



Memorandum

To:	State Community Football Managers		
Cc:	Simon Lethlean, Alistair Dobson, Grant Williams, Simon Laughton		
From:	Josh Vanderloo	Date:	10 th October 2015
Re:	Minimum Age Policy - Amendment		

I wish to advise an amendment to the AFL’s minimum age policy for Junior Football in 2016.

Background

The current policy has been in place for a number of years for the following reasons:

1. Given the skill development requirements and safe learning environment it provides, the optimal pathway for kids to begin their football is with NAB AFL Auskick.
2. The 7 year old rule has been based on developmental research and the Australian Sports Commission framework available at the time which the AFL considers and reviews regularly (along with other elements of the junior policy).
3. With U9’s historically being the starting point for junior football, the policy accounts for the fact that children should be participating in competitions within a two year age range (which is a health & safety consideration).

Recommendation

The AFL proposes to amend the policy to be as follows:

Current Policy	Revised Policy
A player must be 7 years old as at 1 January in any year to be eligible to be registered to play with an affiliated body.	A player must be 7 years by the following dates in each respective State/territory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 1 (TAS) • April 30 (VIC, ACT, SA, NT) • June 30 (QLD, WA) • July 31 (NSW)

Rationale

The AFL understands that the starting point for children along the participation pathway can differ from player to player and philosophically believes in a policy that caters for a range of individual circumstances.

Recent data shows that the birth rate has increased by more than a quarter over the last decade resulting in a growing number of children starting school aged 4. The impact of this societal trend has led to school peer groups being split up due to the AFL’s minimum age policies not aligning with the standard school age policy in each State / Territory.

Whilst there will be children wishing to participate in Junior Football that fall either side of the policy dates, we feel the core principle of maintaining school peer groups as a local retention strategy outweighs this occurrence.

Further to this, the AFL's 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.

It is the accompanying role of the AFL to ensure an appropriate development pathway is available for children of all ages whilst providing flexibility where possible.

This policy change will be in effect from November 1, 2015 and documented in the re-release of the Junior Football Match guide (or similarly titled document)

Josh Vanderloo



Head of Female Football, Junior & Club Development