



THE CAULFIELD BEARS JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB TAKE THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE EMPOWERMENT OF OUR CHILDREN VERY SERIOUSLY.

Empowerment is about the emotional reaction each child has due to their time at the club. It is about building belief, confidence and identity through their sport, and much of this is reliant on how adult figures at the club interact with them.

The Caulfield Bears are committed to building a culture in which the players have age appropriate opportunities to speak up, give input and be involved in decisions. These opportunities not only allow them to grow and build their confidence further, but it also mean that should an incident ever occur, they are more willing to speak up because they know their voice will be heard and their grievance will be taken seriously.

The Caulfield Bears have implemented and will continue to implement a number of initiatives to drive the empowerment of the children involved in our club.

These include:

- 1. Empowering Children to make decisions relevant to their team (re captains)**
 - a. Some teams were surveyed by the coaches to determine the player leadership and/or captain structure they wanted to have for their team; for example:
 - i. Rotating Captains
 - ii. Set Captains for the season voted for by the team
 - iii. Set Captains for different aspects of the game voted for by the team or rotating
 - b. Regardless of the way leadership roles, ie player leadership group, were chosen these children are given an opportunity during breaks to identify strengths and weaknesses of the game so far.
- 2. Empowering children to participate in the decisions at coaching**
 - a. Coaches spend time talking to the team after each game, gathering input into what they achieved during the game and what they should focus on in training. This is done by asking questions but also ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to provide input.
 - b. During coaching sessions children are given the opportunity to have a say in what they think they should be focusing on as individuals and as a team.
- 3. Giving children the opportunity to try a number of positions**
 - a. In the younger teams children are consistently rotated through positions and are given an opportunity to determine where they like to play.
 - b. Some teams conduct surveys at the beginning of the season to get input as to where they would like to play.
 - c. In all age groups, coaches check in regularly through the season to check that children are playing in a position they enjoy.
- 4. Children are given the opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses of the games / teams playing**
 - a. During coaching sessions, breaks and after the games – highlights are identified by both the coach and the children.
 - b. During coaching sessions, breaks and after the games – coaches ask the team how they think they went on the coaching instructions that were given.
 - c. The teams are encouraged to identify when a team mate has done well and congratulate them on that performance.
 - d. If a player makes a mistake there is no tolerance for that player being berated by either the coach or other players. Children are actively encouraged to support players that have made an error.
 - e. Coaches often ask the teams what they can do better and what they did well to help facilitate this feedback.
- 5. Children are not hard graded into teams based on ability:**
 - a. For younger age groups where the club is able to field multiple teams in a competitive, team selection will be made in accordance with friendship groups and in accordance with team selection policy.
 - b. For older age groups (typically U13 and above, but at the discretion of the club for younger age groups), a soft grading approval is taken to team selection so that all children at an age group are given an opportunity to play against a higher graded team, if they must do so.