

	RMFL POL07 DUTY OF CARE POLICY	
	Reviewed	29/3/2017
	Next Review Due	29/3/2019
	<p style="text-align: center;">Signed  Michelle Hill (Secretary)</p>	

The River Murray Football League operates under the SACFL and has adopted its DUTY OF CARE POLICY as set out below. The RMFL will review this in line with its annual document reviews, refer to Appendix 16 SA Community Football League Rules and Regulations.

DUTY OF CARE POLICY

FOR ALL SACFL LEAGUES & CLUBS WHO CONDUCT JUNIOR COMPETITIONS

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the AFL Junior Football Guide and the SACFL's Regulation 33

It is acknowledged that some Clubs do not have sufficient players to fill all Club Junior sides (this is most prevalent in the Regional Clubs) and at times a younger player would benefit from 'playing up a grade' & to assist in making up the numbers for a team.

It is also acknowledged that Clubs, Coaches and Parents have a duty of care when deciding on a player moving up or down a grade. To assist Clubs to undertake reasonable duty of care to protect the younger children from any injury the following policy is considered the appropriate steps to take.

It is important for Clubs to use common sense when making decisions to play a child up a grade, or when from time to time, playing a child who is older, down a grade.

For a child playing up

- It is strongly recommended that the Club designate the Coaches from both grades to determine which child/children are skilled enough and would benefit from playing up, this can be done at the commencement of the season or on the day of a match if required.
- The Coach or a senior representative of the Club must seek approval from the child's parents or guardian, such approval must be in writing, deemed to be a Consent Form to ensure the parent or guardian is aware of the potential risk of injury and to show that the Parent/Guardian are supportive of the Child playing up against older children.
- The child/children must be appropriately identified during the match, (e.g. a coloured arm band or bib or similar)
- • The child must also be recognised on the team sheet as an underage player
- The player should benefit from the opportunity to play up based on his/her skills and strength.
- Coaches should endeavour to match players by age and ability in accordance with the AFL Junior Match Guide

- The umpire must be informed of this process and use his/her best endeavours to protect the child
- This can only occur for a Child playing up **one grade only** (moving from U14 to U17 as an example only) or if the club only has one junior competition.

That Leagues on an annual basis discuss with Clubs possible modified rules or the sharing of junior players amongst clubs. Refer the AFL Junior Football Guild. *The AFL recognises that in regional and rural areas the opportunity to conduct competitions with a 2 year age span is not always possible. That reducing player numbers is recommended (9-12 a side).*

For a child playing down

- Clubs must apply to its League for a 'permit' for an over-age player to play down a grade at the beginning of the season, this decision should be made based on the child's size, ability or possible disability.
- 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 should be informed that there will be an older 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 of the older child

Special Note:

The SACFL was required to provide satisfaction to the JLT Insurance Underwriters that a reasonable 'duty of care' is in place to enable Leagues and Clubs to play children up and down. This is particularly common in country areas where the 3 year competition age bracket is common place. The AFL acknowledges the need within its Junior Football Guide, this allows players to play up for the benefit of the sport, the Club and the Players.

Therefore we request that the Duty of Care Policy be followed where the age gap is greater than 3 years.