



Coaching Philosophy & Coaches Policy

Policy created 2024 – Reviewed Feb 2026 | Next Review: Feb 2027

1. Coaching Philosophy

The North Ringwood Junior Football Club (NRJFC) aims to provide a **safe, family-friendly environment** where junior footballers can learn the fundamentals of Australian Rules Football while participating as part of a team.

The club seeks to:

- Develop **individual football skills** to support both personal improvement and team competitiveness.
- Ensure **player welfare, health, and wellbeing** are prioritised at all times.
- Provide an environment where **players enjoy participating in football**.
- Encourage development through **teamwork, participation and personal growth**.

Core Club Values

NRJFC programs and policies are guided by the following values:

- Participation
- A fair go
- Effort and competitiveness
- Friendship
- Teamwork
- Sportsmanship
- Leadership
- Safety
- Community

All coaching and administrative policies are designed to reinforce these values and support the club's goal of being one of the strongest community clubs within the Eastern Football Netball League (EFNL).

2. Coach Responsibilities and Conduct

A coach at NRJFC acts as a **mentor, role model, and teacher** to junior players. Coaches must always act responsibly and never take advantage of their position.

All coaches are expected to:

- Comply with **club policies regarding smoking, alcohol and drugs**
- Arrive at the ground **at least one hour before games**
- Treat **players, parents, umpires, officials and opposition teams with respect**
- Avoid **verbal abuse, physical abuse or aggressive behaviour**
- Refrain from **swearing during coaching activities**, including before and after matches
- Promote a **positive and supportive environment**

Coaches are expected to lead by example and demonstrate behaviour consistent with the **AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct**.

3. Anti-Discrimination and Inclusivity Policy

NRJFC maintains a strict stance against discrimination or harassment.

No person associated with the club (player, coach, parent, official or spectator) may engage in behaviour that:

- Offends, humiliates or intimidates another person
- Ridicules, threatens or insults another person
- Vilifies someone based on race, religion, gender, sexuality, ability, colour, or national origin

The club supports the **EFNL Vilification and Discrimination Policy** and complies with the following legislation:

- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)

Any breaches should be reported to the **Team Manager or Football Operations Manager** and will be managed through the club's **Issue Resolution Policy**.

4. Gender Participation Policy

NRJFC encourages participation from players of **all gender identities**.

Under the **Equal Opportunity Act 1995 (Vic)**:

- Children **under 12 cannot be excluded** from sporting activities based on gender.
- For participants **aged 12 and over**, gender separation may apply where physical attributes such as strength and stamina are relevant.

As per AFL Victoria and EFNL regulations:

- Female players who turn **14 years old by January 1** of the playing year must participate in a **female competition** rather than a mixed competition.

All members must comply with these rules and any concerns should be directed to club management.

5. Team Selection and Player Development

Equity of Opportunity

The club promotes **fair opportunity for all players** to develop and enjoy football.

As players move through older age groups, the way equity is implemented may change to reflect **competition level and player development needs**.

Player Development Principles

Selection and match participation should support:

- Maintaining player **self-esteem and dignity**
- Ensuring **enjoyment and satisfaction**
- Improving **skills, knowledge and performance**

Player Formation Guidelines

- Players should **rotate through positions** during matches.
- Playing time should be **distributed fairly across the season**.
- All players should take the field **before half time** where possible.

Finals Participation

Where a team plays **two or more finals**, every player should participate in **at least one finals match** where practical.

6. Game Time Policy

NRJFC sets minimum participation standards to ensure fair development opportunities.

Under 8 – Under 15

- Players should receive **at least 75% game time**.

Under 17

- A **minimum of 50% game time** is acceptable to assist transition into senior football where time restrictions do not exist.

Non-Competitive Age Groups (U8–U10)

- The 75% target should be met **each week**.
- Players should experience **multiple positions** through rotation.

Competitive Age Groups (U11–U15)

- The **75% game time average** should be achieved **across the season**.

Monitoring

Coaching staff and team managers are responsible for **tracking player game time**. Maintaining manual records is recommended to assist with resolving disputes.

Exceptions

Reduced game time may occur where:

- A player repeatedly misses training
- A player demonstrates poor attitude or behaviour

However, coaches **must discuss this with the player and parents prior to reducing game time**.

7. Team Grading Policy

Where player numbers allow, the club may field **multiple teams within an age group**.

Team selection considers:

- Player development opportunities
- Team balance
- Training attendance and attitude
- Game awareness and skill level
- Physical capability
- Ability to follow coaching direction
- Previous performance

The **selection panel** will consist of:

- The team coaches (or prospective coaches)
- A member of the Football Operations Department

Their goal is to ensure **balanced teams and development opportunities for all players**.

8. Player Nomination for Lower Grades

Players may request to play in a **lower graded team**.

Process:

1. Parent submits written request to the **Football Operations Manager**.
2. The player and parents attend a **panel meeting**.
3. The panel (Football Operations Manager and two committee members or coaches) reviews the request.
4. The panel communicates the final decision to the family and coaches.

Special consideration may be given to **first-year players** at the club.

9. Team Numbers Policy

To support competitive balance and safety:

- The **highest graded team must have at least 21 players** available each week.
- Players may be **promoted from lower grades** if required.
- Players promoted must be **physically capable and ready for the higher level**.

If the lower team falls below standard numbers:

- The opposing club may be asked to **field equal numbers**.
- EFNL may be contacted if agreement cannot be reached.
- In extreme cases, the club may **forfeit the match for safety reasons**.

As a guideline, **approximately 42 players** are required to sustain two teams in one age group.

10. The Role of the Coach

A coach plays a **central leadership role** within the club and must balance multiple responsibilities.

Key roles include:

- **Manager** – coordinating players, officials and supporters
- **Leader** – organising training, match preparation and team morale
- **Teacher** – developing football skills and tactics
- **Mentor** – guiding player development
- **Selector** – assisting with team selection
- **Communicator** – delivering clear instructions and feedback
- **Motivator** – encouraging player accountability and improvement
- **Planner** – designing seasonal training and development programs
- **Psychologist** – managing diverse personalities within the team
- **Public representative** – representing the club positively

Coaches must continually **review performance, study the game and improve their knowledge** to best support their players.

11. Coaching Tenure

Coaches may re-apply to coach the **same team for up to three consecutive years**.

In exceptional circumstances, the committee may allow a **fourth year** if a suitable replacement cannot be found.

Coaches may also apply to coach **different age groups or teams** within the club.

12. Coaching Application and Requirements

All prospective coaches must:

- Complete the **NRJFC Coaching Application Form**
- Hold or obtain **Level 1 AFCA Coaching Accreditation**
- Possess a **valid Working With Children Check**
- Align their **coaching philosophy with club values**

The club also values applicants with:

- Teaching or education experience
- Coaching experience in other sports
- Elite sporting background
- Previous football playing or coaching experience

Coaches must assemble a **support team**, including:

- Assistant Coach
- Team Manager
- Trainer
- Runner

All support staff must:

- Hold a **Working With Children Check**
- Complete **Level 1 accreditation**
- Sign the **club behavioural policy**.

These roles must be filled with individuals capable of fulfilling responsibilities **throughout the entire season (pre-season, in-season and post-season)**.