2016 Federation Competition Regulations
AFF Youth 9th to 17th Grades
General Provisions

Section 1: General

1. All Federation Youth Competitions shall be conducted under the current FIFA regulations except as otherwise specified in these General Provisions and/or specific competition regulations as applied to particular grades.

2. The control and management of all Federation Youth Competitions is vested in the Competitions Manager, under the supervision of the Chief Executive, by the Auckland Football Federation Board.

3. Where the AFF Competitions Manager or the Federation is required to grant approval for procedures under these regulations, the terms 'Competitions Manager' and 'Federation' shall include those people or groups appointed by the AFF Competitions Manager, the CEO or the Federation Board from time to time to oversee these procedures.

4. The Federation reserves the right to amend or replace these General Provisions and/or specific competition regulations as applied to particular grades from time to time. Any such amendment or replacement shall be notified by email or in writing to all Federation clubs. The non-receipt by a club of notice of any such amendment or replacement will not invalidate the change. Prior to the start of each season the Federation shall send to each club by email and publish on the AFF website the regulations for the forthcoming season. Within any season it is the club's responsibility to update these regulations with any amendments. No change to these regulations shall be implemented without a minimum notice period to clubs of 30 days once the season has commenced.

5. Final decision on interpretation of these General Provisions and/or specific competition regulations as applied to particular grades shall rest with the Federation. Any decision by the Competitions Manager in relation to these regulations can be appealed to the Federation Board in accordance with Section 8 of these regulations.

6. Fines for breaches of these General Provisions and/or specific competition regulations as applied to particular grades may be prescribed by the Federation in the AFF Schedule of Fees, such fines to be notified to Federation Clubs prior to the start of each season.

7. Each Club desiring to compete in Federation Youth Competitions shall, on or before a date advised by the Competitions Manager, confirm in writing their acceptance of an invitation to compete in such competition in the division(s) advised.
    a. The final composition of such divisions shall be at the discretion of the Competitions Manager.
    b. The Competitions Manager shall have the power to accept further entries during the season if, in his opinion, it is expedient to do so.
    c. The Federation shall have the power to increase or reduce the number of divisions and to form or discontinue sections in any division as and when the need arises.

Section 2: Player Eligibility

1. It is a Club's responsibility to ensure that a player is eligible to play and is properly registered using their legal name as recorded on a legal document such as a birth certificate or passport, with their Club's own Federation using the National registration form in Goalnet and be marked active in the current season, and that all necessary clearances from previous Clubs are obtained from the Club and via other Federations or FIFA member countries as required in NZF Regulation on the Status and Transfer of

Players (including provisions for players playing under any loan agreement), *prior to taking the field*.

2. Clubs must provide team lists to the Federation on the approved Federation Mastercard on the prescribed date as advised by the Federation prior to the commencement of competition. The Mastercard shall include for each player the the national identification number, given names and family names as registered in the Goalnet database, date of birth, gender, address, email and any dispensation information. Specific competition regulations for each grade or group of grades may include provision for fines for late submission of team Mastercards as noted in the AFF Schedule of Fees.

3. Clubs wishing to add a player to a team after the Mastercard has been supplied must complete a new Mastercard form with the date of the change recorded and supply it to the Federation prior to the start time of the first competition match the player is to play in for the Club.

4. Unless dispensation has been sought and approved by the Federation, players shall normally play in their Youth age-grade competition as determined by the age they turn during the calendar year.

5. Where players are taking part in age-determined grades, it is the Club's responsibility to sight a copy of proof of age of the player, such document to be a birth certificate, passport or other internationally recognised legal document. The Club is required to produce proof of age if requested by the Federation. It is recommended that this document is uploaded to the player's Goalnet record.

6. A Club may play (i.e. they take the field) a maximum of three players in any Federation Youth Competition match from a lower division team or grade provided that a) no player is playing more than one year above their certified age (unless granted dispensation by the Federation) and b) such players are correctly registered on their regular team's Mastercard.

7. Any team playing an unregistered or ineligible player shall be penalised as determined by the Federation and indicated in specific competition regulations as applied to particular grades, and the Club shall incur any Ineligible/Unregistered Player fine per match where the player is found to be ineligible as set down in the AFF Schedule of Fees.

8. Any player eligible to play 15th Grade or below require dispensation to be approved by the Federation to take part in senior matches and must have a signature from their parent or guardian on the dispensation form.

9. Youth players (17th Grade or below) who have been moved up to play in a senior team (19th grade or senior football) are free to return to their team in a Youth grade provided that they have played for that Youth team within the preceding two weeks, unless the Youth games in that time have been cancelled or postponed. The Youth grade game can have taken place over the same weekend of play as the senior game i.e. the eligibility to continue in Youth grades can be 'refreshed' each weekend.

10. Where a Club has two or more teams playing in the same division no player is eligible to move between these teams without prior approval from the Federation. Applications for movement must be made in writing to the Federation no less than three working days before the match in which the transferring player wishes to play. Permission to move will only be granted once per player and that player must remain in the new team for the remainder of the season.

11. All youth competitions for girls are restricted to female players only. However, youth competitions for boys may include female players. *Individual* female players wishing to play in youth competitions for boys may do so without need for any specific

dispensation from the Federation, but clubs and coaches should have regard to player welfare and safety, and to the development implications for the player. Female players requiring dispensation to play down an age grade will be included in maximum permitted numbers noted elsewhere in Regulations. For individual female players or teams involved in New Zealand Football elite programmes further written dispensation to play in youth competition for boys is required from New Zealand Football.

12. Where a girl's *team* wishes to play in a youth competition for boys, prior written dispensation must be obtained from the Federation. All players in a squad must be identified by name on the dispensation, and such dispensation shall be restricted to those named.

Section 3: Dispensations

1. In special circumstances a Club may apply for age dispensations. Applications for age dispensation, accompanied by proof of reason, must be approved by the Federation before the player can take the field.

2. Dispensations to play down an age grade will *not* be approved for players in teams in a Youth Metropolitan competition. Dispensations will be considered in the normal manner for all girls' youth grades including AFF-only and combined competitions, and for boys' competition in all youth grades.

3. In 7-a-side competitions a maximum of one dispensated player (2 dispensated players for girls-only competitions) to play down may play on the field at any one time. The player must be no more than one age grade older than the grade in which he/she is dispensated to play. In 9-a-side competitions a maximum of two dispensated players (3 dispensated players for girls-only competitions) to play down may play on the field at any one time. The player must be no more than one age grade older than the grade in which he/she is dispensated to play. In 11-a-side competitions a maximum of two dispensated players (3 dispensated players for girls-only competitions) to play down may play on the field at any one time. The player must be no more than one age grade older than the grade in which he/she is dispensated to play.

4. Any application for a player to play more than one year *above* their age grade (excluding 19th Grade which is deemed to be senior football), or for any Youth player eligible to play 15th Grade or below to play in senior AFF competitions (excluding NRFL & Men's & Women's Conference), must be on the relevant dispensation form with a signature obtained from the parent or caregiver of the player.

5. Clubs seeking to play an entire team or squad, where all players or a high proportion of the players are eligible for a lower grade, in a higher grade than their own age-grade, must seek team dispensation from the Federation, who will consider the application based on player development and safety, and on the grade played in previous seasons. For the purposes of this clause a high proportion is defined as five or more in a 7 a side competition, six of more in a 9 side competition and seven or more in an 11 a side competition.

6. In special circumstances a Club may request, and the Federation may approve, dispensations outside those allowed for in Clause 3.1, especially in circumstances involving medical conditions.

Section 4: Transfers

1. Players may transfer between Clubs, following the processes outlined in the NZF Regulation on the Status and Transfer of Players. Any player not correctly transferred in accordance with the regulation, will be deemed to be ineligible.

2. The amount charged for transfers conducted through the Federation will be charged as per the AFF Schedule of Fees.

3. No player may be transferred between 1st July – 30th September in any year, excepting with the written authorisation of the Federation or where otherwise provided for in New Zealand Football's transfer provisions.

4. Where any discrepancy arises between these regulations and those of New Zealand Football, the New Zealand Football statutes, regulations and codes shall apply. No player may be transferred in breach of any FIFA or New Zealand Football regulations.

Section 5: Grading

1. The grading of a player acquired during the season shall be cancelled at the end of the season and recorded again at the beginning of the new season on the Mastercard, subject to the power of the Federation to amend such grading.

2. Any player may play at any time in a grade for which he/she is eligible by reason of age, irrespective of how many games he/she may have played at a higher grade, provided he/she is not *registered* in a higher grade (by means of appearing on a team Mastercard at that higher grade) or is subject to regulations covering Youth Metropolitan & Conference League participation. A player may return to a lower grade if they have played in the lower grade within the previous 15 days. Effectively, playing a third consecutive week in a higher grade deems that player to have moved to that grade, and the team Mastercard for the both grades should be resubmitted to the Federation showing the move. The player is then ineligible for the lower grade and may not play in the lower grade for the remainder of the season. Specific competition regulations for each grade or group of grades may include provision for fines for playing ineligible players as noted in the AFF Schedule of Fees.

3. Applications for grading or regrading of players must be in writing to the Federation, either by letter or email by the Club Secretary or other recognised club official and giving reasons for such an application.

Section 6: Specific Competition Regulations

1. The Federation may set specific competition regulations governing aspects of play and procedure for each Grade as it sees necessary, and shall publish such regulations under separate headings.

Section 7: Discipline and Misconduct

1. Teams, players, officials and spectators shall at all times behave in a manner that shall not damage the image of the game. Clubs are responsible for the behaviour of their spectators, players and coaching staff, and are required to ensure their representatives abide by the FIFA, NZ Football and AFF Codes of Conduct and uphold the spirit of Fair Play while participating in Federation Youth Competition.

2. No charge will be made for misconducts at 17th Grade and below. This waiving of fines does not apply in cases of exceptional misconduct where the Federation or the Disciplinary Committee may impose whatever penalties it may feel are appropriate. Suspensions associated with misconducts will be applied to age grade players.

3. Misconducts, cautions and expulsions shall be referred to the player's relevant Federation who will inform the player's Club through normal processes and will be actioned under the New Zealand Football Disciplinary Code.

4. Any team or members within a team that receives three incident reports within the same season of proven instances of unacceptable behaviour and/or NZ Football Code of

Ethics breaches may be subject to a good behaviour financial team bond. This will be imposed by the AFF Competitions Manager and may be refunded at the end of the season if no further proven reported incidents are received. Any proven reported incidents may result in a forfeit of the financial bond.

5. Teams or members within a team who have been placed on a good behaviour financial team bond in the previous season may be subjected to a non-financial team bond in the following season. The first proven reported incident of unacceptable behaviour and/or NZ Football Code of Ethics breaches may result in a good behaviour financial team bond being imposed by the AFF Competitions Manager.

6. Any good behaviour financial team bond imposed must be paid by the club/team by the advised date. In the event of non-payment, fixtures for that team will be defaulted week by week until paid in full.

7. In instances of exceptional misconduct or where the Federation deems it necessary it shall convene a Disciplinary Committee to hold a Disciplinary Hearing to rule on an incident. The Federation may require an individual(s) to appear before the Hearing, in which case the individual(s) may be accompanied by another official of their Club to give evidence or make a plea on their behalf. If the requested person fails to attend the Disciplinary Hearing the Disciplinary Committee may make a decision in their absence. The Disciplinary Committee shall have the power to impose whatever penalties it may feel appropriate depending on the circumstances. The decision of the Disciplinary Committee will be communicated to the Club in writing.

Section 8: Protests, Disputes and Appeals

1. Any Club playing in Federation Youth Competition may bring a dispute or protest to the Federation through the AFF Competitions Manager.

2. A protest shall be made by the Club Secretary or other recognised club official, by the Wednesday following the match or three working days of a mid-week fixture of the alleged breach, or earlier if stipulated by the rules of the specific competition. The protest must be in writing to the AFF Competitions Manager, setting out the full details of the incident or protest and must be accompanied by the prescribed Incident Report Form.

3. On receipt of the protest, AFF Competitions staff will make the necessary enquiries into the matters placed before them, including any referee and/or officials from opposing teams, and will advise the decision in writing to the party or parties concerned.

4. Any decision of the AFF Competitions Manager may be appealed to the Federation Board by any of the parties involved. Such appeal must be received at the Federation office in writing within 14 days of the date of the letter containing the decision, and be accompanied by the Administration Fee as set by the Federation from time to time and shown on the AFF Schedule of Fees. The Board may appoint an Disciplinary Committee to deal with the appeal. The Board may convene a hearing or may choose at their absolute discretion to deal with the Appeal on the papers. Any decision of the Board or the Disciplinary Committee will be communicated to the parties involved in writing. The Board may further at its sole discretion refund the appeal fee.

5. Any decision of the Disciplinary Committee may be appealed to the Federation Board by the person(s) or Club(s) involved. Such appeal must be received at the Federation office in writing within 14 days of the date of the letter containing the decision, and be accompanied by the Appeal Fee as set by the Federation shown on the AFF Schedule of Fees. The Board may appoint an Appeals Committee to deal with the appeal. The Board may convene a second hearing or may choose at their sole discretion to deal with the Appeal on the papers. The Board or the Appeals Committee may impose penalties

as set out in AFF Rules and New Zealand Football statutes, regulations and codes, and any decision will be communicated to the person(s) and/or Club(s) in writing.

6. A club may further appeal the decision under the provisions set out in the New Zealand Football Disciplinary Code.

Section 9: Competitions

1. The Federation shall determine times, dates and grounds for any fixture in Federation Youth Competition and shall have the right at all times to amend, postpone or cancel any fixture.

2. Where scheduling on a home ground or a neutral ground consisting of artificial turf constructed and installed to the appropriate standards, both teams shall fulfil the fixture or be deemed to have defaulted.

3. Clubs may request changes to scheduled fixtures (ground and kick-off times) for internal operational reasons, but must do so in writing to the AFF Competitions Manager no later than 10 days prior to the scheduled game, to allow other affected parties and stakeholders to receive adequate notice of the changes. After that cut-off only non-material changes (e.g. from one pitch to another on the same reserve at the same kick off time) will be considered, but not changes to kick off times unless agreed by both teams and the Competitions Manager.

4. In exceptional circumstances postponements may be proposed by Clubs through the Club Secretary or other recognised club official. Such proposed postponements must be received by the Federation no less than 24 hours before the scheduled time of kick-off, and will be accepted or rejected at the sole discretion of the Competitions Manager. However, a request for postponement will normally be approved if:
    a. There is prior agreement of the opposition and an acceptable new time and date for the fixture has been agreed with the Competitions Manager;
    b. The team has been drawn to play in a New Zealand Football cup competition less than 72 hours before or after the fixture.

5. Proposed postponement/abandonment of any match prior to kick-off, for any reason, shall be reported immediately to the AFF Competitions Manager, by the referee if present, or if no referee is present, by the home club.

6. In the event of a late cancellation by the Competitions Manager on the day of a fixture, but where two teams arrive at the ground unaware of the cancellation and the game is played, the Competitions Manager shall at his sole discretion determine whether the result of the game shall be included in the competition, or whether the game shall be recorded as postponed, abandoned or cancelled. The Competitions Manager shall later determine whether the game shall be replayed or shall remain cancelled, in which case the result shall not be part of the determination of the overall competition.

7. When inclement weather or any other reason has meant competitions cannot be concluded within the required time-frame the Federation may close any competition and declare final placings based on, at its sole discretion, the standings at the end of the first completed round, standings at the close of the competition, or as a result of a play-off between two or more teams.

8. The Federation may at its sole discretion supply medals and/or trophies to championship winning sides in Federation Youth Competition. Any perpetual trophies shall remain the property of the Federation at all times. Trophy winners are responsible for the maintenance, repair and/or replacement, and engraving of their Club name on any perpetual trophies awarded to them.

9. Shirt/short numbering is not mandatory, and is not mandatory across *all* shirts/shorts being worn in any match by either team, unless there is a Specific Competition Regulation applying to a particular division, grade or competition. However, when *any* shirts or shorts in use in any match by a team are numbered, there shall be no duplication of any number within a team. Shorts, if numbered, must carry the *same* number as the shirt number worn by an individual player.

10. The use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs or drones) is prohibited under Council rules on Council parks. Any person found to be operating one of these devices over a sports field if it is in use by others, will be requested by the home Club to remove the device. If this request is not complied with, the home Club is to submit an incident report with all details to the relevant Competitions Manager. The local Council will be notified and sanctions may be applied against the offending individual.