

# **DISPENSATION POLICY**

**COMMUNITY COMPETITIONS**



**FOOTBALL  
VICTORIA**





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# OVERVIEW

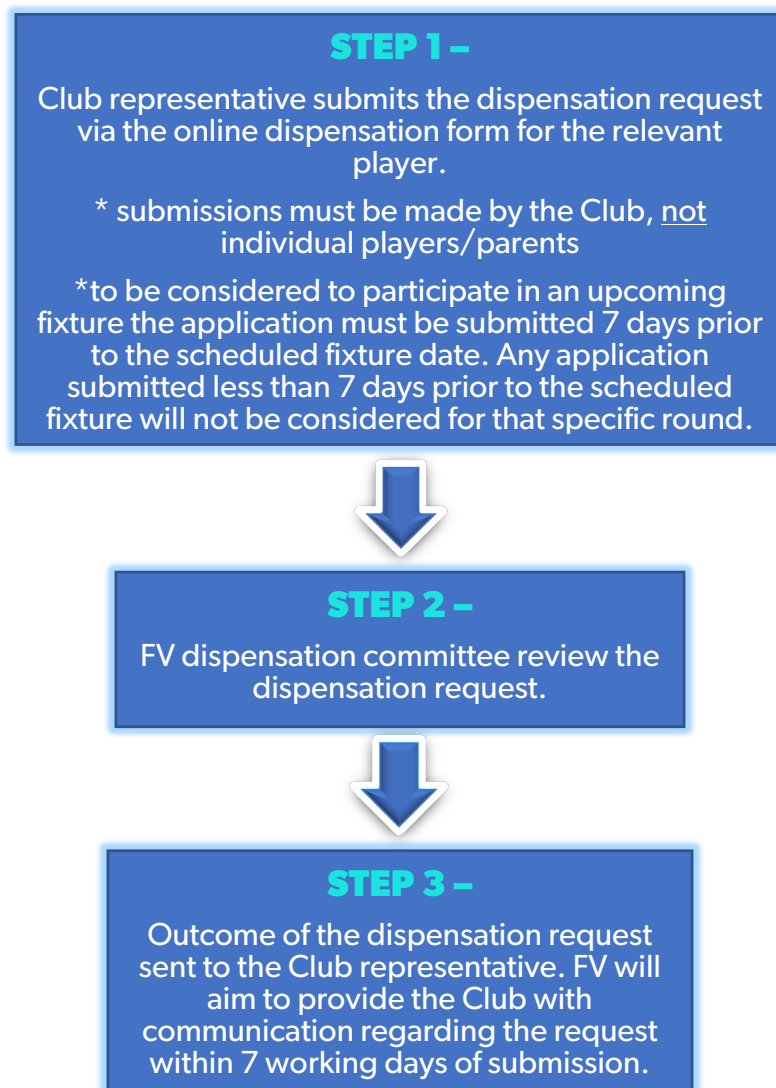
The purpose of this policy is to provide all stakeholders with a clear and concise process for dispensation requests amongst the FV community competitions.

This policy allows Clubs to submit a request for a player(s) to be granted exemption by FV to participate in competitions that they would otherwise not be eligible to.

To ensure all requests receive due consideration in line with the policy, FV has formed a dispensation committee that includes representatives from all relevant departments including but not limited to the competitions, technical, diversity and inclusion and registrations department. The purpose of the committee is to provide relevant expertise in evaluating each request.

FV at its sole discretion may amend any part of the dispensation policy as required from time to time.

## DISPENSATION PROCESS



\*Any Club that requests to submit further supporting documentation or information after the outcome of the request has been determined will incur a 're-review' administrative fee of \$75 charged to the Club's account.

# DETERMINATING A DISPENSATION APPLICATION

There are a range of various factors FV consider when determining the outcome of a dispensation application. A number of these factors may include and are not limited to:

- Maintaining the integrity of FV competitions
- Playing history of the player
- Alternate reasonable opportunities for the player to participate at the Club in an age eligible age group
- Alternate reasonable opportunities for the player to participate at a Club within reasonable age brackets in an age eligible age group
- The number of requests made for a certain team
- The number of requests made for a certain Club
- Supporting documentation from the national body - FA
- Supporting documentation from a certified medical practitioner
- The Club being able to provide the player with the assistance needed to prepare the player to play in an age eligible age group the following year
- Dispensation history of the player
- The submission being made in line with the stipulations surrounding the relevant dispensation category
- The wellbeing and safety of all participants
- Any other relevant circumstance or relevant supporting documentation

## SUBMITTING A DISPENSATION APPLICATION

All dispensation requests must be submitted by the Club on behalf of the relevant player. Submissions from individual parents/guardians/players will not be accepted.

To be considered to participate in an upcoming fixture the application must be submitted 7 days prior to the scheduled fixture date. Any application submitted less than 7 days prior to the scheduled fixture will not be considered for that specific round.

To submit a dispensation application please fill out the [Online Dispensation Application Form](#).

Please ensure that prior to submitting a dispensation request you are equipped with the following.

- FA ID number - to progress through the process the player must have an FA ID number. Please contact the registrations department via [registrations@footballvictoria.com.au](mailto:registrations@footballvictoria.com.au) for any queries regarding a player's FA ID number;
- all relevant information required to be submitted; and
- any relevant documentation as per the below regulations.

It is important to note that Clubs submit dispensation application requests in accordance with this policy, however approval is not guaranteed, nor should the Clubs anticipate approval prior to the dispensation request being considered and determined by FV through the defined process.

Should the dispensation request be approved – the approval is only applicable for the competition season relevant to the year in which the request is made and the provided approval letter by FV must be readily available on match day.

# TRANSGENDER, NON-BINARY AND INTERSEX

Everyone has a right to participate in football regardless of their gender identity, sexual orientation, and intersex status. These are protected characteristics under the law. The below guidelines and policy points relate to the inclusion of trans and gender diverse athletes, as well as athletes with intersex variations. A full policy related to the community guidelines and policy on the inclusion of trans and gender diverse athletes will be released by FV in 2023, which will give more comprehensive and detailed information for clubs and leagues. FV wishes to reinforce FV's commitment to diversity and inclusion within football and has a strict no-tolerance approach to transphobia.

For purposes of clarity, the following terminology is explained:

Transgender: A person with a gender identity that is different from the gender/ sex assigned at birth

- Transgender man: someone with a male gender identity who was assigned female at birth.
- Transgender woman: someone with a female gender identity who was assigned male at birth.
- Cisgender: a non-transgender person, who identifies as the assigned gender at birth.
- Non-binary: Some people do not identify as exclusively female or male. As their gender identity is outside the female/ male binary, they are often referred to as 'non-binary'.

Transition/Affirmation: The legal steps a transgender person takes to affirm their gender identity.

Intersex: The status of having a genetic, physical, or hormonal feature(s) that are not easily identified as being:

- Neither wholly female or male
- A combination of female and male
- Neither female or male

A person with an intersex variation may identify as man, woman, neither or both.

## MINIROOS BOYS & GIRLS (U7 – U11)

Clubs are to nominate teams into MiniRoos age eligible competitions or nominate for teams to be in MiniRoos competitions in line with their development and skill levels.

FV do not require dispensation requests to be submitted for any player who is age eligible to participate in the MiniRoos competition (ages between 7 and 11 years old).

The follow dispensation categories are available for the MiniRoos level of competition.

Note: Dispensation for this level of competition is only required to be submitted for players that wish to play in MiniRoos competitions however are not age eligible for Under 11's. This is specific to a player who is turning 12 during the respective calendar year and is not age eligible for the Under 11 MiniRoos competition.

## • MEDICAL DISPENSATION

FV recognises that it may be necessary in some circumstances to provide dispensation for an individual to play in an FV competition a maximum of one (1) year below their age due to a physical disability, mental disorder or physical size development consideration as identified and diagnosed by a certified medical practitioner.

A certified medical practitioner is a medical specialist who has attained the appropriate qualifications and accreditations to practise and includes both sports physicians and paediatricians.

The Club must provide FV with the following documentation in support of their application for medical dispensation.

- a supporting letter from the players parent (s) or guardian
- current (within 12 months of the application unless evidencing a chronic condition) medical evidence to support the application from the players medical specialist detailing the need for dispensation; and
- any other information the club wishes to submit in support of the application.

## • FIRST YEAR DISPENSATION

A first-year dispensation may be granted to a player who has not previously been registered with FA or FV. This form of dispensation is to allow an individual to play in an FV competition for which the usual eligible age is a maximum of one (1) year below the player's age and is only valid for one competition season. Dispensation is only granted for players to play down one age group. Requests to play down two (2) or more age groups are not permitted. This dispensation cannot be reapplied for the following competition season or any other season following the player's first season participating in an FA or FV competition.

FV may in its sole discretion refuse to grant a dispensation request under this regulation in circumstances where the player in question has played football in school or other competitions not administered by FV or FA. FV may seek further information from the Club in question before deciding under this regulation and the Club must submit that information as part of the dispensation request.

A first-year dispensation may be refused or revoked by FV acting in its sole discretion if FV later discovers that the Club did not provide relevant and/or requested information without a reasonable excuse.

## • PLAY FOOTBALL DISPENSATION

A play football dispensation may only be granted in exceptional circumstances where there are no reasonable alternatives available to the player and in the opinion of FV, it benefits the interests of one or more of the following to allow the dispensation:

- i. the player;
- ii. the Team;
- iii. the Club;
- iv. the League in which the Team participates;
- v. football in Victoria in general.

Play football dispensation is only granted for players to play down one age group. Requests to play down two (2) or more age groups are not permitted.

If granted, the play football dispensation is a one year 'bridging dispensation' to allow the Club to take reasonable steps to prepare the player to play in their rightful age group the following season. It is envisaged that this dispensation will not be required for the following year.

# JUNIOR BOYS (U12- U21) & JUNIOR GIRLS (U12 – U19)

## • MEDICAL DISPENSATION

FV recognises that it may be necessary in some circumstances to provide dispensation for an individual to play in an FV competition a maximum of one (1) year below their age due to a physical disability, mental disorder or physical size development consideration as identified and diagnosed by a certified medical practitioner.

A certified medical practitioner is a medical specialist who has attained the appropriate qualifications and accreditations to practise and includes both sports physicians and paediatricians.

The Club must provide FV with the following documentation in support of their application for medical dispensation.

- a supporting letter from the players parent (s) or guardian
- current (within 12 months of the application unless evidencing a chronic condition) medical evidence to support the application from the players medical specialist detailing the need for dispensation; and
- any other information the club wishes to submit in support of the application.

## • FIRST YEAR DISPENSATION

A first-year dispensation may be granted to a player who has not previously been registered with FA or FV. This form of dispensation is to allow an individual to play in an FV competition for which the usual eligible age is a maximum of one (1) year below the player's age and is only valid for one competition season. Dispensation is only granted for players to play down one age group. Requests to play down two (2) or more age groups are not permitted. This dispensation cannot be reapplied for the following competition season or any other season following the player's first season participating in an FA or FV competition.

FV may in its sole discretion refuse to grant a dispensation request under this regulation in circumstances where the player in question has played football in school or other competitions not administered by FV or FA. FV may seek further information from the Club in question before deciding under this regulation and the Club must submit that information as part of the dispensation request.

A first-year dispensation may be refused or revoked by FV acting in its sole discretion if FV later discovers that the Club did not provide relevant and/or requested information without a reasonable excuse.

## • ABOVE AGE DISPENSATION

An above age dispensation may be granted to allow a player to play in a competition more than four (4) years above their age group.

The Club must provide FV with the following documentation in support of their application for an above age dispensation.

- a signed letter from the player's Club president supporting the application
- a signed letter from the player's Club Technical Director supporting the application
- a signed letter of consent from the players parent (s) or guardian supporting the application



- a document listing general medical details of the player by a medical professional including height and weight; and
- any further information requested by FV.

## • **GENDER DISPENSATION**

Under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act, it is unlawful to discriminate on the ground of gender up until the age of 12 years.

Football Victoria allows players to play in gendered competition of their choosing under the following guidelines:

- Players who identify as non-binary, transgender or intersex are permitted to participate in the competition of their choice, up to the age of U12 for a girl's competition, and up to the age of U13 for a boy's competition.
- Players who identify as male are permitted to play in female competitions in accordance with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* up until Under 12 girls. The player must turn 12 or below during the 2023 calendar year and may play in their equivalent age group of female competitions without the prior approval of FV.
- Players who identify as female are permitted to participate in male competitions up until Under 13 boys. The player must turn 13 or below during the 2023 calendar year and may play in their equivalent age group of male competitions without the prior approval of FV.
- Players who identify as female are not permitted to participate in male competitions from Under 14 and above with the exception of the player falling into one of the below categories.
  - ➔ the player is currently registered to a regional club without any reasonable female pathway available to the player. To be clear a regional club is classified as a Club that has received prior written approval by FV to participate in FV metropolitan community competitions excluding Geelong based clubs; or
  - ➔ the player receives prior written approval from the FA Technical Department.

The Club must provide FV with the following documentation in support of their application for gender dispensation in relation to a regional player and/or an FA-approved player;

- a signed letter from the player's Club president supporting the application
- a signed letter from the player's Club Technical Director supporting the application
- a signed letter of consent from the player's parent (s) or guardian supporting the application
- a document listing general medical details of the player by a medical professional including height and weight; and any further information requested

Players who have affirmed their gender identity by transitioning to a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth; are in the act of transitioning/affirming via gender affirming practices; or are non-binary people, are eligible to nominate to play in a competition of their choosing conducted for their affirmed gender and not sex assigned at birth.

Note: FV may request supporting documentation as part of any application under these guidelines and applicants may be referred to FA's policy.

All decisions in relation to the gender rules are final and at the discretion of the FA & FV diversity and inclusion team, technical team and FV competitions team. These decisions are not appealable.

## • **PLAY FOOTBALL DISPENSATION**

A play football dispensation may only be granted in exceptional circumstances where there are no reasonable alternatives available to the player and in the opinion of FV, it benefits the interests of one or more of the following to allow the dispensation:

- vi. the player;
- vii. the Team;
- viii. the Club;
- ix. the League in which the Team participates;
- x. football in Victoria in general.

Play football dispensation is only granted for players to play down one age group. Requests to play down two (2) or more age groups are not permitted.

If granted, the play football dispensation is a one year 'bridging dispensation' to allow the Club to take reasonable steps to prepare the player to play in their rightful age group the following season. It is envisaged that this dispensation will not be required for the following year.

## • **FINALS/PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY EXEMPTION DISPENSATION**

A finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation may be granted to allow a player that has played less than five (5) Regular Season Competition Fixtures to qualify for finals/playoff fixtures.

FV will only consider dispensation in exceptional circumstances and where a Club/Team can establish it is unable to field a team for a final due to insufficient player numbers as a result of unavailability (including injury). Any Club wishing to apply for a finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation must apply to FV:

- in writing
- at least five (5) working days before the final is due to take place
- setting out the grounds on which it requests a dispensation to be granted
- with evidence to support player unavailability; and
- providing FV with any further information required and/or requested.

# **VPLW/ WOMEN'S STATE LEAGUE / GEELONG SENIOR WOMENS**

## • **SENIOR WOMENS AGE DISPENSATION**

A senior women's age dispensation may be granted in relation to a player who is under the age of 14 years old as of 1 January in the year of that relevant competition season and is requesting to play in a Senior Women's Competition.

The Club must provide FV with the following documentation in support of their application for senior women's age dispensation.

- a signed letter from the player's Club president supporting the application
- a signed letter from the player's Club Technical Director supporting the application
- a signed letter of consent from the players parent or guardian supporting the application
- a document listing general medical details of the player by a medical professional including height and weight; and
- any further information requested by FV.

- **GENDER DISPENSATION**

Players who have affirmed their gender identity by transitioning/affirming to a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth; are in the act of transitioning via gender affirming practices; or are non-binary people, are eligible to nominate to play in a competition of their choosing conducted for their affirmed gender and not sex assigned at birth.

Note: FV may request supporting documentation as part of any application under these guidelines and applicants may be referred to FA's policy.

- **SIX (6) MATCH DISPENSATION (WSL)**

A six-match dispensation may be granted to enable a player to play more than six (6) Competition Fixtures for a team in a lower division in the Women's State League (WSL) due to another players long-term injury or illness.

The Club must provide supporting documentation from a medical practitioner indicating a player's long-term injury or illness as part of this application.

- **FINALS/PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY EXEMPTION DISPENSATION (VPLW AND WSL 1 COMPETITIONS)**

A finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation may be granted to allow a player that has played less than five (5) Regular Season Competition Fixtures in either the VPLW or Women's State League One (1) senior or reserves competition for that relevant competition season to qualify to play in VPLW or Women's State League One (1) seniors finals/playoff fixtures.

FV will only consider dispensation in exceptional circumstances and where a Club/Team can establish it is unable to field a team for a final due to insufficient player numbers as a result of unavailability (including injury). Any Club wishing to apply for a finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation must apply to FV:

- in writing;
- at least five (5) working days before the final is due to take place;
- setting out the grounds on which it requests a dispensation be granted;
- with evidence to support player unavailability; and
- providing FV with any further information required and/or requested.

- **FINALS/PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY EXEMPTION DISPENSATION (WSL 2 AND BELOW & GEELONG SENIOR WOMENS COMPETITIONS)**

A finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation may be granted to allow a player that has played less than five (5) Regular Season Competition Fixtures to qualify for finals. This dispensation may only be granted in relation to a player competing in the WSL 2 or below or Geelong Senior Women's competitions.

FV will only consider dispensation in exceptional circumstances and where a Club/Team can establish it is unable to field a team for a final due to insufficient player numbers as a result of unavailability (including injury). Any Club wishing to apply for a finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation must apply to FV:

- in writing;
- at least five (5) working days before the final is due to take place;
- setting out the grounds on which it requests a dispensation be granted;
- with evidence to support player unavailability; and
- providing FV with any further information required and/or requested.

# MEN'S STATE LEAGUE

## • SENIOR MEN'S AGE DISPENSATION

A senior men's age dispensation may be granted in relation to a player who is under the age of 15 years old as of 1 January in the year of that relevant competition season and is requesting to play in a Senior Men's Competition.

The Club must provide FV with the following documentation in support of their application for a senior men's age dispensation:

- a signed letter from the player's Club president supporting the application;
- a signed letter from the player's Club Technical Director supporting the application;
- a signed letter of consent from the player's parent or guardian supporting the application;
- a document listing general medical details of the player by a medical professional including height and weight; and
- any further information requested by FV.

## • GENDER DISPENSATION

Players who have affirmed their gender identity by transitioning/affirming to a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth; are in the act of transitioning via gender affirming practices; or are non-binary people, are eligible to nominate to play in a competition of their choosing conducted for their affirmed gender and not sex assigned at birth.

Note: FV may request supporting documentation as part of any application under these guidelines and applicants may be referred to FA's policy.

## • FINALS/PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY EXEMPTION DISPENSATION

A finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation may be granted to allow a player that has played less than five (5) Regular Season Competition Fixtures in either the Men's State League senior or reserves competition for that relevant competition season to qualify to play in Men's State League seniors finals/playoff fixtures.

FV will only consider dispensation in exceptional circumstances and where a Club/Team can establish it is unable to field a team for a final due to insufficient player numbers as a result of unavailability (including injury). Any Club wishing to apply for a finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation must apply to FV:

- in writing;
- at least five (5) working days before the final is due to take place;
- setting out the grounds on which it requests a dispensation be granted;
- with evidence to support player unavailability; and
- providing FV with any further information required and/or requested.



# MEN'S METROPOLITAN / GEELONG

## SENIOR MEN'S

### • SENIOR MEN'S AGE DISPENSATION

A senior men's age dispensation may be granted in relation to a player who is under the age of 15 years old as of 1 January in the year of that relevant competition season and is requesting to play in a Senior Men's Competition.

The Club must provide FV with the following documentation in support of their application for a senior men's age dispensation:

- a signed letter from the player's Club president supporting the application;
- a signed letter from the player's Club Technical Director supporting the application;
- a signed letter of consent from the player's parent or guardian supporting the application;
- a document listing general medical details of the player by a medical professional including height and weight; and
- any further information requested by FV.

### • GENDER DISPENSATION

Players who have affirmed their gender identity by transitioning/affirming to a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth; are in the act of transitioning via gender affirming practices; or are non-binary people, are eligible to nominate to play in a competition of their choosing conducted for their affirmed gender and not sex assigned at birth.

Note: FV may request supporting documentation as part of any application under these guidelines and applicants may be referred to FA's policy.

### • FINALS/PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY EXEMPTION DISPENSATION

A finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation may be granted to allow a player that has played less than five (5) Regular Season Competition Fixtures within that relevant competition season to qualify to play in finals/playoff fixtures.

FV will only consider dispensation in exceptional circumstances and where a Club/Team can establish it is unable to field a team for a final due to insufficient player numbers as a result of unavailability (including injury). Any Club wishing to apply for a finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation must apply to FV:

- in writing
- at least five (5) working days before the final is due to take place;
- setting out the ground on which it requests a dispensation be granted;
- with evidence to support player unavailability; and
- providing FV with any further information required and/or requested.

# MEN'S METROPOLITAN MASTERS

- **AGE DISPENSATION**

An age dispensation may be granted in relation to a player who turns the age of 35 within the calendar year for that relevant competition season and is requesting to play in Metropolitan Masters Competitions.

- **GENDER DISPENSATION**

Players who have affirmed their gender identity by transitioning/affirming to a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth; are in the act of transitioning via gender affirming practices; or are non-binary people, are eligible to nominate to play in a competition of their choosing conducted for their affirmed gender and not sex assigned at birth.

Note: FV may request supporting documentation as part of any application under these guidelines and applicants may be referred to FA's policy.

- **FINALS/PLAYOFF ELIGIBILITY EXEMPTION DISPENSATION**

A finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation may be granted to allow a player that has played less than five (5) Regular Season Competition Fixtures within that relevant competition season to qualify to play in finals/playoff fixtures.

FV will only consider dispensation in exceptional circumstances and where a Club/Team can establish it is unable to field a team for a final due to insufficient player numbers as a result of unavailability (including injury). Any Club wishing to apply for a finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation must apply to FV:

- in writing;
- at least five (5) working days before the final is due to take place;
- setting out the grounds on which it requests a dispensation be granted;
- with evidence to support player unavailability; and
- providing FV with any further information required and/or requested.

## OTHER FV COMPETITIONS

This policy is relevant to FV Community and Geelong competitions.

For further information on other FV competitions please see contacts details below.

**NPL COMPETITIONS:** [nplvictoria@footballvictoria.com.au](mailto:nplvictoria@footballvictoria.com.au)

**FUTSAL COMPETITIONS:** [futsal@footballvictoria.com.au](mailto:futsal@footballvictoria.com.au)

**GOFOOTBALL COMPETITIONS:** via the GoFootball website.

**ALL ABILITIES COMPETITIONS:** [Selin.Arpaci@footballvictoria.com.au](mailto:Selin.Arpaci@footballvictoria.com.au)

## CONTACT US

If you have any further questions regarding the dispensation application process or community/Geelong competitions dispensations more generally, please contact FV via [competitions@footballvictoria.com.au](mailto:competitions@footballvictoria.com.au)