

Memorandum of Understanding

between



**AFL Victoria
(AFL Vic)**

AND



**Associated Grammar
Schools of Victoria
(AGSV)**

a) DEFINITIONS

- **AFL** – Australian Football League
- **AFL State Affiliates** – AFL Queensland; AFL NSW/ACT; AFL Victoria; AFL Tasmania; AFL Northern Territory; West Australian Football League; South Australian Football League
- **State Talent Competition** – Includes all underage and overage AFL/State Affiliate run talent competitions throughout Australia (i.e. NAB League, WAFL Colts, etc.)
- **AFL National Championships** – Includes games played as part of the U16 and U18 National Championships competition.
- **State Academies** – Underage State talent programs that are run in each state and feed into the AFL National Championships
- **National Academy** – An elite national talent program run by the AFL and involving 50-60 of the most talented 17 (Level 1) and 18 (Level 2) year old's in the country.
- **Schools Competition** – Includes all games played as part of a school program or competition
- **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** – Is a document that is developed for each individual in the State and/or National Academy outlining match schedules, and areas of development for that player.

b) INTRODUCTION

AFL Victoria is the governing body for Australian Football within Victoria. It is responsible for the effective management and development of the game. AFL Victoria manages and conducts the talented player pathway including the NAB League and State Academy programs competition to develop talented players. In addition, AFL Victoria conducts participation programs such as Auskick, Coach Education, AFL9's, school programs and uses AFL Player clinics to promote the game.

The Associated Grammar Schools of Victoria (AGSV) conduct a range of sporting programs, including football, to assist the total development of students attending member schools.

This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AFL Victoria and the AGSV schools is to assist in the management of players playing in the NAB League competition, State Academy program, school competitions and the development of football in the Independent School system.

There is strong evidence that many players are playing (and training) too much football, which can lead to them suffering 'burn out' or sustaining long term injuries. While the AGSV schools and AFL Victoria wish to encourage young men to pursue AFL football to the highest levels, this Memorandum of Understanding has been created so all involved are mindful of the overall development and welfare of players, this being the primary concern of AFL Victoria and the AGSV schools, who aspire to play football at this level.

A series of guidelines have been developed to assist in the relationship:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- All decisions are made in the best interests of the individual player
- Program dates and training sessions are sensibly negotiated and agreed to avoid the player being compromised by having to choose between programs
- All parties are encouraged to communicate early to get the best outcome for the player
- Work as closely as possible so players won't be doing high intensity training sessions on consecutive days
- Sleep is important for recovery both mentally and physically and a player should be encouraged not to attend a morning session if they are not participating
- Study is important for players and if they have extremely high study loads or exams they should communicate this and not be expected to attend sessions
- Selection in squads and teams won't be affected by lack of attendance in programs or at training sessions if the player has a legitimate reason
- NAB League clubs to attempt to manage players when they come back into the programs if they have played a high number of consecutive games
- Injuries and rehabilitation program to be communicated and managed by both NAB League club and school

c) TO ACHIEVE THIS, AFL VICTORIA AGREES:

1. To recognise that the primary concern of each AGSV school is the well-being and education of each of its students and will always act in what it believes is the best interests of the students in its care.
2. To recognise and honour the wish of the Heads of AGSV schools to have students attend to their academic and school co-curricular school commitments and to participate in AGSV sporting fixtures.
3. In the best interests of student safety and well-being, students play one full competition football match per week except when playing conditions occur under Section (d) clause 2 of this MoU. During the AGSV season, this match would be played for their school, in the AGSV competition. A guiding principal is that a player should not participate in more than 24 games over the course of the year (see Appendix 7 for reasoning behind this total).
4. To adhere to the calendar (see Appendix 8) that has been put together by all parties to assist in the clarity of student well-being, expectations and development. This includes that the priority from a football perspective to be NAB League programs from November to the long weekend in March. That there is a shared priority from mid March to the end of the term 1 school holidays. That AGSV school football takes priority over NAB league from the start of term 2 to end of AGSV season, which includes the AGSV vs APS Representative match. NAB League becomes the priority from the end of the AGSV season to the end of the NAB season.
5. In the summer months, the priority from a football sense, is to provide talented players with the opportunity to participate in either Academy or NAB League programs with suitably accredited staff overseeing workloads. Efforts will be made to organise NAB League practice matches, training and training camps with the aim to avoid clashes with AGSV summer sport match times. Monitoring students' study and leisure time between the school and the NAB League club must be taken into account in assessing the individual student's wellbeing. In cases where summer sports require training during the week, efforts should be made to manage workloads with full consideration given to the students/players' welfare and their sporting priorities.
6. That in weeks where the players are to play in AGSV matches, such players attend one NAB League competition training session for medical screening or light recovery and are to be available for the scheduled training sessions conducted by the school.
7. Through consultation between the school and the NAB League competition club, to support players during Term 4 and Term 1 being able to combine both NAB League competition trials/ training sessions and school programs and activities.
8. To reach a clear agreement to provide AFL Victoria, the AGSV schools, and parents, agreement as to the availability of the player for NAB League competition, State representative trials and AGSV school matches. A player availability form is available to assist in this process if required (see Appendix 1). For those players involved in AFL National or State Academy Programs, this form will be incorporated into the players Individual Development Plan (IDP).

9. To liaise with the school regarding the player's performance for school players who are playing in the NAB League competition, which will be measured against the player's IDP where possible. There is a Player Performance report available for AGSV players (refer Appendix 3). Alternatively, if a verbal report can be provided and relationships developed this is a preferable means of communication. Vic Metro and Vic Country Staff to make contact with AGSV schools in relation to players selected in Vic Country or Vic Metro U18 and U16 squads to discuss the individual development of each player and to ensure consistency on the key focus areas of improvement
10. To support the injury diagnosis and treatment of NAB League registered players that have been injured during an AGSV match. A form of communication between the club and the school should occur so all parties are on the same page. Appendices 5 & 6 have been provided as an option to assist in this process. The emphasis is on the importance of sharing and communicating between all parties.
11. Support AGSV schools with development programs aimed at maximising participation and enhancing the environment of school football for the benefit of all players, coaches and umpires and the game in general.
12. Where possible, to make available coaching staff and facilities to assist with the training of AGSV teams.
13. That during the conduct of AFL Victoria Futures (U17) program, no AGSV school player will be expected to participate if the school for which he plays is engaged in a fixtured 1st XVIII AGSV school game including any AGSV Practice matches or AGSV Representative game. AFL Victoria will endeavour, wherever possible, to schedule Futures (U17) matches during times when fixtured AGSV football is not being played. Furthermore, a player who is unable to commit to the Futures program because of the above conditions will not be discriminated against in future AFL Victoria Talent Programs.
14. To forward the NAB League competition fixture and Representative team preparation programs, when available, to AGSV schools and to consult with the AGSV Executive Officer regarding the NAB League competition fixture. AFL Victoria will promote the AGSV vs APS match within their printed fixture.
15. To endeavour to fixture a NAB League competition bye weekend when the AGSV vs APS match is scheduled. In the event this cannot be achieved, AFL Victoria will support the selection of NAB League competition registered players, playing in the AGSV vs APS match.
16. In conjunction with the AGSV Executive Officer, to endeavour to organise an AFL venue for the AGSV vs APS match if requested.
17. To organise a personal development opportunity for AGSV coaches to attend if available and willing.
18. Agree that in the event of a player being suspended in the NAB League competition for a disciplinary act, the subsequent suspension will be served in the competition that the player is scheduled next to participate in. To provide clarification, if a player receives a one week suspension in a NAB League game and then is due to play AGSV football the following week, the

suspension will be served in this competition. Conversely, if a player is suspended in an AGSV game and is due to play NAB League game the following week, the suspension will be served in the NAB League competition.

19. To provide information regarding the development of the NAB League Girls competition and AFL Vic Female academies as they continue to grow: In 2019 with the advent of female football in the AGSV sports program, there is a crossover of seasons and it will be important to negotiate with AGSV schools on access to girls to play in the NAB League competition up to 25 May. This is particularly important given that State U18 squads are chosen on the basis of NAB League form.

d) TO ACHIEVE THIS, AGSV SCHOOLS AGREE:

1. To recognise and honour the wish of AFL Victoria to have players available for all NAB league competition matches excluding those that clash with AGSV schools competition matches (not practice games) and the AGSV vs APS Representative match.
2. To adhere to the calendar (see Appendix 8) that has been created to assist with the clarity of student well-being, expectations and development. This includes that the priority from a football perspective to be NAB League programs from November to the long weekend in March. That there is a shared priority from mid March to the end of the term 1 school holidays. That AGSV school football takes priority over NAB league from the start of term 2 to end of AGSV season, which includes the AGSV vs APS Representative match. NAB League becomes the priority from the end of the AGSV season to the end of the NAB season.
3. To grant exemptions for their students from AGSV fixtured matches to enable the students to take part in the NAB AFL U16 & U18 Championships which are part of the AFL Victoria Academy Program. Such players will also be available to play in trial matches under the following conditions for such teams, noting that AFL Victoria does not allow players to play two matches in two days.
 - (i) Players in the AFL Victoria U18 Academy program for Vic Metro and Vic Country are required to be available for **both** scheduled trial matches. The scheduling of the first trial match will occur during the school holidays. The final trial match will be held for both Metro and Country players on 26 May, 2019. Please note that this trial match will be utilised to finalise a team for the National Championships. As such, only players trying to qualify for that team will be selected. Players who are definite selections for the National Championships will not be required to play in the second trial game for either Metro or Country teams
 - (ii) Players selected in the AFL Victoria U16 Academy programs are required to undergo both physical testing (both country & metropolitan). Where there is a clash between testing and AGSV first XVIII duties then AGSV duties take priority. Players will be required to play in the first trial game on Saturday 11 May. The final trial game will be held for both Metro and Country players on Saturday 1 June, 2019. Please note that this trial match will be utilised to finalise a team for the National Championships. As such, only players trying to qualify for selection in the final squad will be required to play. Players who are definite selections for the National Championships will not be required to play in the second trial game for either Metro or Country teams. **Players who do not make themselves available for selection under the conditions outlined will not be considered for selection for the NAB AFL Championships program.**
4. To allow NAB League competition players to return to their NAB League club for medical assessment or light training session earlier in the week (preferably Monday), when the player is not playing in the following week's NAB League competition match. In the weeks where there are no AGSV schools matches

the players are available to play with their NAB League club, such players will not be required to train with their school. Parents and, if required, the family GP should also be considered in the consultation process.

5. To liaise with the NAB League club regarding the player's performance for school players who are playing in the AGSV competition, which will be measured against the player's IDP where possible. There is a Player Performance report available for AGSV players if required (refer Appendix 2). Alternatively, if a verbal report can be provided and relationships developed this is a preferable means of communication
6. To provide information to NAB League clubs regarding injuries sustained by NAB League competition registered players playing in AGSV school matches. Communication is encouraged in the easiest method possible. The forms in Appendix 4&6 are one method of providing that information. Schools are asked to encourage any injured players to attend their NAB League club for further diagnosis and treatment.
7. Where possible, to make available facilities to assist with the training of NAB League clubs, particularly pre season.
8. To enable players to play at least two games during AFL Victoria's U16 Carnival held during the Term 1 school holidays.
9. To provide winter and summer sport fixtures to AFL Victoria and consult with AFL Victoria regarding the winter fixture.
10. To promote the NAB AFL Championship program/games.
11. To make recommendations, regarding talented players playing in junior school teams who may not have been identified by the NAB League clubs.
12. Agree that in the event of a player being suspended in the TAC Cup competition for a disciplinary act, the subsequent suspension will be served in the competition that the player is scheduled to participate in. To provide clarification, if a player receives a one week suspension in a NAB League game and then is due to play AGSV football the following week, the suspension will be served in this competition. Conversely, if a player is suspended in an AGSV game and is due to play NAB League game the following week, the suspension will be served in the NAB League competition.
13. To negotiate with AFL Victoria regarding access of Female players to play in the NAB League competition up to 19/20 May 2019. In 2019 with the advent of female football in the AGSV sports program, there is a crossover of seasons. The negotiations are particularly important for individual players given that State U18 squads are chosen on the basis of NAB League form. Decisions should be made on the basis of the best interests of the student.

e) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT

1. Where disagreements arise in the interpretation or application of this MoU between a NAB League club and an AGSV school, it is agreed that the State Talent Manager for AFL Victoria and the AGSV Executive Officer as well as consultation with the parents will endeavour to resolve the dispute. In the event that that these parties cannot resolve the dispute, it would be the AFL National Talent Manager and the school's Principal or the nominated school's representative to reach an agreement.
2. The respective NAB League competition coach / Region Manager, the player and their school's Head of Sport and 1st XVIII coach meet early in the year to plan the year ahead and put the student involved at ease and solve any mixed messages they are receiving from either/ both parties.
3. The AGSV Heads and AFL Victoria recognise the need to work together to educate students and families of students as to the understandings that exist between the AGSV Heads and AFL Victoria.
4. AFL Victoria and AGSV Heads agree to establish a Steering Committee consisting of representatives from both parties to meet periodically to monitor both the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding and the general development of football in AGSV schools.

f) REVIEW

This Memorandum of Understanding will be reviewed at the end of the 2019 year with the principles detailed in this to be active across the 2019/2020 years.

EXECUTED AS AN AGREEMENT.

On behalf of AFL Victoria
Paul Hamilton – State Talent Manager

Date



3/5/19

**On behalf of the Associated Grammar
Schools of Victoria**
Troy Rowe - Executive Officer

Date



3/5/19