



RIVERLAND FOOTBALL LEAGUE



JUNIOR PLAYER – PLAYING UP & PLAYING DOWN POLICY			
Author	Riverland Football League	Version	2
Authorised by	RFL Commission	Approval Date	18 March 2024
Other Relevant Documents	RFL Play Up Form RFL Play Down Form	Review Date	January 2025

POLICY STATEMENT

The Riverland Football League (RFL) is an affiliated member of the South Australian National Football League (SANFL) and as such recognises the Australian Football League (AFL) as the overarching Governing body.

The RFL has a Junior Competition which is limited to a 3 year age gap as a requirement of player insurance provider. Players seeking to play in a grade above their designated age group may do so provided they meet the Risk Management Protocols as set out below.

- Any Under 11 players can play Under 13
- Any Under 13 players can play Under 15
- Only top age Under 15 players can play Under 18 (Player can only move up 1 grade)

RFL Clubs, coaches and parents have a duty of care when deciding on a player moving up or down a grade.

POLICY

To assist Clubs to conduct reasonable duty of care to protect the younger children from any injury the following policy is considered the appropriate steps to take.

CHILD PLAYING UP

Risk Management Protocols:

- The request for a 'Playing Up' Permit must be submitted to the RFL no less than one (1) week prior to the intended first game of the player in the higher grade. The request must be made using the appropriate Play Up form.
- The RFL Football Operations Committee will review and either approve or decline the request. The Committees decision is final.
- Umpires notified of younger players in the age group prior to game commencing.
- Younger players will be highlighted on team sheets.
- Coaches are instructed to liaise with umpires regarding the younger players on each team.
- Coaches will endeavor to match players by ability and size on match day.
- Clubs are instructed to advise their players of any younger players in the opposition team.
- Bottom age players wear yellow arm bands to signify all of the above and this is mandated by the League.

- Fair play rules are used to even up numbers for each side to ensure a safe playing environment for younger players.

Risk Management Enforcement:

- No player in the age group will miss a game to play an underage player.
- These players' ability and physical attributes will be assessed by the RFL officials early in the season to identify any potential issues.
- Such circumstances must be signed off by the League and these will be determined on a case by case basis.
- The league has the ability to impose fines via By Laws for any breaches of the policy. Those penalties are determined by the board in conjunction with an investigation committee.

CHILD PLAYING DOWN

- Clubs must apply to the RFL Football Operations Committee for a 'permit' for an over-age player/s to play down a grade no less than one (1) week prior to the players intended first game in the lower grade. This application must be made on the relevant 'RFL Junior Player – Play Down Form'.
- The decision to apply for a permit should only be made based on possible medical condition and/or disability, child's size or ability. In some cases, applications may be made based on the child's size and/or ability.
- The application for a 'Playing Down' Permit must be forwarded to the RFL Football Operations Committee and players may not play down unless written approval from the RFL Football Operations Committee has been received.
- Although this policy relates to the RFL Junior Competition, it is recognised there may be players who suffer medical / physical conditions which seriously impedes their ability to play within the senior competition. In such cases an application may be forwarded to the RFL Football Operations Committee, but consideration will only be given subject to the age of the player/s.
- The Club must agree that the player or players are suitable to play against younger children.
- The coaches should endeavour to match players by ability and size on match day.
- The parents of the younger age group must be informed that there will be an older child/child on the field.
- The player is to be noted on the team sheet.
- The umpire must be made aware by the coach or the Club of the team.
- The child/children must wear a fluorescent arm band (or other identification as directed by the Board in the interim) on the left upper arm of the child/children.

- The Club making the application and Parents / Guardian’s must acknowledge the following conditions will apply to permits issued under this policy. These will include, but not restricted to:
 - Permits are issued for the player to play only within the grade/team nominated.
 - The RFL Football Operations Committee reserves the right to revoke any permit if it is found – The player has played up in another age group/team
 - The player is reported or sent from the playing field by any Official
 - It is identified the player has not played within the rules of Australian Rules Football and/or Junior Policy

RECOMMENDATION

- This policy is to be read in conjunction with the AFL Junior Football Guide
- The RFL on an annual basis will discuss with Clubs on possible modified rules or the sharing of junior players amongst Clubs. (*Refer the AFL Junior Football Guide*)

REFERENCES

SACFL Rules and Regulations

<https://sanfl.com.au/communityfootball/community-football-rules-regulations/>

AFL Junior Football Guide:

https://resources.afl.com.au/afl/document/2020/01/21/0947b624-5457-4983-8ed8-a862ccfefca1/Australian-Football-Match-Policy.pdf?_ga=2.142755196.858114085.1651646417-364855388.1608629757

Rules of Australian Football

<https://www.afl.com.au/about-afl/laws-of-the-game>

History of Junior Interleague Player Selection Policy

Version	Date reviewed and endorsed	Content of review/purpose
1	Unknown	First version
2	18 March 2024	Play up Risk Management Protocols/Enforcement added