

2025 DISPENSATION POLICY

There are a range of various factors the GSL Board 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 GSL competitions
- Playing history of the player
- Alternate reasonable opportunities for the player to participate at the Club in an age eligible age group
- The total number of requests received for a particular team in a particular age group at the Club does not exceed more than 3 players in an 11v11 competition, or 2 players in a 9v9 competition.
- 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
- Applicable laws, including but not limited to the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Any other relevant circumstance or relevant supporting documentation

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 at least 7 days prior to the scheduled fixture date. Dispensation applications can take up to 14 days to receive a response.

To submit a dispensation application please fill out the online GSL Player Dispensation Request form at <https://form.jotform.com/250077514078053>. 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.
- all relevant information required to be submitted; and
- any relevant documentation as per the following policy.

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

Medical Dispensation

GSL recognises that it may be necessary in some circumstances to provide dispensation for an individual to play in a 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 GSL 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 GSL, FA or FV. This dispensation is to allow an individual to play in a 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. Requests to play down two (2) or more years 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 a GSL competition.

The GSL may in its sole discretion refuse to grant a dispensation request in circumstances where the player in question has played football in school or other competitions not administered by the GSL. The GSL may seek further information from the Club in question before making their decision and the Club must submit that information as part of the dispensation request. If the player has played in other ball-based team sports, this will be considered as part of the request.

A first-year dispensation may be refused or revoked by the GSL acting in its sole discretion if the GSL 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 the GSL Board, it benefits the interests of the player; and/or the Team; and/or the Club; and/or the League.

Play football dispensation is only granted for players to play down one year. Requests to play down two (2) or more years 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.

MiniRoos Boys & Girls (Under 6 - 10)

GSL do not require dispensation requests to be submitted for any player who is age eligible to participate in the MiniRoos competition (ages between 5 and 10 years old). Clubs are to allocate players to a team in line with their development and skill levels.

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 10's. This is specific to a player who is turning 11 during the respective calendar year and is not age eligible for the Under 10 MiniRoos competition.

Junior Competitions (Under 12 - 17)

GENDER DISPENSATION

Under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act, it is unlawful to discriminate on the ground of sex or gender identity up until the age of 12 years. Players over 12 years old may be treated differently in certain circumstances, including in relation to aspects of strength, stamina or physique, to maintain elite pathways and to foster participation. 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 U16.

Players who have affirmed their gender identity by transitioning to a gender that is different to their sex assigned at birth or 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, unless it gives cause to a risk to themselves or others as determined by GSL/FV/FA.

Note: GSL may request supporting documentation as part of any application under these guidelines.

Finals/Playoff Eligibility Exemption Dispensation

A finals/playoff eligibility exemption dispensation may be granted to allow a player that has played less than the required qualifying rounds:

- five (5) regular season competition rounds to qualify for seniors finals.
- three (3) regular season competition rounds to qualify for junior finals.

The GSL Board 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 the GSL:

- in writing
- at least seven (7) 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 GSL with any further information required and/or requested.