



Elwood City welcomes all players (boys and girls) and their parents to our Club.

As a community organisation, we are focused on making it as easy as possible to join a team, play at a level that suits your ability and have fun.

Our Club aspires to have teams represented at the highest possible level in all age groups.

To help support that ambition and the long-term development of all our players, the Club has recently invested in a Technical Director to oversee all technical aspects of the Club's soccer development.

With the endorsement of the Technical Director, we plan to introduce a formal policy regarding Team Formation to consider the varied ability of players within a team, and the league in which a team is playing.

The principles underlying the Club's Teams Formation Policy are as follows:

1. To encourage as many children as possible to play soccer and in a league that is best suited to their ability and experience.
2. To encourage the retention of players in older age groups, and to provide the opportunity for players to play their junior soccer at the one club and to provide a pathway to senior soccer.
3. To develop the soccer skills of all children who play with Elwood City Soccer Club, regardless of ability.
4. To teach sportsmanship, teamwork, discipline, respect, and tolerance of others.
5. To encourage the development of a team ethic where the contribution of all players is valued equally.
6. To provide a safe, caring, and fun environment.
7. To ensure our processes and policies are clear and known by players and parents.

The following policies will take effect from the 2023 season.

### Team Sizes

1. **Under 8's and Under 9's**
  - a) 7 per side playing.
  - b) Maximum of 11 players per team squad.
2. **Under 10's to Under 13's**
  - a) 9 per side playing.
  - b) Maximum of 14 players per team squad.
3. **Under 14's and older**
  - a) 11 per side playing.
  - b) Maximum number of 17 players per team squad



### Team Formation

The soccer development needs of all players will be the priority in determining teams. This will likely mean players of similar skills and experience will be grouped together under a grading system.

### Grading Guidelines

#### 1. U11's and younger age groups

- a) As a general principle no grading will apply as the diversity of skills and experience is not significant and the competition does not involve recording of scores, publishing leagues or finals.
- b) Grading will be undertaken if:
  - There is more than one team per age group,
  - There is a large diversity of skills and experience across all players in the age category indicating teams should be registered in different leagues.

#### 2. U12's and over age groups

- a) Grading will be performed based on skills and experience if there is more than one team registered and the spectrum of skills and experience indicates teams should be registered in different leagues.

The grading process will be overseen by the Club's Technical Director with support from at least one other independent club official.

Trials will be held to assess individual player's skills and experience. Players will then be graded into teams as appropriate. The Technical Director will also determine in which league a team should play.



## Questions & Answers

### **Why is the club introducing a Team Formation Policy?**

As a community soccer club, we have a responsibility to ensure that our players are offered the best environment to develop their skills, grow their confidence and enjoy the game.

Grading allows the club to create the most suitable pathways for our players, based on their skills and experience, while assisting the long-term viability of our Club through improved player development and retention.

### **What if I want my child to play with their friends?**

In the younger age groups the club will seek to accommodate friendships, where this doesn't disrupt the grading process as outlined above.

In the older age groups teams will be formed on skills and experience levels, but we will try to accommodate friendships requests where this doesn't disrupt the grading process.

In extenuating circumstances, the Juniors Committee may consider friendships in Team Formation, however the players will be grouped in the lower league relevant to the respective players grading assessment.

### **How will the grading process be undertaken?**

Grading is the responsibility of the club's Technical Director, supported by an independent Club official, who will conduct a training and match simulation session to assess each player's skills and experience.

Players will then be graded into teams, and teams allocated to leagues.

### **Can I appeal the grading decision?**

If you have any questions relating to the grading process or its outcomes for your child you may contact the Club's Technical Director.

### **What if my child cannot make, or joins the club, after the grading process?**

The Club will seek to accommodate extenuating circumstances for all existing and new players. If teams have been finalised, any ungraded player will be allocated to the lowest level team depending on player numbers.

Please ensure that you contact the Club's Technical Director if your child cannot make their grading session.

### **Will grading outcomes be carried from one year to the next?**

No. Given changes in player development and the introduction of new players to the Club, grading will occur each year for all players, where required under the Team Formation policy.

### **How will coaches be allocated to graded teams?**

Ensuring that each team has a suitable coach is the responsibility of the Club's Technical Director.