



ST BERNARD'S OLD COLLEGIANS FOOTBALL CLUB INC.

Founded 1963; Incorporated 1984; Affiliated with VAFA & WRFL

JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB POLICY DOCUMENT

(To be read in conjunction with the WRFL Rules and regulations)

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INTRODUCTION

The St Bernard's Old Collegians Junior Football Club welcomes all players, their families and friends to our club. The Club is rich in history having been part of the Victorian Amateur Football Association (VAFA) competition for over 50 years. Our junior club is part of the Western Region Football League (WRFL) and combined with a successful Auskick program, we take pride as a club that we can be a significant part of your child's football journey.

This document contains important information about our club policies on player numbers and participation; expected behaviours; and provides some answers to some commonly asked questions. Please take the time to read the document and if you have any comments or questions, please contact one of the junior committee members or email juniorpres@stbernardsfc.com.au. Further information can be found on the club website www.stbernardsfc.com.au/juniors.

PHILOSOPHY

We would like to ensure that we provide an equal opportunity for all children to play football; to develop their skills and understanding of the game; and to provide a safe and fun environment for them to enjoy their football.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Each year the club will conduct a registration day (or days) and provide the opportunity for parents to pay the fee as set by the junior committee.

Registrations may close if any team/age group reaches the maximum number of players.

Fees must be paid upon registration through the WRFL Website. This is scheduled to occur prior to Round 1 of each year otherwise the player will be ineligible to play until the WRFL Registration (\$10 per player) and Club Fees (see below) are paid.

2017 Club Fees

If paid prior to Saturday, 18 February

1st Player - \$280, 2nd Player - \$150, Family (3 or more Players) - \$480

If paid on, or after Saturday, 18 February

1st Player - \$320, 2nd Player - \$150, Family (3 or more Players) - \$520

EXISTING PLAYERS will receive an invitation to register via email from the WRFL.

NEW PLAYERS to the club are asked to attend the **Registration Day on Sunday, 12 February (9:30am – 11:30am)** at the St Bernard's College Oval, Perrett Pavilion (Enter via Gate 8).

(Please bring a copy of your birth certificate or passport).

Email registration enquiries to junioradmin@stbernardsfc.com.au

TEAMS AND ELIGIBILITY

The St Bernard's Junior Football Club is affiliated with the Western Region Football League (WRFL). The WRFL has the following divisions that we are required to adhere to, based on our player registrations:

Boys	Girls
Under 8	Under 12
Under 9	Under 15
Under 10	Under 18
Under 11	
Under 12	
Under 13	
Under 14	
Under 15	
Under 17	

Further, the WRFL define the eligibility of a player as follows:

- the eligibility of an underage competition player shall be determined by the age of the player on the first day of January of the current season.
- all players must be a minimum of 7 years of age as of the 1st of January of the current season to be eligible for registration. Players must not be any more than two (2) years younger than the age group he/she is playing in.

In addition to the WRFL policy, it is our club policy that:

- all players will play in their specified age group unless circumstances such as - not enough players in an older age group - deem it necessary to move players up in age group.
- any decision to move a player "up" in age group will be at the recommendation of the relevant coaches after consultation with the player and the player's parent(s).
- any recommendation will be submitted to the Junior Football Operations Manager for final approval; or not as the case may be.

TRAINING

The standard times and days for training are as follows:

- Under 17 teams will be on Wednesday and Friday nights from 4:30pm - 6:00pm
- Under 13 to Under 17 teams will be Wednesday nights from 4:30pm - 6:00pm
- Under 8 to Under 12 teams will be Friday nights from 4:30pm - 6:00pm

Circumstances may require changes to the standard times, or days allocated, and will be communicated to those teams affected. **Players will not be allowed to train or play without a mouthguard.**

The coaches require players to attend training on time and with the appropriate training equipment and attitude. Discipline at training is just as important as on the game day.

TEAM SELECTION

Under 8 – 12 players per side on the ground with any number of interchange players. The game is played under modified rules with each ground divided into 3 sections – Forwards, Centres and Backs. Players to be rotated every quarter i.e. centre, backs, forwards. Excess players should be given to opposition team if they are short.

Under 9 & 10 - 18 players per side on the ground with any number of interchange players. Players to be rotated every quarter i.e. centre, backs, forwards. Excess players should be given to opposition team if they are short. (a minimum of 15 players per side)

Player team placements for Under 8, 9 & 10:

St Bernards is a family friendly club and we want the best experience for your child transitioning into junior football.

Each player can nominate up to 3 friends at the time of registration if they wish to play in the same side. The St Bernard's Junior Committee will endeavour to match at least 1.

If due to numbers this is not possible, the decision rests with the committee to ensure even teams are built, after all considerations have been accounted.

By the 3 or 4th week of the season, please rest assured that your child will make a strong bond with those in their nominated side regardless; as playing footy is all about making new friends and our coaching staff embrace this ethos at the club.

Please note players who register AFTER round 1 will be accommodated at the committee's discretion.

Under 11 to 17 - 18 players per side on the ground with 7 interchange players i.e. a maximum of 25 players that can be named on the team sheet and take the field. It is not the intent of the club to have a roster greater than 25 per side but from time to time this may be unavoidable. If however a team list extends beyond 25 then players will need to be formally rostered off during the season. It will be the responsibility of the coach and team manager to ensure all players are rotated equitably. Also, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the Coach and Team Manager of a player's inability to play whether due to sickness, injury, holidays, etc.

TEAM GRADING SELECTION

It is strongly believed that we as a club need to commence grading of players at the Under 11 level through to, and including, Under 17. This may mean top age players playing in a lower grade within the age group and similarly, bottom age players playing in a higher grade. The reasoning behind any such decision is:

- a) The development of top age players by playing in a lower grade. These players may not currently have the skill or ability to play in the highest grade and playing in a lower grade will ensure more game time to develop skills. Also it may act to protect smaller body top age players to play in a lower grade.
- b) Exposing bottom age players, who have the skill and body to compete in a higher grade, to a quality of football that will help them to develop their skills further.

During the season, there may be some movement of players between teams as part of the development, grading and team balance process.

Please note that this policy is reviewable at the discretion of the committee in conjunction with the coaching staff and the Head of Football Operations.

PLAYING TIME

Ideally each player up to and including the lowest Under 14 graded team should receive a minimum of 3 quarters per game. This may depend on injuries, issues of player discipline and player fitness levels.

It may be necessary at the Under 15 and Under 17 level for some players to receive more game time for a number of reasons, at the coach's discretion. However, all players should receive a minimum of 2 quarters per game.

Please note that this policy is reviewable at the discretion of the committee in conjunction with the coaching staff and Head of Football Operations.

PLAYERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

There may be players whom we are advised or become aware of that have special needs:

Learning difficulties - Not all students within a classroom learn the same way or at the same rate. We advise all coaches to become aware where possible of these needs and modify coaching techniques to help accommodate these learning needs.

Medical – Please advise during registration of any pertinent medical needs/conditions your child may have so that our first aid team have knowledge on game day should medical attention be required.

Emotional and Social Difficulties - There may be uncooperative behaviour from time to time This may be just adolescent behaviour and nothing more .However if it is a demonstration of possible further issues that the player may be experiencing, the coach will endeavour to assess and understand the situation and communicate this to the committee / parents in a constructive manner with a view to achieving a positive outcome for the child.

FINALS SELECTION

Finals football is considered different to the home and away season. The selection policy for finals will be based on the following:

- a) An opportunity for as many players as possible to experience finals football.
- b) An understanding that player selection and playing time for individual players gives the team the best possible opportunity to do well.
- c) Ideally a player will receive a minimum of half a game.
- d) An understanding that the policy will provide coaches in the Under 14's through to Under 17's a greater scope for varying playing time for individual players than Under 11's to Under 13's.

FINALS ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for finals, players must play a minimum of four (4) home and away games with that club. Two (2) of these four (4) games must have been in the team he/she is wishing to represent in the finals. Any player who has played half the home and away games less any byes plus one (1) game during the season with teams in a higher grade may not play in a finals game in a lower grade.

Players who play in two (2) or more games in the same weekend can only count the game played in the higher grade as qualifying for finals.

Clubs who have more than one (1) team in any division of the same age group playing in finals games on the same weekend will be allowed free interchange of players for that weekends finals games provided

they do not play more than one (1) game on the same weekend (unless special circumstances arise, which must be approved by the WRFL General Manager, Football Operations or representative).

COACHES

To coach within the WRFL, it is mandatory that all coaches are accredited as a minimum Level One Coach. The club will arrange for, and pay for, enrolment in an accredited Coach's course.

Coaches will be expected along with their team manager to attend a coaches meeting during the season to update the status of the team, address resource issues and give feedback as appropriate. This information can then be shared amongst the coaching group.

On field discipline and player management is the domain of the coach. Our clear objective is to play the game in the spirit of fairness and mutual respect for teammates, opposition players and umpires.

All coaches should have a working with children certificate where required.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved with the club we understand that this is an individual choice; however the club and the individual teams cannot function without the assistance of people outside of the coaches, team managers and committee.

Many roles need to be fulfilled on game day; your team manager will roster parents on for specific roles. If you want to be involved in a semi permanent, or permanent capacity, please discuss with your team manager or coach. The following is a list of roles that may need to be filled:

Semi-permanent or permanent

- Field Umpire (if not supplied by the WRFL)
- Boundary Umpire
- Runner
- Trainer (must be qualified, the club will pay for the course and registration)

Rostered on

- Goal Umpire
- Oranges/lollies
- Time Keeper
- Umpire Escort
- Water Carriers

GAME DAY

All players must have a mouth guard - no mouth guard; no play.

Correct playing uniforms - royal blue shorts for home games; white shorts for away games (Under 8 – Under 11 do not require white shorts; only blue); football boots, football socks; and jumper.

Players in all age groups are supplied with jumpers by the Club. These jumpers are the property of the club and must be handed back at the end of the season. If they are not handed back, a cost will apply as the jumper will need to be replaced. These jumpers are not to be worn to training and should be looked after as if your own.

Any medical requirements for your child should be communicated to the coach, team manager or trainer and managed by you/your child if appropriate e.g. Ventolin.

UNIFORM

All players must wear WRFL approved shorts and socks. These are available through the club and can be purchased from the property room on selected training nights.

INJURIES & INSURANCE

Injuries may occur during training or a game. A trainer will be at all games for each team. The cost of transportation to a medical facility and/or treatment at the medical facility is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Note the club is bound by the Insurance Policy of the WRFL.

CLUB ROOMS

It is essential that we treat our (and opposition club rooms with respect). We need to ensure that the rooms are cleaned for others to use. It is not just the responsibility of the committee members; coach's or team managers to clean up but the players and parents also. ***The last team playing at the end of the day should ensure that the rooms are left clean.***

The social rooms also need to be respected; again it is the responsibility of us all to ensure that we leave the rooms in a clean manner. And please note, football boots should not be worn in the social rooms.

PROCEDURE FOR MANAGEMENT OF REPORTED PLAYERS

The club will endeavour to ensure that the distress associated with being reported or being a victim of a report is minimised. The following should be undertaken:

At the game:

- a) The player, and others on the interchange bench, should remain calm, to ensure that no further incidents occur.
- b) Supporters and particularly the parents need to remain calm and must not enter the field of play or the interchange area.
- c) Ensure that all details of the incident are immediately noted (team manager and other witnesses to get together).

Post-game:

- a) The coach and team manager in consultation with the player and parents will discuss actions and timings.
- b) The Junior Secretary of the club needs to be notified of the report and the decision of the coach, team manager and player regarding the taking of the set penalty or evidence to be given.
- c) If the case goes to the tribunal, the club will provide an advocate to take charge of the defence or assist in the prosecution. The coach will take an active role. It is recommended that parents do not attend the tribunal.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

It is understood that parents may, at times, have concerns for their child or themselves. We believe as a committee that we have tried to address the majority of these concerns through our policy development. However, in the event that a grievance is to be raised, we suggest the following process:

- a) Wherever possible please approach the coach to resolve the matter.
- b) If you believe that it is not possible to approach the coach or the issue has remained unresolved after discussion, then we ask you to discuss the matter with the Head of Football Operations.
- c) If it is still not possible to resolve the issue then the Junior President will mediate and provide a binding resolution in writing.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The following is the WRFL Code of Conduct which has been adopted by and supported by the Junior Committee.

Preamble

The WRFL view the development and expansion of underage football as a vital component in the promoting and maintaining Australian Rules football as a major sport throughout Australia.

To this end, it is important that as many children as possible not only learn the skills of the game, but are encouraged to develop an enthusiastic enjoyment of all aspects of the sport.

The Junior Board of the WRFL feels it essential to set down of a minimum code of conduct. This WRFL's Junior Board has found it most challenging to make the split between actual conduct of all those involved in under age football and those philosophies that we believe are critical to the overall conduct.

With this in mind, we have opted to make a dual presentation as follows:

1. A Code of Conduct for junior players, club officials, coaches and spectators.
2. Philosophies intrinsic to under age football.

Code of Conduct

- Consumption of alcohol is strictly prohibited at any venue while under age football is being conducted.
- Players, spectators and officials should ensure that both on and off field behaviour is consistent with the principles of good sportsmanship.

Therefore:

- Swearing or abuse by either club official, player or spectator is not permissible at any time.
- Disputing umpire's decisions or behaving in an aggressive manner toward them is unacceptable. If there is a genuine concern, there are appropriate channels of communication in place.
- Aggressive behaviour and abuse toward opposition players, coaches, club officials or spectators is likewise unacceptable.
- All accredited coaches should be assessed by clubs regarding their knowledge of the Rules of the WRFL and their attitude toward working with young people. If their attitude or knowledge is inadequate, steps should be taken to enable them to attend the next available Coaches Accreditation Course for a further re-accreditation. Common sense should prevail if there is an attitudinal problem.

Philosophies required to Support Code of Conduct

- All participants should understand that the Rules of the game are mutual agreements which no-one should evade or break. All those involved in under age football should strive to develop a respect for the League in which they participate, their club and their opponents.
- We all have an obligation to behave in a manner that will bring credit to ourselves, our club and the game of Australian Rules football.
- Players should be proud when walking off the ground after each game knowing they have given of their best.
- For the game to be enjoyable, players must have the opportunity to participate, learn and achieve their potential. The role of adults is to provide the environment for this to occur.

- Selection of teams and amount of field time given to players in under age football should not be decided on current ability only.
- Coaches must take into account the age group and skill level of those they are coaching - neither expecting too much nor too little.
- It is inappropriate in under age football for clubs with a large list of players in any one age group to neither loan nor make allowances for those clubs with smaller lists. Those teams with the greater number should play with no more than one extra player on the field.

Players Code of Conduct

- Play for the “fun of it” and not just to please parents and coaches.
- Play by the rules.
- Never argue with an official. If you disagree, have your captain or coach approach the official during a break or after the game.
- Control your temper. Verbal abuse of officials or other players, deliberately fouling or provoking an opponent and throwing equipment is not acceptable or permitted in any sport.
- Work equally hard for yourself and your team. Your team’s performance will benefit and so will you.
- Be a good sport. Cheer all good plays whether they are by your team or the other team.
- Treat all players as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of another player.
- Co-operate with your coach, team-mates and opponents. Without them there would be no game.
- At all times show respect and manners to everyone concerned.

Officials Code of Conduct

- Modify Rules and Regulations to match the skill of children and their needs.
- Compliment both teams on their effort.
- Be consistent, objective and courteous in calling all infractions.
- Condemn the deliberate foul as being unsportsmanlike and promote fair play and appropriate sports behaviour.
- Use common sense to ensure that overcalling violations does not lose the “spirit of the game” for children.
- Publicly encourage rule changes, which will enforce the principals of participation for fun and enjoyment.
- Actions speak larger than words. Ensure that both on and off the field your behaviour is consistent with the principals of good sportsmanship.
- Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound officiating principals and the principals of growth and development of children.

Parents Code of Conduct

- If children are interested, encourage them to play sport. However, if a child is not willing to play, do not force him/her.
- Focus upon the child’s effort and performance rather than the overall outcome of the event. This assists the child in setting realistic goals related to his/her ability by reducing the emphasis on winning.
- Teach children that an honest effort is as important as victory so that the result of each game is accepted without undue disappointment.
- Encourage children to always play according to the rules.

- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing a game.
- Remember that children learn best from example. Applaud good plays by both teams.
- If you disagree with an official, raise the issue through the appropriate channel rather than question the official's judgement and honesty in public. Remember that most officials give their time and effort for your child's involvement.
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from sporting activities.
- Recognise the value and importance of volunteer coaches. They give of their time and resources to provide recreational activities for the children and deserve your support.
- Always remember two points: sportsmanship but most importantly let's all have fun.

Spectators Code of Conduct

- Children play organised sports for fun. They are not playing for the entertainment of spectators only, nor are they miniature professionals.
- Applaud good performance and efforts by your team and the opponents. Congratulate both teams upon their performance regardless of the game's outcome.
- Respect the officials' decision. If there is a disagreement, follow the appropriate procedure in order to question the decision and teach the children to do likewise.
- Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a competition. Positive comments are motivational.
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Show respect for your teams opponents, without them there would be no game.
- Encourage players to play according to the rules and the officials' decisions.
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not using foul language, harassing players, coaches or officials.

Coaches Code of Conduct

- Abide by the Laws and Rules. The Laws of the Game and Rules of your Club/League.
- Teach the rules. Rules are mutual agreements which nobody should break.
- Group players competitively.
- Avoid overplaying talented players.
- Maximise fun. Place winning in perspective.
- Stress safety always.
- Consider maturity levels. Devise training programs to suit all.
- Develop team respect. For opponents, umpires and coaches.
- Recognise the importance of proper injury treatment.
- Keep up to date. With coaching developments.
- Attain coaching accreditation.
- Avoid derogatory language based on gender or race.