



**2024 Q Schools of Excellence
HANDBOOK**

2024 AFL QLD Schools of Excellence Handbook

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Section 1

COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

1.1 Competition Management

The Queensland Schools of Excellence (QSoE) Competition is managed and led by:

Jeff Neumann

Participation & Programs Manager – Schools, Diversity & Inclusion

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Tarryn Meyer

Schools Coordinator

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The Competition Management will be responsible for the following duties:

- overseeing the requirements to be eligible as an AFL QSoE and the minimum criteria to retain status as an AFL QSoE;
- administering the QSoE Competition;
- overseeing the running of the QSoE Competition;
- liaising with the heads of school programs and AFL staff (including umpires and other related members of the QSoE Competition);
- circulating information on the QSoE Competition and keeping participants informed;
- marketing the QSoE Competition via social media;
- distributing nomination information for the QSoE Competition;
- ascertaining draw requirements for QSoE schools;
- ascertaining ground availability from AFLQ Clubs and QSoE schools;
- constructing the draws for the QSoE Competition and making them available on PlayHQ;

- allocating 'Match Managers';
- providing guidance for the handling of any problems arising in the QSoE Competition; and
- evaluating the success of the QSoE Competition.

Section 2

COMPETITION FORMAT & DATES

2.1 Fixtured Matches

Matches will be scheduled in Term 1 and Term 2, 2024. The competition teams will be split into two playing divisions – ‘Premiership division’ and ‘Development division’ - based on school nominations, previous year results and balance of competition.

The competition fixture, including dates and venues, can be found on www.aflq.com.au/schools-of-excellence/ or PlayHQ.

2.2 Progression into Q Schools Cup

Following the conclusion of the Premiership and Development Competition, teams will play in either the wild card, quarter or semi finals of the ‘Q Schools Cup’.

Each Premiership/Division team’s ladder position will determine whether they progress into the wild card, quarter or semi final of the Q Schools Cup finals stages.

Ladder Position	Qualify For	Division	Date
1 st Place – Premiership	Semi Final #1	All Divisions	Wed-4 September
2 nd Place – Premiership	Quarter Finals	All Divisions	30/31 July
3 rd Place – Premiership	Quarter Finals	All Divisions	30/31 July
4 th Place – Premiership	Quarter Finals	Female Divisions Only	30/31 July
5 th to 8 th Place	Wild Card	Female Divisions Only	16/17 July
4 th to 7 th Place	Wild Card	Male Divisions Only	16/17 July

Section 3

UMPIRING

3.1 Umpiring Appointments/Policy

The following parties will appoint umpires:

- QSoE Premiership & Development Competitions
 - AFL Queensland (**AFLQ**): 2-3 field umpires (depending on division/availability).
 - Schools: Each team is required to provide 1 goal umpire.
- Q Schools Cup – Quarter Finals & Wild Card:
 - AFLQ: 2-3 field umpires (depending on division/availability)
 - Schools: Each team is required to provide 1 goal umpire
- Q Schools Cup – Semi Finals:
 - AFLQ: 2-3 field umpires (depending on division/availability)
 - Goal umpires:
 - Junior division: Each team is required to provide 1 goal umpire.
 - Senior division: AFLQ to provide 2 goal umpires.
- Preliminary and Grand Finals:
 - AFLQ: 2-3 field umpires (depending on division) and 2 goal umpires.

3.2 School Umpiring Program

The AFLQ contact for the school umpiring program is:

Nicola Stevens

Umpire Development Coordinator

Mobile: 0498 222 248

Email: Nicola.stevens@afl.com.au

Section 4

MATCH MANAGER DUTIES

4.1 Match Manager's duties

AFLQ will provide a 'Match Manager' for each venue. The Match Manager must wear an AFLQ staff polo for easy recognition and is responsible for ensuring:

- umpires' flags, whistles, scoresheets and match results sheets are taken to the grounds;
- the scoreboard is operational with host/home school operating;
- a timekeeper is in place with siren;
- a stretcher is available with first aid provider;
- two footballs are available, with the spare to be kept in their area (yellow footballs for games post 3:00pm);
- they meet with umpires before matches;
- matches are run on time;
- during matches, scores are monitored and communicated;
- they keep the official score;
- match results are compiled after matches and published on PlayHQ; and
- they meet with umpires after match and discuss any Reportable Offences (see section 8).

Section 5

SCHOOL DUTIES

5.1 Duties

All staff involved with the QSoE program (including heads of program) are to be conversant with this publication and aware of their outlined duties, which are:

- confirming all players, coaches and officials are registered via the PlayHQ or CoachAFL platform – this includes confirming players are registered in the appropriate year level;
- ensuring team sheets are up to date and published via PlayHQ prior to the commencement of the scheduled matches;
- ensuring their school is observing all covid guidelines, along with the directions of any AFLQ staff;
- confirming each of their school's teams will be accompanied by a staff member who is responsible for that team;
- Confirming they are adhering to the requirements for day excursions, as set down by their respective education bodies;
- ensuring all players are correctly attired (i.e. football socks, AFLQ football shorts and guernseys), and officials (runners, water carrier and goal umpires in enclosed shoes);
- **notifying the Competition Manager if their school intends to forfeit and, if applicable, arranging for the payment of an administration fine of a maximum of \$500 (see 6.15); and**
- monitoring that the coaches, officials, and players are participating in the spirit of true sportsmanship, ensuring that the competition is a credit to the game of Australian Football and those participating in it.

5.2 First Aid

AFLQ will provide a qualified first aid officer at all QsoE Competition games (note, AFLQ will not provide strapping or strapping tape).

Participating schools are required to travel with a well-resourced first aid kit ensuring that reasonable provision is made for the treatment of injuries outside of scheduled games (i.e. travelling to and from games etc.).

Injury reports will be emailed to the school coordinator post event by Competition Management. Participating schools, players and officials must abide by the AFL Community policy for concussion management and the return to play protocols as outlined by the AFL. The AFL has developed a comprehensive concussion management policy ensuring the safety and well-being of players through comprehensive guidelines and resources for managing sport-related concussions in Australian Football.

5.3 Personal Injury / Accident Insurance

Students participate in the QSoE Competition at their own risk. They are responsible for their own personal injury/accident insurance.

The AFL has arranged Public Liability Insurance for a sum insured of \$20,000,000 to cover it and AFLQ's legal liabilities. However, AFLQ expects each school involved in Australian Football programs to also maintain public liability insurance to sufficiently cover it's legal liabilities.

At its own discretion, each school or individual may want to consider purchasing personal accident insurance to protect it against claims for non-Medicare medical expenses arising from this Australian Football program, or any other school program.

Section 6

MATCH CONDITIONS & REGULATIONS

6.1 Junior & Senior Male Divisions

- **Junior Male Division:** for male students enrolled in grades 7, 8 and 9 ONLY (students are not permitted to play up into the Senior Male Division under any circumstances).
- **Senior Male Division:** for male students enrolled in grades 10, 11 and 12 ONLY (students are not permitted to play down into the Junior Male Division under any circumstances).
- **Team Size:** teams may consist of up to 25 players (i.e. 18 on-field and 7 interchange).
- **Timings:**
 - 4 x 15 minute quarters
 - (¼ time = 5 minutes, ½ time = 5 minutes, ¾ time = 5 minutes)
- **Field size:** Full field as per AFL standards and participation framework.

6.2 Junior & Senior Female Divisions

- **Junior Female Division:** for female students enrolled in grades 7, 8 and 9 ONLY (students are not permitted to play up into the Senior Female Division under any circumstances).
- **Senior Female Division:** for female students enrolled in grades 10, 11 and 12 ONLY (students are not permitted to play down into the Junior Female Division under any circumstances).
- **Team Size:** teams may consist of up to 22 players (i.e. 16 on-field and 6 interchange).
- **Timings:**
 - 4 x 15 minute quarters
 - (¼ time = 5 minutes, ½ time = 5 minutes, ¾ time = 5 minutes)

- **Exception:** Regional pool games may be shortened to accommodate local scheduling requirements.
- **Field size:** Full field as per AFL standards and participation framework

6.3 Year 7 & 8 Gala Days

- **Junior Female Division:** for female students enrolled in grades 7 and 8 ONLY
- **Junior Male Division:** for male students enrolled in grades 7 and 8 ONLY
- **Team Size:** teams may consist of up to 12 players (i.e. 9 on-field and 3 interchange).
- **Timings:**
 - 2 x 12 minute halves
 - ½ time – 3 minutes
- **Exception:** Games may be shortened to accommodate local scheduling requirements and/or delays in day schedule.

Field size: Modified field, 110m maximum

6.4 Disability Inclusion Division

- **Students identified as having a disability under the Education Adjustment Program (EAP).**
- Eligible students must have a current verification in one or more of the following six EAP disability categories:
 - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
 - Hearing Impairment (HI)
 - Intellectual Disability (ID)
 - Physical Impairment (PI)
 - Speech-Language Impairment (SLI)
 - Vision Impairment (VI)

- Social Emotional Disorder (SED)
- **Junior Inclusion Divisions:** for students enrolled in grades 7,8 & 9 ONLY.
- **Senior Inclusion Divisions:** for students enrolled in grades 10,11&12 ONLY.
- **Team Size:** teams may consist of up to 12 players (i.e. 9 on-field and 3 interchange).
- **Timings:**
 - 4 x 10 minute quarters
 - (¼ time = 5 minutes, ½ time = 5 minutes, ¾ time = 5 minutes)
- **Exception:** Regional pool games may be shortened to accommodate local scheduling requirements.
- **In the event of a draw:** 5 minutes each way with a straight swap over. Should there be a further draw, this process shall continue until there is a winner.
- **Field size:** Modified field, 110m maximum
- School merge criteria is available upon request.

6.5 Competition Points

To ensure the QSoE Competition is run professionally and in the spirit of the game, the following points system will be in place:

WIN:	4 points
DRAW:	2 points (or cancellation of match)
LOSS:	0 points

If, after the round robin games, any two (2) or more teams competing in the same division have obtained an equal number of competition points, the position of such team on the ladder shall be determined by a percentage calculated as the percentage ratio of the cumulative total of points scored by a team to the cumulative total of points scored against that team as recorded.

Any school who plays an ineligible, suspended, expelled or over-age student will be stripped of all competition points.

6.5 Ineligible players

Playing an ineligible player, an over-age player or a player not registered on PlayHQ, will incur the loss of any competition points (for the purposes of a ladder), prevent the team from progressing to the next stage of the QSoE Competition or being awarded the State Championship title.

An ineligible player is:

- A student enrolled in the incorrect grade for the specified division;
- Playing extra student/s as an extended bench without prior approval from Competition Management;
- A student currently serving a school suspension; or
- A student enrolled from another school.

6.6 Playing Uniforms

QSoE teams must be wearing approved match day uniforms, including the QSoE shield produced by an approved supplier. If QSoE teams are instructed to wear their clash strip, they will be notified 1 week prior to the match at the match briefing.

6.9 Trophies and Awards

At the end of the QSoE Premiership and Development season, the QSoE perpetual will be awarded to the school who has accumulated the most wins with the greater for & against percentage across all four QSoE divisions (combined ladder) in the Premiership competition.

The QSoE Premiership and Development competition leading goal scorers will be awarded with recognition, along with an MVP award for both competitions voted on by coaches at the conclusion of each match, awarding 3-2-1 to the opposition players of who they thought was best

6.10 Footballs

AFLQ will supply the following footballs for matches:

- Junior Female: size 3 leather

- Junior Male: size 4 leather
- Junior Inclusion: size 4 leather
- Senior Female: size 4 leather
- Senior Male: size 5 leather

6.11 Officials

Each team is entitled to the following and they must be listed on team sheet:

- One (1) head coach:
 - attired in school polo;
 - registered on Coach.AFL; and
 - minimum level 2 accreditation, desired Level 3.
- Maximum three (3) assistant coaches:
 - attired in school polo;
 - registered on Coach.AFL; and
 - min. level 1 accreditation, desired Level 2.
- One (1) official runner:
 - attired in a pink labelled shirt, appropriate shorts and enclosed footwear.
- One (1) first aid/sports trainer/medical team member:
 - attired in school polo and clearly identifiable as the medical official.

All officials are to wear enclosed footwear. Water carriers are not permitted in the QSoE Competition unless explicitly permitted by the Competition Management in circumstances of extreme heat. In case of Competition Management notifying schools of extreme heat, the runner shall be able to carry water to players.

6.12 Interchange

The interchange area for this competition will be the marked area in the centre of the field, between the positioned coaches' boxes. A player cannot enter the field as a replacement until the player they are replacing has left the field through the marked interchange area.

A player who does not leave the playing ground through the approved areas shall not be permitted to take further part in the match unless they are taken from the playing ground on a stretcher.

6.13 Schools of Enrolment & Combined Teams

- All students must be formally enrolled within the school that lodges the team nomination (with the exception of distance education – see below).
- In the event a student changes their school of enrolment after already participating in an QSoE match, they are no longer eligible to participate in their initial team (note, they are permitted to participate under their new school of enrolment).
- Should grades 11 and 12 wish to enter, they may draw upon grade 10 students from one of their official feeder schools. This must be approved by Competition Management prior to attending the scheduled match.
- With Competition Management approval, a student who is enrolled in distance education can join a local school and it will be considered as a single entry. This entry will remain eligible to progress through the QSoE Ccompetition.

6.14 Conduct

Coaches, officials and players must participate in the spirit of true sportsmanship, ensuring that the competition is a credit to the game of Australian Football and those participating in it. This requires coaches/staff to emphasise to their players that they are to always compete in a sportsmanlike manner.

Undue rough play, blatant violence, abusive and offensive language and unsportsmanlike behaviour will not be tolerated in anyway. Players displaying this type of behaviour will be sent from the field.

Teams deemed to be behaving in a manner contrary to the spirit of the game will

be issued with a warning from the Match Manager during the match. Should this behaviour not be rectified, the team may be suspended from future games within the QSoE Competition.

Schools are encouraged to impose disciplinary action appropriate to such conduct as they see fit.

6.15 Forfeits

In the case of a match forfeit, it is the offending school's responsibility to firstly notify Competition Management.

Schools who forfeit within 7 days of their scheduled match time will be fined \$500.00 towards covering associated costs.

PLEASE NOTE: if a forfeit is necessary due to reasons or conditions beyond a school's control (extreme weather conditions, traffic etc.), this will be taken into consideration before a fine is issued.

AFLQ will notify all relevant parties, such as umpires, Match Managers, opposition schools and the venues. In the event of a forfeit, the team forfeited against will receive the four premiership points and the win.

6.16 Minimum Numbers

MINIMUM team numbers for games to commence.

- Junior & Senior Female: 12 on-field (full field)
- Junior & Senior Male: 14 on-field (full field)
- Junior & Senior Male Inclusion: 9 on-field

Where difficulty occurs fielding full team numbers, coaches must even up player numbers. Should one team have a full team, they may play an extended bench (i.e. in an 18 a-side match, should the opposition only have 14 on-field, the team with a full side may have an extended interchange of 11 players).

6.17 Wet Weather Policy

In the event of wet/inclement weather causing a venue to close, AFLQ will endeavor to source an alternative venue. If this is not possible within a reasonable timeframe, the match will be rescheduled.

6.18 Alcohol

The policy and action plan in relation to alcohol consumption at QSoE Competition matches is as follows:

- Areas other than those designated as licensed are enforced as alcohol free.
- It is the Match Manager's duty to regulate any alcohol consumption.
- Where it is acknowledged that the spectators are supporting their school, the teacher in charge should assist the Match Manager in directing offending spectators to refrain or move to the licensed area (if one exists).
- The Match Manager will contact Police if offending spectators choose to ignore directions.

6.19 10 Goal Rule

The purpose of this rule is to encourage coaches, once a 10 goal (60 point) lead is reached during a match, to appreciate that it serves no purpose to inflict massive losses on their opposition but rather, at that point in time, to revert to experimenting with players playing in different positions and to even-up the skill levels of the teams.

The following process should be followed:

- a. If a team leads by 10 goals or more at any time, it is the obligation of both coaches to equalise the on-field competitive balance of the match, using measures including but not limited to team position experimentation and player rotation.
- b. If the margin equals or surpasses sixty (60) points after a goal at any stage throughout the match, the field umpire is required to enforce the following measure to assist with evening up the game:
 - i. the trailing team will automatically start with the ball at the centre circle;
 - ii. all players must be set up in their field positions until possession has been disposed of; and

- iii. if the margin does become less than sixty (60) points after a goal, at any stage throughout the match, then the field umpire will revert back to the ball starting in the centre.
- c. The maximum winning margin for all fixtured matches is 10 goals (60 points).
- d. Scores and percentage from any fixture matches where the margin is greater than sixty points at the end of the match will be adjusted as if the margin was sixty (60) points using the losing team's score as the base score.
- e. Non-compliance with the spirit and application of the 10 goal rule is an act of misconduct under the laws of Australian Football.

6.20 Last Possession Rule

If the ball moves out of bounds from a kick or handball, a free kick is to be awarded to the nearest opponent. If a player runs the ball over the boundary line, a free kick is to be awarded to the nearest opponent.

If the ball is off hands or a player's body, a ball-up is to occur 10 metres in from the boundary line. If there is any doubt as to whose free kick it is, a ball-up is to occur 10 metres in from the boundary line.

Section 7

ENTRY INTO THE AFL QUEENSLAND SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE

7.1 **Bound to requirements, minimum criteria and other rules**

Each team entering the competition shall be bound by and shall comply with:

- a. the regulations and duties outlined in this document, 'AFL Queensland Schools of Excellence 2024 Handbook';
- b. the minimum criteria/requirement to be endorsed as an AFL QSoE;
- c. the laws of Australian Football, and amendments made to these, as outlined in this document;
- d. any resolutions, determinations, rules or regulations made by AFLQ in relation thereto; and
- e. application for exemption from either the Rules and Regulations or Competition By-Laws is at the sole discretion of Competition Management.

Section 8

REPORTABLE OFFENCES

8.1 Notice of charge

If an umpire identifies a player has committed a 'Reportable offence' (as that term is defined under the Laws of Australian Football), the following process must be followed:

- a. the Match Manager will complete a notice of charge form and inform the school of its lodgement;
- b. the Match Manager will review the information and work with the school of the offended player to work through the charge;
- c. the Match Manager will recommend the school impose a set penalty, in line with the Set Penalty Guide for Reportable Offences (excluding references to the Tribunal) – see Appendix 1;
- d. if the offending player is enrolled in community football, AFLQ may notify their registered club; and
- e. AFLQ reserves the right to refer any incidents to AFLQ's Partnerships & Compliance Lead and/or Participation and Programs Manager – Schools, Inclusion and Diversity, to deal with the matter as they deem appropriate.

Please note, players registered with an affiliated AFLQ Club should be aware that they must not engage in conduct which is unbecoming or likely to prejudice the interests or reputation of Australian Football, the AFL, AFL Queensland, any other league licensed by AFLQ to administer Australian Football competitions, their respective competition or their club, and bring those into disrepute (see rule 6.13 of the *AFL Queensland Community Rules and Procedures*).

Appendix 1

CLASSIFICATION TABLE

Conduct	Impact	Contact	Base Sanction
Intentional	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	5+ Matches (Tribunal)
		Body	4+ Matches (Tribunal)
	High	High/Groin/Chest	4 Matches
		Body	3 Matches
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest	3 Matches
		Body	2 Matches
	Low	High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches
		Body	1 Match
Careless	Severe	High/Groin/Chest	4+ Matches (Tribunal)
		Body	3+ Matches (Tribunal)
	High	High/Groin/Chest	3 Matches
		Body	2 Matches
	Medium	High/Groin/Chest	2 Matches
		Body	1 Match
	Low	High/Groin/Chest	1 Match
		Body	1 Match

Appendix 2

UNDERSTANDING CLASSIFICATION TABLE

CONDUCT (INTENTIONAL, CARELESS)

Intentional conduct

A Player intentionally commits a Classifiable Offence if the Player engages in the conduct constituting the Reportable Offence with the intention of committing that offence.

Careless conduct

A Player's conduct will be regarded as 'Careless' where it constitutes a breach of the duty of care owed by the Player to all other Players. Each Player owes a duty of care to all other Players, Umpires and other persons (as applicable) not to engage in conduct which will constitute a Reportable Offence being committed against that other Player, Umpire or other person (as applicable).

IMPACT (LOW, MEDIUM, HIGH OR SEVERE)

In determining the level of impact, regard will be had to several factors.

Firstly, consideration will be given to the extent of force and, in particular, any injury sustained by the Player who was offended against (note, the absence of injury does not preclude the classification of impact as low, medium, high or severe). Secondly, strong consideration will be given to the potential to cause injury, particularly in the following cases:

- intentional head-high strikes, such as those with a swinging clenched fist, raised forearm or elbow;
- high bumps, particularly with significant head contact and/or Player momentum;
- any head-high contact with a Player who has his head over the ball, particularly when contact is made from an opponent approaching from a front-on position;
- forceful round-arm swings that make head-high contact to a Player in a marking contest, ruck contest or when tackling;
- any contact that occurs when the other Player should not reasonably be expecting or is not reasonably prepared for contact (i.e. contact off the ball);
- any dangerous tackle.

Impact Guidelines

- **Severe** – Major impact and serious injury to the Player and/or likely to miss significant number of games.
- **High** – major impact on the Player and was not able to participate in the remainder of the game and/or major ongoing issues that require medical intervention and/or may miss some games.
- **Medium** – Clearly some impact on the Player and the Player left the field for a lengthy period of time and/or some possible lower level ongoing treatment(s) required.
- **Low** – Minimal or no impact on the game and the Player continued to play the majority of the game and suffered no or minimal ongoing issues.

CONTACT (HIGH/GROIN, BODY)

- High contact is not limited to contact to the head and includes contact above the shoulders.
- A classification of high contact may apply to a careless or intentional dangerous tackle which has the potential for injury to be caused through dangerous high contact with the ground and where high contact does not actually occur.
- Contact to the groin includes contact to the crease or hollow at the junction of the inner part of each thigh with the trunk together with the adjacent region and including the testicles and vulva.
- Contact to the chest means contact to the breast(s) of the other person (females only).
- Where contact is both high and to the body, it will usually be classified as high contact.
- Where contact is both to the chest and to the body, it will be classified as contact to the chest (females only).
- Contact will be classified as high, to the groin or, in the case of females only, to the chest, where a player's head, groin or chest makes contact with another player or object such as the fence or the ground as a result of the actions of the offending player. By way of example, should a player tackle another player around the waist and as a result of the tackle, the tackled player's head makes forceful contact with the fence or the ground the contact in these circumstances would be classified as high, even though the tackle was to the

body.

- The Match Manager has the discretion to grade contact as body contact rather than high contact where the body impact would result in a more significant sanction.

Appendix 3

CARDING

YELLOW CARD

Meaning

Player is sent off for a near reportable offence. Can be used as a match management tool to lessen the chance of a player committing a reportable offence.

Duration

Player is to leave the playing surface for 15 minutes of playing time. **Player can be replaced** immediately.

Some instances where a yellow card may be used:

- Player is showing signs of aggression that could lead to a report;
- Late tackles;
- Provoking other players (pushing, threatening);
- Failing to adhere to an umpire's request/warning; or
- Umpire abuse.

RED CARD

Meaning

Player is reported and sent off for the rest of the match.

Duration

Player is to leave the ground for the rest of the match. Player is not allowed inside the playing area or the coaches box. **Player cannot be replaced** for 15 minutes of playing time.

Some instances where a red card is warranted:

- Any reportable offence such as Striking, Kicking, Excessive force in a tackle, Charging, Abusive language to an umpire using swearing or Misconduct

COACHING BOX CARD SYSTEM

Meaning

A system will apply where a field umpire can manage unacceptable coaching box behaviours in real time via the Coaching Box Card System (document on AFL website).

Duration

The three-strike system may result in a coach being reported, given a red card and ejected from a game.

The three phases are:

- 1st Phase - a warning (White card shown)
- 2nd Phase – another warning, free kick and 50m penalty (White card shown)
- 3rd Phase - Head Coach reported and removed from game, free kick and 50m penalty (Red card shown)

A reported coach may receive a coaching citation.

Code of Conduct

If any person involved in the QSoE Competition is found to be in breach of the *National Community Football Policy Handbook*, the breach may be investigated by AFLQ.