



MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

Good coaching relationships are important in building a child or young person's confidence, their skill set and love of sport. It is important that a coach creates a positive and safe environment through having well defined boundaries.

Maintaining professional boundaries protects both the child and/or young person and you from physical, psychological, and emotional harm.

To maintain professional boundaries, you should not:

- Blur your role as a coach so a child or young person doesn't have a clear understanding of what you can and can't do for them - **remember: friendly not friend.**
- Favour, isolate, or single out an individual child or young person.
- Initiate contact with children or young people (or former participants) outside of football activities, including through social media, unless an established relationship already exists (family or friends).
- Offer support to a child or young person, or their family, outside of football activities, such as babysitting or financial support.

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Unlike the law, or policies, professional boundaries may be applied differently in different circumstances. E.g. providing a lift or socialising with your team outside of football may be unavoidable in small communities or in rural areas with limited transport.

DEFINITIONS

A Child: someone involved in footy who is 12 years or younger - usually a player but may also be a sibling of a player or child of an adult at the club.

A Young Person: someone involved in footy who is between the ages of 13 and 18 years old - usually a player but could also be an umpire or in another role at the club, or a sibling or child of a player.

Adult: someone involved in footy who is over the age of 18 - this could be a coach, manager, umpire, club official, AFL staff member, volunteer, and/or a parent.



TIP - Having a uniform and wearing it whether it is your AFL polo, or your club gear is a good way to help determine your boundaries - uniform on when you are in your professional role and off when you are not.

It is also a good way to explain it to children and young people.



GIVING GIFTS

As a coach it is important you are not favouring one child or young person over another. Avoiding gift giving or incentives is a good way of maintaining these boundaries, unless you are distributing these fairly between all children and young people in your team and they are proportionate to the circumstances e.g. buying ice creams for everyone at the end of the season is both fair and proportionate. Taking one child

or young person to the AFL Grand Final is neither fair nor proportionate.

When accepting gifts from children and young people or their families always ensure a supervisor, a manager or someone in your club is aware, transparency is key and again, consider if the gift is proportionate to the circumstances.



USE, POSSESSION OR SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

While supervising or interacting with children or young people, adults in football must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug
- use or be under the influence of alcohol
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over-the-counter drugs
- supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco) to children or young people

- smoke cigarettes, vape or use e-cigarettes during football activities.

Assume a child or young person is watching or listening and behave in a way that models respectful, responsible, and lawful behaviours.



REMEMBER - We want all children and young people in football to be safe, feel safe, play safe.



PHOTOGRAPHS OR FILMING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

When can we take and use photos and images of children and young people?

Children and young people may only be photographed or filmed:

- when they state they are happy to have their photo taken and give consent
- with parent or carer consent and the parent is informed of how the images are going to be used and stored
- in a context that is directly related to football
- when the child or young person is appropriately dressed
- in the presence of other adults related to football.



If a child or young person does not wish to be photographed, or their parent/carer has not provided permission for them to be filmed, they should not be singled out or made to feel excluded. There may be reasons to opt out of photos that a parent/carer does not want to share, and they should have the right to opt out without judgement.

This could include serious risks of family violence from another parent or family member that may escalate if a child's whereabouts is exposed through the sharing of photos online. Remember you never know what someone else might be experiencing.

Football clubs, leagues and associations should ensure that:

- Any image of a child or young person is de-identified before publishing in any format (unless consent is obtained to publish identifying information) and must not be published without parent or carer consent, including in annual reports or on social media.
- Where possible, images are taken on a work device rather than a personal device.
- Images are stored in a manner that prevents access from an unauthorised person, in a locked drawer or cabinet if the images are in hard copy or in a password protected folder if the images are digital.

- Images taken by coaches or managers are to be destroyed or deleted as soon as they are no longer required.



STRATEGY – Whenever you take or share a photo or video of a child or young person ask yourself: would I be ok with someone else taking and sharing this if it were my own child?



PHOTO AND VIDEO CHECKLIST

- Have you asked the child or young person if they are ok to have photo or video taken of them?
- Do you have consent from a parent or carer?
- Is the context related to football?
- Is everyone appropriately dressed?
- Is there another adult at the football club aware that photos or video are being taken?
- Is there a professional photographer taking photos?
- Do you have permission to share it publicly? From parents and from the child or young person
- Do you have permission to share identifying information with the photo or video (name / football club - *never share personal contact details of any child or young person publicly*)?
- If you have taken photos or videos on your phone, have you forwarded them on to your club, league or association and/or stored them securely? (On a hard drive, not on your phone)
- Have you deleted all photos and video from your phone?
- Have you applied the 'my own child' rule?