



Underage Application to Play Up

This form is to be used by a Club seeking approval from the Controlling Body for a Player to play in a higher Grade for which the Player is not automatically age eligible under Section 3.1(b)(ii) of the *National Community Football Policy Handbook*. The application must detail what the exceptional and compelling circumstances are that have regard to the Player's football development interests including their physical capacity, experience, skill level and social maturity.

PART A PLAYER DETAILS

Player First Name		Player Surname	
Player D.O.B.		Player Club	
Player's Actual Grade (e.g. U11)		Grade Seeking Approval For (e.g. U14)	

PART B RELEVANT ATTRIBUTES (PHYSICAL CAPACITY, EXPERIENCE, SKILL, SOCIAL MATURITY)

Player's Height		Player's Weight	
How many years has the Player played AFL?		AFL Grades Played in Past 3 Seasons	
Has the Player played representative football?	Yes ☐	If "Yes", provide a summary of the player's representative history.	
Is the Player part of a football talent Program (eg AFL Academy)	Yes ☐	If "Yes", provide details, e.g. what program, how long in program, age group etc.	
Has the Player finished in the top 5 in a Club or League Best & Fairest?	Yes ☐	If "Yes", provide details, e.g. what age group, place etc.	
What other Sports has the Player participated in over the past 3 years, and what grades?			
Submission on the Player's Social Maturity Observations of the player's ability to behave and interact appropriately with players and officials in the higher grade. Details of any leadership, volunteering, or extracurricular activities the player has undertaken.			

PART C COACH ASSESSMENT (The player is to be assessed at a training by the coach of the team they wish to play for)

Details of Assessment Undertaken. Details of the drills undertaken and observations of the Player's capabilities in those drills including by comparison to other Players (of that Grade) and assessment on whether there is any unreasonable risk to the Player's health and safety to play in the higher Grade.			
Coach Declaration <i>I confirm that I have assessed the Player as detailed above and, in my view, the Player is capable of playing in the higher Grade requested from a physical capacity, experience, skill level and social maturity perspective.</i>	Coach Name		
	Coach Signature		
	Date		

PART D EXCEPTIONAL & COMPELLING CIRCUMSTANCES (Club and/or parent/guardian to complete)

Detail the **exceptional and compelling circumstances** for the request to play up in a higher Grade, and any reasons as to how this is in **Player's** football development interests?
See **Principles & Examples** on next page.

PART E SAFEGUARDING REQUIREMENTS (where a junior player is seeking to play in a senior competition)**Player Protection Initiatives.**

What initiatives will be undertaken by the Club to ensure the welfare of the underage player being integrated into a Senior football club environment having regard to *Safeguarding Children & Young People* requirements.

For example, the potential exposure to obscene language or behaviour or consumption of alcohol at or following club events (eg training, matches, social events etc).

PART F DECLARATION & SIGNATORIES (read and tick all boxes in acknowledgement of these terms)

The responses and details provided in this Underage Application to Play Up are true and accurate. False or misleading information in this Application may be in breach of the *National Community Football Policy Handbook*, and may result in revocation of any approval to play up.

☐

The Parents / Guardians of the Player give permission for the Player to play in the higher Grade and are satisfied that the Club has appropriately assessed the Player's capability of playing in that Grade.

☐

This Application for Dispensation relates to the current season only and, if approved by the Controlling Body, provides no expectation of ongoing rights to such approval in any future season.

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The Club and Parents / Guardians of the Player agree to comply with any conditions of approval of this Application as imposed by the Controlling Body [see Note 4].

☐

Parent / Guardian Name

Signature

Date

Club Contact Name

Signature

Date

Club Contact

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NOTES

PRINCIPLES and EXAMPLES

NOTE 1

General Principles

1. **Eligibility.** Section 3.1(b)(ii) allows an underage player to play in age groups that are two years above their age without dispensation. For example, a player who is 9 (turning 10 in the playing year) may play Under 10, Under 11 and Under 12 grades.
2. **Player Wellbeing.** Priority must be given to the player's wellbeing. Where a player seeks to play in a grade that is three or more years ahead of their age, an appropriate process must be adopted to evaluate the player's capabilities to play in a significantly higher age level, including establishing there are exceptional and compelling circumstances to support this, as well as obtaining parental consent.
3. **Participation.** A player seeking to play under these provisions should not displace a player who is age-eligible and available to play in that grade. For example, an available Under 16 player should not be 'dropped' from the Under 16 team to allow selection of an Under 13 player.
Exceptions to this are:
 - if the applicant player has no other reasonable & readily available age-eligible playing options; or
 - the player is seeking to play in a Senior competition
4. **Participation.** In allowing the player to play up, there should be no significant adverse participation impact on the player's usual age level team. For example, where allowing a player to play up results in their usual age level team forfeiting a match due to insufficient numbers.
5. **Child Safeguarding.** Regard must be had for Child safeguarding provisions under the Handbook and under relevant laws, particularly where an underage player is seeking to play in a Senior grade.

NOTE 2

Exceptional & Compelling Circumstances

Exceptional and Compelling Circumstances refers to the **applicant player's circumstances**, not those of the team or club. Both 'exceptional' and 'compelling' circumstances must be met.

Exceptional. Regular definitions of *exceptional* include "*much greater than usual*", "*to an unusually high degree*" or "*unusual and infrequent*". Therefore, a circumstance must be more than "unusual".

Compelling. Regular definitions of *compelling* include "*strong and convincing*" and "*forceful and persuasive*".

Relevant Attributes. In assessing whether there are exceptional and compelling circumstances, the Controlling Body must also have regard for evidence that the player:

- is **physically capable** of playing in the higher level
- has the **skills** and understanding of the game to play at the higher level
- has **experience** in playing AFL or another relevant (e.g. contact) sport
- has the **social maturity** to behave and interact appropriately with players and officials in that higher grade

The presence of these attributes does not, of itself, mean the application meets exceptional and compelling circumstances.

NOTE 3

Examples

These are examples only. A Controlling Body is not limited to these examples in assessing whether there are exceptional and compelling circumstances.

Participation. For example, if a competition does not provide an age-eligible grade such that playing in a higher age group is the only viable option the player has to participate. This should consider any other reasonable & readily accessible option for the player in the competition or in a neighbouring competition.

Development Interests. For example, a player listed in a Talent League Club or Academy where that Club or Academy has requested the player to play at a higher level for development reasons (and that there is evidence of this).

Risk. For example, a player who is significantly more physically developed than others in their age-eligible grade and whose physicality presents an abnormal risk to others in that grade.

NOTE 4

Approval

Conditions of Approval. In approving an Application, the Controlling Body may impose any conditions that it considers are appropriate, including limiting the number of matches the Player can play in the higher grade. Any breach of such conditions:

- (i) may result in immediate revocation of approval to play up;
- (ii) may result in the Player being deemed an ineligible player; and
- (iii) may be dealt with as a breach of policy under the Handbook or Controlling Body Rules.