



# MAINTAINING PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES WITH CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

## ADHERING TO 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 in your umpiring and officiating role 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 an official 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 or training activities, including through social media, unless an established relationship already existed (family or friends).
- Offer support to a child or young person, or their family, outside of football or training 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 teams outside of football/umpiring may be unavoidable in small communities or in rural areas with limited transport.

## DEFINITIONS

**A Child:** someone involved in footy who is 12 years old 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, player, 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 an umpire and/or official, it is important you are not favouring one child or young person over another. Although uncommon in an umpire or official role, avoiding gift giving or incentives is a good way of maintaining these boundaries.

When accepting or giving gifts to or 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 and/or fairly distributed.



## USE, POSSESSION OR SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

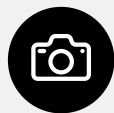
While supervising or interacting with children or young people, umpires and/or officials must not:

- 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 every child and young person 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/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/umpiring
- when the child or young person is appropriately dressed
- in the presence of other adults related to football/umpiring.



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 where possible:**

- 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.
- 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 an umpire or official 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 a photo or video taken of them?
- Do you have consent from a parent or carer?
- Is the context related to football/umpiring?
- 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? If so, adults shouldn't need to take photos at all
- Do you have permission to share it publicly? From parents/carers 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 league, club 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?

**SAY SOMETHING**

If you have concerns about the safety of a child or young person or have just seen or heard something that doesn't feel right, it is important you say something:



**You can:**

Speak directly with someone you trust in football like a coach, team manager, umpire, official or club representative.



Write down your concerns and pass them onto your club or association via email or a letter.



Use this QR code to raise a concern with the AFL



For any safeguarding queries email [childsafety@afl.com.au](mailto:childsafety@afl.com.au)

As always if anyone is in immediate danger contact the police on 000

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