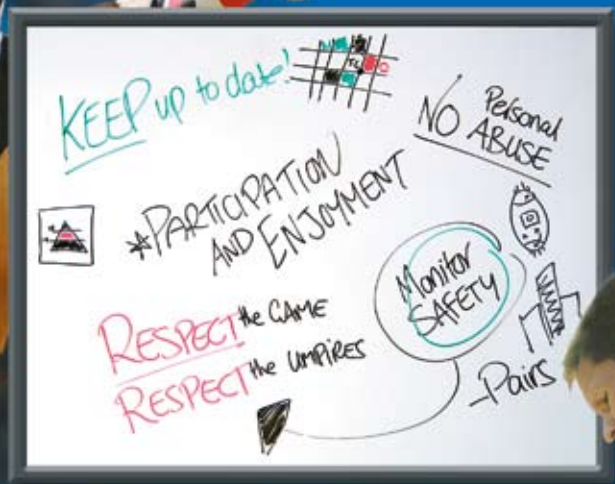




# AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct



Positive procedures for coaches at all levels



# F O R E W O R D

Australian Football coaches (and officials who appoint them) are becoming increasingly aware that, as members of the wider community and the sports industry, they have legal and ethical obligations to present themselves in public in accordance with acceptable standards of behaviour.

Recognition of this fact by the AFL and affiliated bodies is shown in many ways including the requirement for coaches to be accredited and a focus on safety, legal and behavioural information in coaches' courses and seminars.

It is important to maintain standards amongst Australian Football coaches for the integrity of the sport and the general good of coaches. The AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct is an outline of acceptable behaviours. The Code is not intended to be lengthy, or detailed and does not remove the requirement for coaches to exercise judgement. However it does stand as a model for leagues, clubs and schools to expect that basic standards of behaviour are maintained. By accepting the Code, coaches are signifying commitment to supporting minimum standards of good coaching and the concepts of responsibility, competence and propriety within coaching.

The AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct has been in existence and included in coaching manuals for many years. Study of the Code is an integral part of AFL coach accreditation courses and coaches are required to sign their agreement to comply with the Code as part of the accreditation process. Increasingly, clubs and leagues are reinforcing codes of behaviour for coaches and other participants at local level as part of a drive to improve the quality of club environments. There is an expectation that all Australian Football coaches are aware of their responsibilities under the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct and act accordingly.



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

**The AFL gratefully acknowledges the support of the Australian Government for AFL Game Development Programs, through the Australian Sports Commission.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Andrew".

ANDREW DEMETRIOU – AFL Chief Executive Officer



# THE AFL COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

I \_\_\_\_\_  
of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

hereby commit, to the best of my ability, to uphold the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct.

I understand that as an integral component of my accreditation, I must maintain a standard of behaviour and conduct in the best interests of the game and the players/staff in my care.

In representing myself in an honest manner, and without bringing the coaching profession or the Game into disrepute, I will endeavour to uphold the following to the best of my ability:

1. I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of all individuals within the context of my involvement in Australian Football, by refraining from any discriminatory practices including, but not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, ethnic background, special ability/disability or sexual orientation, preference or identity.
2. I will abide by and teach the AFL Laws of the Game and the Rules of my Club and League/Association.
3. I will be reasonable in the demands I make on the time commitments of the players in my care, having due consideration for their health and wellbeing.
4. I will be supportive at all times and I will refrain from any form of personal or physical abuse or unnecessary physical contact with the players in my care.
5. I will have due consideration for varying maturity and ability levels of my players when designing practice schedules, practice activities and involvement in competition.
6. Where I am responsible for players in the 5-18-year-old age group, I will strive to ensure that all players gain equal playing time. I will avoid overplaying the talented players, aiming to maximise participation, learning and enjoyment for all players regardless of ability.
7. I will stress and monitor safety always.
8. In recognising the significance of injury and sickness, I will seek and follow the physician's advice concerning the return of injured or ill players to training.

# THE AFL COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

9. I will endeavour to keep informed regarding sound principles of coaching and skill development, and of factors relating to the welfare of my players.

10. I will at all times display and teach appropriate sporting behaviour, ensuring that players understand and practise fair play.

11. I will display and foster respect for umpires, opponents, coaches, administrators, other officials, parents and spectators.

12. I will ensure that players are involved in a positive environment where skill-learning and development are priorities and not overshadowed by a desire to win.

13. I reject the use of performance-enhancing substances in sport and will abide by the guidelines set forth in the AFL Anti Doping and Illicit Drugs policies.

I agree to the following terms:

1. I agree to abide by the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct.
  2. I acknowledge that the AFL, or a body affiliated with the AFL, may take disciplinary action against me if I breach the code of conduct. I understand that the AFL, or a body affiliated with the AFL, is required to implement a complaints-handling procedure in accordance with the principles of natural justice, in the event of an allegation against me.
  3. I acknowledge that disciplinary action against me may include de-registration from the AFL National Coaching Accreditation Scheme.
- Note:** This "Coaches' Code of Conduct" is to be signed and conformed to as part of the accreditation requirements of the AFL. Coaches should be aware that, in addition to this Code, they may be obliged to sign a further Code of Conduct/Ethics with their Club and/or League.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESS SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

(TO BE SIGNED BY CLUB PRESIDENT, AFL AUSA KICK DISTRICT MANAGER OR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL - WHICHEVER APPLIES)

**T**he AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct is now linked to an established procedure for compliance. The spirit of the Code is to provide guidelines for conduct during the course of coaching activities. The intention in administering the Code is to identify coaches who may require further education and training. One off, minor breaches of the Code will be addressed through a consultation and tutoring process which will allow coaches ample opportunity to modify their behaviour so as to allow more effective delivery of coaching.

Coaches, to whom the Code of Conduct applies (all AFL accredited coaches), acknowledge and accept that the AFL, directly or through its affiliates, may take disciplinary action and apply sanctions if the Code is breached. Such disciplinary action may lead to penalties and coaches will abide by the penalties applied under the Code.

Generally, complaints regarding breaches of the Code of Conduct should be dealt with at the appropriate local level. In the first instance one-off, minor breaches should be dealt with at club level. This policy, including the attached flow chart provides guidance for the appropriate level at which a particular complaint should be dealt with. Any coach, against whom a breach of the Code is alleged, shall be afforded natural justice in the determination of the outcome. To ensure fairness, complaints should be dealt with in accordance with the following processes.

## Procedures in the case of an alleged breach of the Code

### Formal Complaint

A complaint concerning a coach must be directed in writing to the governing body (Club, League or Association) of the competition in which the coach is active. Each Club, League or Association will appoint a Compliance Officer to deal with the complaint. Generally an existing club or league official, such as general manager, coaching coordinator or investigations officer, etc. can carry out this role.

A complaint concerning a breach of the code by a coach shall:

- a) be in writing;
- b) identify the coach against whom the complaint is made;
- c) set out the details of the complaint;
- d) identify the name and address of the complainant;
- e) be signed by the complainant.

The Compliance Officer will determine whether the complaint is made in the proper form as set out above and comes within the scope of the Code of Conduct policy.

If, at the discretion of the Compliance Officer, the complaint does not comply with the above, the complainant will be informed in writing and may submit a corrected complaint.

### Investigation

Within seven days of the complaint being received, the Compliance Officer will provide written details of the complaint to the coach against whom the complaint is made and allow the coach to respond. The coach shall have 14 days to respond to the complaint in writing or in person to the Compliance Officer. Taking into account the complaint and the reply, the Compliance Officer shall determine whether:

- the complaint is to be dismissed or upheld;
- disciplinary action is necessary, in which case sanctions may be applied;
- further investigation is required; or
- a formal hearing is required.

## Formal hearing

If a formal hearing is required, the Club, League or Association shall appoint an appropriate panel to hear the complaint (this can be the existing League or Association tribunal). In any case, the panel shall be made up of impartial persons who have had no prior involvement in the matter or any direct or indirect relationship with or to the parties in the matter. It is recommended that one of the panel members shall be an accredited coach. The majority decision of the panel will be determinative.

## Appeal Process

Any appeal to the decision will be made within two days to the League or Association which will hear an appeal within their disputes determining system (i.e. tribunal or appeals board). Any penalty administered by the original panel will remain in force pending the outcome of an appeal.

## Penalties

Penalties and sanctions open to be imposed by the Compliance Officer; Conduct Panel or Appeals Body may, depending on the severity of the breach, include one, or a combination, of the following:

- issuing citation notices;
- requiring verbal or written apology;
- letter of reprimand from the Club, League or Association;
- the removal of certain privileges of membership;
- referral to counselling by or through State or Regional Development/Coaching staff;
- suspension from coaching duties and privileges;
- deregistration.

## DEREGISTRATION

Deregistration means the withdrawal of AFL Coach Accreditation for a set time (suspension) or for life.

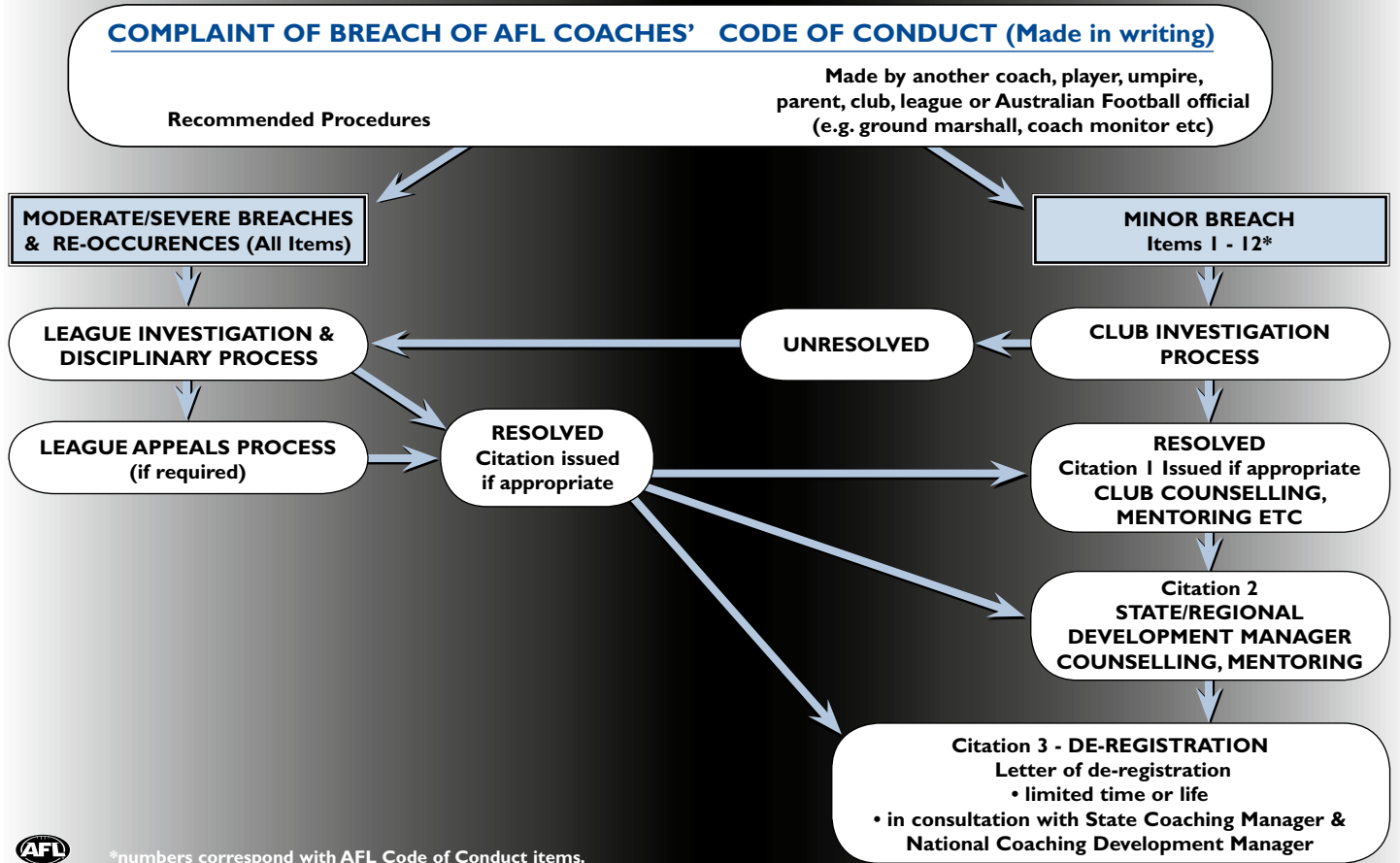
Generally, under the AFL policy of compulsory accreditation for coaches, deregistration will mean a person who has their accreditation suspended or withdrawn will not be able to engage in coaching activities in any affiliated organisation during that time.

Coaches who are sanctioned under this policy may also be subject to the disciplinary rules and processes of the Australian Football organisations in which they are actively involved, including referral to the League tribunal or other properly constituted disciplinary mechanisms. In the most serious cases coaches may also be subject to criminal prosecution.

In accordance with the spirit of the Code of Conduct, a three-stage citation process, in line with accompanying flow chart, is recommended by the AFL for dealing with breaches of the AFL Coaches' Code of Conduct.

The operation of the process will be monitored by the State Coaching Manager of the AFL affiliate in the state concerned.

# AFL COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT - ADMINISTRATION FLOWCHART



\*numbers correspond with AFL Code of Conduct items.

# AFL COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

## *Administration Procedure\**

### CODES OF CONDUCT BREACH

|                                  | <b>Stage 1<br/>Club Consultation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Stage 2<br/>Mentoring</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Stage 3<br/>Disciplinary</b>                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Procedure</b>                 | 1.1 Coach issued with a Code of Conduct Citation 1.<br>1.2 Breach to be outlined in accordance with Coaches' Code of Conduct.<br>1.3 Coach to meet with Club Management Committee.                                                                                 | 2.1 Coach issued with a Code of Conduct Citation 2.<br>2.2 As per 1.2<br>2.3 League to issue notification of ramifications of a further breach to a coach<br>2.4 Regional Development Manager to counsel and assist with strategy to Coach delivery and behaviour. | 3.1 Coach issued with a Code of Conduct Citation 3.<br>3.2 As per 2.1.<br>3.3 Coach's record to be presented to State Coaching Manager.<br>3.4 Coach to be de-registered from National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS). |
| <b>Action Responsibility</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• League to issue citation notice.</li> <li>• Club to counsel coach.</li> <li>• Club to reply in writing to Junior League body, no longer than one week after meeting, outlining action and/or approach adopted.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• League to issue citation notice.</li> <li>• Regional Development Manager or appointed Level 3 Coach to facilitate implementation of strategies to modify behaviour.</li> </ul>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• League to issue citation.</li> <li>• State Coaching Manager to administer.</li> <li>• National Coaching Development Manager advised.</li> </ul>                                     |
| <b>Monitoring</b>                | <b>MONITORING PROCESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• League Official</li> <li>• Umpire (if not reportable offence)</li> </ul>                                                                                                                        | <b>MONITORING PROCESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Random monitoring by League Executive or appointed persons.</li> <li>• Regional Development Manager to observe all coaches issued with Level 1 citation.</li> </ul>                             | <b>MONITORING PROCESS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As in Level 2</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Information Dissemination</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club</li> <li>• Coach</li> <li>• Regional Development Officer</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club</li> <li>• Coach</li> <li>• Regional Development Officer</li> <li>• State Coaching Manager</li> </ul>                                                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club</li> <li>• Coach</li> <li>• Regional Development Officer</li> <li>• State Coaching Manager</li> <li>• National Coaching Development Manager</li> </ul>                         |