

AFLQ SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE 2027

OVERVIEW

The AFL Queensland Schools of Excellence Program is designed to be an aspirational framework for schools offering a Secondary curriculum (Year 7 - 12) across Queensland, recognising and supporting schools that demonstrate excellence in the delivery of Australian football programs and student development outcomes.

Following consultation with current endorsed schools and broader stakeholder feedback, AFL Queensland has undertaken a review of the program to ensure it remains relevant, sustainable and reflective of the diverse school football landscape across the state. The review identified a need to strengthen endorsement standards, clarify the purpose of the program and provide greater opportunities for schools at different stages of their football journey. Feedback also highlighted increasing interest from regional schools and schools delivering high-quality football programs that may not be able to play in the existing competition.

The proposed 2027 model recognises that excellence extends beyond on-field results. An AFLQ endorsed football school should focus on developing students' football skills while promoting physical activity, wellbeing, teamwork, inclusivity and positive school culture. Endorsed schools will also provide meaningful opportunities for students to engage in coaching, umpiring, leadership and volunteering pathways, creating lifelong connections with the game.

Through a refined endorsement framework and tiered playing opportunities, AFL Queensland aims to create a clear pathway for schools to progress and be recognised for excellence and engagement with Australian Rules Football. Whether participating in a Premiership competition, Development competition or alternative endorsed playing opportunities, schools will be united by a commitment to delivering high-quality football programs, fostering strong community connections and creating positive outcomes for students. This approach ensures the program remains a benchmark for excellence while supporting the continued growth of Australian football across Queensland.

2027 Schools of Excellence Model

The AFLQ Schools of Excellence model separates Endorsement from Competition Participation, recognising that excellence in school football is about more than on-field performance alone.

Schools will be endorsed based on the quality, sustainability and impact of their football program, while playing opportunities will be aligned to the school's capability, objectives and stage of development.

This structure creates a clear pathway for schools across Queensland while ensuring the Schools of Excellence Premiership Competition remains an aspirational and elite competition.

Stream	Playing Environment
Premiership Schools	Schools of Excellence Premiership Competition
Development Schools	Schools of Excellence Development Carnival Days
Endorsed Football Schools	StreetSmarts AFLQ Schools Cup

The Journey to Excellence

Recognising excellence at every stage of a school's football journey

Not every school is at the same stage of development. The 2027 AFLQ Schools of Excellence model provides multiple entry points while maintaining a clear pathway towards becoming one of Queensland's elite AFL schools.



AFLQ Endorsed Football School

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Schools of Excellence Development

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Schools of Excellence Premiership





Schools of Excellence - Premiership

Schools that demonstrate exceptional performance across all endorsement pillars and provide a high-performance football environment.

Suitable for schools that:

- Deliver an established and highly successful football program
- Demonstrate strong pathway outcomes
- Meet all endorsement standards
- Seek to compete against the state's leading AFL schools
- Can participate in a South East Qld based competition



Schools of Excellence - Development

Schools that demonstrate strong football programs and a commitment to continuous improvement, while working towards premiership-level standards.

Suitable for schools that:

- Are growing and investing in football
- Meet endorsement standards
- Seek meaningful competition opportunities
- Aspire to progress towards Premiership-level standards
- Can participate in Carnival Days conducted in South East Qld across all terms



AFLQ Endorsed Football School

Schools delivering quality football programs that align with AFLQ standards but may not wish to or are geographically unable to participate in a statewide competition.

Suitable for schools that:

- Deliver quality football opportunities
- May be regional or geographically isolated
- Participate in alternative playing opportunities
- Focus on program development and student outcomes



SIX CORE PILLARS

The AFL Queensland Schools of Excellence Endorsement Framework provides a clear benchmark for recognising schools that deliver high-quality, sustainable and impactful Australian football programs. AFL Queensland acknowledges that every school operates within a unique environment, with varying resources, student cohorts and strategic priorities. Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, the framework focuses on the core elements that underpin successful football programs and positive student outcomes. Built around six key pillars, the framework supports schools to strengthen, develop and continually improve their football offering. Through endorsement, AFL Queensland aims to recognise schools that create meaningful opportunities for students, foster strong community connections and demonstrate a commitment to football excellence across Queensland.

GOVERNANCE	**Leadership, planning and program sustainability.**
PROGRAM	**Structured football opportunities that develop and engage students.**
PLAY	**Meaningful and appropriate playing experiences.**
PATHWAYS	**Connections to playing, coaching, umpiring and leadership opportunities.**
COMMUNITY	**Partnerships that strengthen football and school engagement.**
FACILITIES	**Quality environments that support program delivery.**

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Application Process

Schools may apply for endorsement at any time throughout the year, with endorsement recognised for the following year post application (endorsement applies for an annual period).

Step 1 - Self-Assessment

Schools complete a self-assessment against the AFLQ Schools of Excellence Framework, providing supporting evidence against each endorsement pillar (refer to the 'Endorsement Criteria' section for information required).

Step 2 - Apply via EOI

Schools submit an Expression of Interest to AFLQ outlining and providing evidence relating to how they meet the criteria required for the respective tier they are applying for. Please note that new schools cannot be endorsed straight to Premiership level and must spend a year in Development before being eligible.

Step 3 - AFLQ Review

Applications are reviewed by AFL Queensland staff against the Schools of Excellence Framework. Where required, AFLQ may seek further information or conduct a consultation meeting with the school to better understand the school's football offering.

Step 4 - Endorsement Outcome

Following an AFLQ review, schools will be notified of the outcome of their submission. Schools will receive a summary of strengths and recommended areas for future growth.

Step 5 - Ongoing Review

Endorsed schools will participate in a light-touch annual review process with AFLQ to ensure programs continue to align with the framework for the respective level they are engaged with, with a view to also identifying opportunities for future development.



Endorsement Pathways & Assessment

Schools will be assessed against the six AFLQ Schools of Excellence pillars*. Each endorsement level reflects the maturity, quality and sustainability of the school's football program.

Endorsed	Development	Premiership
Foundational football program	Established football program	Leading football program
Meets the minimum requirements across all six pillars	Demonstrates consistent delivery and continued growth	Demonstrates excellence, sustainability and leadership
Provides recognised football opportunities	Provides structured participation and pathway opportunities	Delivers a comprehensive, high-quality football program

* Please see all details of the six AFLQ Schools of Excellence pillars on the 2nd last page

Endorsement Criteria

Pillar 1: Governance

Endorsed	Development	Premiership	Evidence Required
A staff member is nominated to coordinate the school's Australian Football program.	A dedicated football lead oversees the program, supported by additional staff.	A clearly defined football leadership structure is embedded within the school.	Staff roles, organisational chart or position descriptions
Australian Football is included within the school's sporting program.	The school maintains an annual football program or action plan.	Australian Football is included within the school's broader strategic planning.	School sports plan, annual football plan or strategic plan

Endorsement Criteria

Pillar 2: Program

Endorsed	Development	Premiership	Evidence Required
Provides structured Australian Football opportunities for students.	Delivers a regular football program across multiple year levels.	Delivers a comprehensive and sequential football program across the school.	Program outline, timetable or curriculum overview
Provides access to suitable coaching and program delivery. Minimum 1 AFL Schools Member & 1 AFL accredited coach.	**All** AFL teachers / coaches are AFL accredited to support program delivery. Minimum 3 AFL School Members.	Maintains a sustainable coaching structure with ongoing staff development. All teachers / coaches are AFL accredited with Level 2 or plans to upskill. Minimum 5 AFL School Members	Coaching register/ qualifications or professional development records

Endorsement Criteria

Pillar 3: Play

Endorsed	Development	Premiership	Evidence Required
Participates in StreetSmarts AFLQ Schools Cup across multiple divisons.	Participates in StreetSmarts AFLQ Schools Cup & AFLQ Schools of Excellence Development Carnival Days.	Participates in AFLQ Schools of Excellence Premiership Division.	Competition entries or event registrations.
Records basic student and team participation in AFL teams.	Tracks participation numbers and program growth.	Uses participation, retention and progression data to evaluate and develop the program.	Participation data showing students, teams, divisions. External competition data.

Endorsement Criteria

Pillar 4: Pathways

Endorsed	Development	Premiership	Evidence Required
Promotes local club and representative football opportunities.	Maintains active connections with local clubs and AFLQ pathway programs.	Maintains formal and sustainable pathway relationships with clubs & academies.	Communications, partnership documentation or pathway information.
Provides and promotes opportunities for students to participate in coaching, umpiring, leadership or volunteering.	Provides structured opportunities for students to participate in multiple non-playing football pathways, with students actively engaged each year.	Embeds non-playing pathways within the football program, with regular opportunities across coaching, umpiring, leadership and volunteering and demonstrated student progression.	Student participation records; coaching or umpiring accreditation; leadership or volunteer roles; examples of students progressing into further opportunities.

Endorsement Criteria

Pillar 5: Community

Endorsed	Development	Premiership	Evidence Required
The school actively promotes and celebrates Australian Football participation and achievements within the school community.	The football program actively engages the broader school community through events, communications, recognition and opportunities for involvement.	The football program is embedded within the school's culture, with strong whole-school engagement, recognition and demonstrated contribution to school identity and community connection.	School newsletters and social media; awards or recognition; football events and activations; assemblies; school communications; examples of student, staff and family engagement.

Endorsement Criteria

Pillar 6: Facilities & Resources

Endorsed	Development	Premiership	Evidence Required
Has access to a safe and suitable space for football activities.	Has regular access to appropriate training and playing facilities.	Has reliable access to high-quality facilities that support training, competition and program growth.	Facility information, venue agreement or photographs.

Assessment Requirements

To receive any endorsement level, a school must:**

Meet **all mandatory criteria** for that level.
Meet the minimum requirements across **all six pillars.**
Provide sufficient **evidence** to verify its application.
Participate in the annual review process.

A school demonstrating advanced practice in some pillars but not meeting the minimum criteria in another pillar may be endorsed at the lower level with a documented improvement plan.

**Please note that all application outcomes are at the absolute discretion of AFLQ

APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW!

Are you a current AFLQ School of Excellence or aspiring school wanting to be endorsed?

Expressions of Interest are now open to current and aspiring AFLQ Schools of Excellence.

Apply here: https://www.cognitoforms.com/AFLQueensland/AFLQueenslandSchoolsOfExcellence2027

Applications close:
Friday 27th November 2026 at 5:00pm
Late submissions will not be accepted.

Application Outcomes:
Week commencing Monday 7th December application outcomes will be communicated to schools.



Item	Category
Pillar 1: GOVERNANCE	
1.1	The football program is supported by school leadership and aligned to the school's strategic priorities.
1.2	The school has an identified football program lead responsible for coordinating and overseeing the program.
1.3	The school demonstrates a clear vision and purpose for football within the school community.
Pillar 2: PROGRAM	
2.1	The school delivers a structured football program that provides regular opportunities for student participation and development.
2.2	The program includes opportunities for students of varying ages, abilities and experience levels to engage in Australian football.
2.3	Coaches and support staff are appropriately qualified or actively working towards relevant AFL accreditation requirements.
Pillar 3: PLAY	
3.1	The school provides meaningful playing opportunities aligned to their endorsed stream and program objectives.
3.2	The school supports AFL Queensland competitions, carnival days or approved football events where appropriate.
3.3	The school demonstrates a commitment to positive match day experiences, player development and sportsmanship.
Pillar 4: PATHWAYS	
4.1	The school provides students with opportunities to engage in Australian football pathways beyond playing, including coaching, umpiring, leadership and volunteering.
4.2	The school actively promotes and supports participation in AFL and AFLQ pathway programs where appropriate.
4.3	The school demonstrates connections that support student progression within Australian football and broader sporting opportunities.
Pillar 5: COMMUNITY	
5.1	The school maintains strong relationships with local clubs, AFL Queensland and the broader football community.
5.2	The school creates opportunities that promote participation, connection and engagement in Australian football.
5.3	The football program positively contributes to the school's culture and community.
Pillar 6: FACILITIES	
6.1	The school provides access to suitable facilities and equipment to support the delivery of its football program.
6.2	The school demonstrates a commitment to providing safe, functional and sustainable football environments.
6.3	The school maximises opportunities to utilise and develop facilities through partnerships and shared community use where appropriate.


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