Victorian Churches Football Association, Inc.

Promotion & Relegation Policy

Overarching Principles

As per the VCFA Match Rules, the divisional structures each season will be at the absolute discretion of the VCFA, and will generally follow the guidelines in this Policy.

Decisions regarding divisional structures will prioritise the best interests of the Association as a whole.

Where a conflict arises between the best interests of different divisions, the interests of the higher division will be prioritised to ensure strong competition at the highest levels.

Premier League Competitions

Participation in the WPL, MPL1 and MPL2 competitions shall be by application, or at the initial invitation of the VCFA. Generally, this is a one-off application that does not need to be reapplied for each year.

Entry (qualification) requirements for these competitions is based on, but not limited to:

- club governance structure
- financial stability
- competitive standard
- team behaviour
- availability of a co-fixtured reserves side, and
- availability of appropriate facilities.

In situations where a club no longer meets the qualification requirements the club may be asked to leave or reapply to the Premier League competition they are participating in.

Where a team finishes last or second-last in the lowest Premier League competition, and a Divisional team or teams meet the qualification requirements, reapplication to the Premier League competitions may be required.

The VCFA Operations team will support clubs with teams outside of the Premier League competitions to meet Premier League entry requirements.

A single Member will generally not be permitted to enter more than one team in the Men's Premier League and Women's Premier League competitions, except at the request of the Member and at the discretion of the VCFA Operations team.

Any Member with a team eligible for promotion or relegation to an PL competition where they already field a team may either:

a) Be ignored for the purpose of relegation and promotion
b) Replace the team that Member already has fielded in that competition, with the team being replaced being promoted or relegated; accordingly, or
c) Be invited but not required to enter more than one team in that competition.

Women's Competitions

This policy generally applies to all senior competitions including women's competitions.

However, recognising that the women's competition is less developed and has fewer teams than the men's competition, some additional discretion may need to apply to women's divisional structures to ensure a fair and balanced competition with sufficient team numbers in each division.

The lowest division of the women's competition is a social football competition, with alternative rules and outcomes, and as such does not follow this policy for promotion and relegation.

Promotion and Relegation

The placement of teams in competitions shall be based on the finishing position of a Member's teams in the most recent home and away season.

The Premier and Runner-up of each division will be eligible for promotion to the next highest division for the following season.

Teams finishing in last and second last position of each division will be relegated to the next lowest division for the following season.

In circumstances where team numbers change, and the normal two-up, two-down policy is not possible, team placements may be altered at the discretion of the VCFA Operations team, including limiting promotion and/or relegation to one-up and one-down.

Where the number of teams nominated by a Member decreases, the Member will be expected to continue fielding teams in the higher divisions it has previously participated in.

Where the number of teams nominated by a member increases, new teams will be placed based on the request of the Member and ultimately at the discretion of the VCFA Operations team.

There will be no automatic promotion and relegation between the Premier League competitions and the Divisional competitions, with all entries into the Premier League competitions by application only.

Where a Divisional team meets qualification requirements to enter the Premier League competitions, the bottom two clubs of the lowest Premier League competition can be subject to the Promotion and Relegation process and may be asked to reapply for the following season.

Filling Divisional Vacancies

The VCFA often receives requests from Members regarding their teams' placement in divisional structures. Except where exceptional circumstances exist to the satisfaction of the VCFA Operations team the divisional structures will be formed in accordance with this policy.

Where discretion is exercised to place teams other than in accordance with this policy, the placement (along with reasons for the exercise of discretion) will be published to all Members.

From time-to-time vacancies are created in a division due to:

a) a Member withdrawing team(s) from competition;
b) a Member being expelled from competition;
c) a team being relegated; or
d) other reasons from time to time.

If a vacancy is created in a division prior to the commencement of the season (whether that vacancy is created during the previous season or in the 'off-season' prior to the commencement of the season in question) the VCFA may in order of preference:

a) fill the vacancy
b) leave multiple vacancies and run a smaller division; or
c) leave the vacancy and run the division with a bye.

at its sole discretion.

Where the VCFA elects to fill a divisional vacancy created, it may be filled in the following order of priority:

a) newly entered teams to the competition who request to fill a specific vacancy.
b) the highest finishing team which misses out on promotion in accordance with this policy, from the division below the division in which the vacancy arises
c) the highest finishing team, which is to be, or has been, relegated in accordance with this policy from the division in which the vacancy arises.

For the avoidance of doubt, if it is necessary to avoid vacancies in the divisional structures, teams may be promoted (or may avoid relegation) regardless of finishing position.