedures in Section 7. Discipline, suspension and expulsion of our Constitution (available on the web site)

Smoke and Vape Free Policy

St Paul's McKinnon Junior Football Club (SPMJFC) recognises that:

- Environmental (second-hand) tobacco smoke **and vapor from e-cigarettes** are health hazards, and non-smokers **and non-vapers** should be protected from exposure
- Role modelling by adults can significantly influence junior members. Seeing adults refrain from smoking or vaping sets a positive example.
- Smoke-free areas make smoking **and vaping** less visible and less socially acceptable.
- Smoke-free areas support smokers and vapers who are trying to quit or reduce their consumption.
- Outdoor smoke-free areas help reduce cigarette butt litter (which reduces cleanup costs, fire risk, and the risk of children ingesting discarded butts).
- Smoke-free (and vape-free) environments are advantageous in attracting new members and positively promoting the Club in the community.

Victorian legislation **bans smoking and vaping** within 10 meters of a sporting venue that is an outdoor public place during underage (U18) competitions, training or practice sessions, or any breaks during these underage activities

Accordingly, this policy applies to all members, administrators, officials, coaches, players, spectators, visitors and other volunteers/staff of the Club.

General

- Cigarettes and other tobacco products will not be sold at any time at the Club (including vending machines).
- Coaches, players, officials, and volunteers will refrain from smoking while involved in an official capacity for the Club, on and off the field. This includes training, game days, and club functions.
- No images of Club volunteers, members, officials, coaches, or players **smoking or vaping** at club-related activities are to be placed on social media.
- **E-cigarettes (vaping) are included in this policy** and are treated the same as tobacco smoking. Use of any e-cigarette device is not permitted in any area or situation where smoking is prohibited.

Smoke-free areas

The SPMJFC requires the following areas of the Club's facilities and sporting grounds to be totally smoke-free (no smoking or vaping):

- All indoor areas.
- All outdoor playing/training areas.
- All spectator areas (standing and seated, covered and uncovered) during games or training.
- All canteen, catering, eating and drinking areas.

Smoke-free areas will be clearly signed (where possible) and promoted in Club materials.

Functions

- Club functions, including social events and meetings, held at Club facilities are to be smoke-free.

- Club functions held away from Club facilities should also be smoke-free wherever possible. If smoking is permitted at an external venue, it must be in a designated outdoor smoking area away from the main event.
- If a designated smoking area is provided, smokers ****or vapers**** may only use that outdoor area and must safely dispose of cigarette butts.
- All invitations and advertising for functions, meetings and events will note that they are smoke-free (and/or family-friendly).

Non-compliance

All Club committee members will enforce the Smoke Free Policy. In the event of non-compliance:

- An explanation of the policy (and the applicable Victorian tobacco and e-cigarette laws) will be given to the person/people breaching the policy, including identification of the specific area where smoking/vaping is not permitted.
- If the person continues to violate the policy, at least two committee members will use their discretion on further action, which may include asking the person to leave the club facilities or function.

Policy promotion

The Club will promote the Smoke Free Policy regularly by placing **No Smoking or Vaping** signage in prominent locations indoors and outdoors.

Vilification and Discrimination Policy

Section 1 – Commitment

The St Paul’s McKinnon Junior Football Club (SPMJFC) is committed to an environment which promotes racial and religious tolerance by prohibiting certain conduct and providing a means of redress for victims of racial and religious vilification and/or discrimination.

The Club is bound by the **Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)**, the **Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)**, and the **Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)**. This policy is consistent with the legislation and with the AFL’s Rule 30 and the Victorian Football League’s Rule 7.3. This policy is not a substitute for legislation.

SPMJFC will ensure this policy is communicated to spectators and participants. We will also ensure that club participants receive anti-vilification and discrimination training on an annual basis.

Nothing in this policy prevents a person from lodging a complaint under the relevant legislation. If a complaint is made under this policy, the Club shall ensure the parties are informed of their rights under law.

Section 2 – Definitions

- **“Complaints process”** means the procedure outlined in Sections 6, 7 and 8 of this policy.
- **“Club”** means the St Paul’s McKinnon Junior Football Club.
- **“Engage in conduct”** includes use of the internet or email to publish or transmit statements or other material.
- **“League”** means the South Metro Junior Football League (SMJFL).
- **“Detriment”** includes humiliation and denigration.
- **“Discrimination”** in this policy means conduct based on a person’s race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin. Discrimination may be:
 - **Direct discrimination:** treating or proposing to treat someone less favourably on one of the above bases.
 - **Indirect discrimination:** imposing or intending to impose a requirement that someone with one of those attributes cannot comply with, when a higher proportion of people without that attribute can, and it is not reasonable in the circumstances.
- **“Participant”** includes a player, director, officer, employee, volunteer, or agent of a Football Club that participates in the League.
- **“Spectator”** is a person who attends a football game or event conducted by a Club or the League.

Section 3 – Prohibited conduct

- **Racial and religious vilification:** No person in their capacity as a Spectator or Participant in the League, or in the course of carrying out their duties or functions as or incidental to being a participant in the League, shall engage in conduct that offends, humiliates, intimidates, ridicules, incites, threatens, disparages, vilifies or insults another person on the basis of that person’s race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.

- **Serious racial and religious vilification:** No person in their capacity as a Spectator or Participant in the Club, or in the course of carrying out their duties or functions as or incidental to being a participant in the Club, shall **intentionally** engage in conduct that they know is likely to incite hatred against another person, or threaten physical harm to a person or their property, because of that person’s race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.
- **Racial and religious discrimination:** No person in their capacity as a Spectator or Participant in the Club, or in the course of carrying out their duties or functions as or incidental to being a participant in the Club, shall engage in conduct that discriminates, directly or indirectly, against another person on the basis of that person’s race, religion, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin (as defined above).
- **Victimisation**
 - No person in their capacity as a Spectator or Participant in the Club, or while carrying out their duties or functions, shall victimise another person.
 - A person victimises another if they subject, or threaten to subject, that person to any detriment because they (or someone associated with them) intend to pursue or have pursued their rights under this policy or under law (e.g., making a complaint or assisting in a complaint).

Section 4 – Authorised persons

- The Club will appoint an **Incident Committee** to ensure that any breach of this policy is responded to promptly and equitably.
- The **President** of the Club is the senior decision-maker in the complaints process. If the President is unavailable for an extended period, they must nominate a person (e.g., Vice President) to act on their behalf if a complaint arises.

Section 5 – Confidentiality and records

- Confidentiality must be maintained throughout the complaints process. All parties to a complaint, the President (or delegate), the Club’s Incident Committee, any witnesses, and the independent conciliator must agree to maintain confidentiality. No person involved in the process shall publicly comment on any aspect of it without prior written agreement of all parties.
- The Club shall ensure that any documents relating to a complaint remain confidential and are retained for 7 years from the date of the complaint.

Section 6 – Inter-club breaches of the policy

If it is alleged that a Spectator or Participant from another club has contravened this policy:

- An Umpire, Spectator or Participant of our Club may lodge a written complaint with our Incident Committee.
- Our Incident Committee shall, by 5:00 pm on the next working day after receiving the complaint, lodge it with the League’s Complaints Officer.
- Our Club’s Incident Committee will take no further action once the complaint is lodged with the League, unless instructed by the League’s Complaints Officer.

Section 7 – Intra-club breaches of the policy

If it is alleged that a Participant of our Club has contravened this policy (e.g., player to player within our club):

- A Spectator or Participant may lodge a written complaint with our Club’s Incident Committee. The Club will handle it following AFL Victoria’s Vilification framework. Complaints are generally resolved through confidential conciliation at club, with potential referral to tribunal if unresolved.

Extreme Weather Policy

While environmental factors usually do not prevent training sessions or matches, occasionally extreme weather (heat, lightning, etc.) may pose risks to players and officials. This policy outlines the Club's approach to assessing and responding to extreme weather conditions.

Extreme Heat

Heat-related stress can impair performance (causing dizziness, headaches, collapse, illness) and, in extreme cases, be life-threatening. Preventing heat stress through preparation is crucial. **All players, parents, guardians, and officials have a responsibility** to mitigate heat risks:

- Ensure adequate hydration before and during games/training.
- Notify medical or coaching staff if feeling unwell (especially due to heat).
- Use water and electrolyte drinks as needed.
- Use cooling strategies (e.g., wetting the body, shade).
- Apply SPF 30+ sunscreen in sunny conditions.
- Do not play if experiencing illness in hot conditions.

The Club's guideline is to **cancel or postpone training if the ambient temperature reaches 35°C or above** (considering humidity as well). This threshold aligns with AFL Victoria recommendations for junior sports. The Club will monitor weather forecasts and make timely decisions, communicated via Team Managers.

Lightning:

A 10 km radius as the minimum safe distance from lightning. As a guide: if the interval between a lightning flash and thunder is 30 seconds or less, the storm is within ~10 km and poses a threat.

If lightning is present or imminent:

- Officials (umpires/coaches) will consult and may delay, suspend, or cancel play/training.
- If a game or training is underway and a lightning threat emerges, players and spectators should immediately seek shelter in a building or fully enclosed vehicle. Do ****not**** shelter under trees or metal structures.
- Play will not resume until at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or thunderclap. Blue skies or a break in rain do not mean it's safe-wait the full 30 minutes from the last observed lightning/thunder.

Privacy Policy

The SPMJFC collects personal information (names, addresses, date of birth) for the primary purpose of holding records of its membership and, in particular, records of juniors who play for the club and their parents and/or guardians.

The SPMJFC maintains a mailing and telephone list which is used so the club can distribute information to members on key operations such as training, games, club functions, etc. Also, the SMPJFC may collect health information from its player members relating to treating and recording football injuries and any pre-existing medical conditions.

The SPMJFC takes all reasonable steps to protect the personal information and the health information that it holds from misuse and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

By completing the Player Registration, you give SPMJFC permission to use photos of players taken at matches/training for the Club, in the Club's printed material and on the Club's website and social media.

As a member of the Club, you have a right to access any information that the SPMJFC holds about you. If the information is not accurate, complete and up to date, you can ask us to modify our records. All requests must be submitted in writing to the Secretary.

Our club website may contain links to other websites. These links are meant for your convenience only. Links to third party websites do not constitute sponsorship or endorsement or approval of these websites. Please be aware that we are not responsible for the privacy practices of such other websites. We encourage our users to be aware, when they leave our website, of reading the privacy statements of each and every website that collects personally identifiable information. This privacy policy applies solely to information collected by this website.

If you have any questions or concerns at any time about our privacy policy or the use of your personal information, please contact the Secretary or Child Safety Officer.

Concussion Management Policy

The SPMJFC follows the AFL's 'Management of Concussion in Australian Football (updated March 2024)' guidelines. In line with these guidelines (as adopted by the SMJFL), the Club's concussion policy has been strengthened to ensure player safety

- No player who is suspected of having a concussion is allowed to continue participating in a game or training session - they must be immediately removed and must not return that day. Coaches, trainers, and officials are trained to recognise concussion symptoms and will err on the side of caution.
- A player diagnosed with concussion must have a mandatory rest from playing in any matches for at least 21 days (three weeks). This is a new minimum return-to-play interval introduced in 2024 for all community and junior football, which the SMJFL has adopted.
- Before resuming contact, training or competing in a game after a concussion, the player must be symptom-free and must receive written clearance from a qualified medical practitioner (e.g. GP or sports physician). The doctor's clearance must confirm the player has recovered and can gradually return to play.
- Even after the 21-day rest period, a concussed player should undertake a graded return-to-play program under medical supervision. The earliest a junior player can play in a match again is on the 21st day post-injury and only if they have completed each stage of recovery without symptoms and obtained medical approval
- If any post-concussion symptoms persist beyond about 5-7 days, the Club strongly recommends seeking a specialist medical opinion (for example, from a neurologist or sports concussion clinic) before resuming any form of training
- The Club utilises recommended tools and resources for concussion management.

For further information, members should refer to the AFL's *Management of Sport-Related Concussion in Australian Football* guidelines (2024) - available via the AFL or SMJFL websites - which provide detailed medical guidance and sport-specific concussion management protocols.