SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media provides unique opportunities for sports clubs to engage, connect, and develop unique relationships with people in a creative and dynamic medium where users are active participants. Information about an event or campaign messages can be dissipated virally amongst supporters within online communities. However, we must also be aware that these sites can become a negative forum for complaining, gossiping, or bullying. Care must be taken to not to breach the Club Safeguarding Policy of GDPR.

THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES WILL APPLY TO THE CLUB'S SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and the password must be held by the PRO and at least two Club Officers.

- The accounts will be monitored by a member of the General Committee who will have login details for the sites.

- Any inappropriate posts will be removed by the designated moderator. The moderator will explain the reasons for removal to the person who posted the content.

- All posts will convey the same positive spirit that the club would instill in all its communications.

- All posts should be respectful and done in a polite manner that reflects well on the club.

- Parental and child's permission is required before pictures of videos of children or young people are posted online. (See Photography and Use of Images Policy).

GUIDELINES FOR CLUB LEADERS USING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

If a club leader has their own personal profile on a social media website, they should make sure that others cannot access any contents, media, or information from that profile which:

  a) they are not happy for others to have access to.

  b) which would undermine their position as a coach/volunteer representing their club.

In order to ensure this, leaders should consider the following:

- Changing the privacy setting on the profile so that content is only visible to those accepted as friends.

- Regularly reviewing who is on their 'friends list' and only accept friend requests from known individuals.

- Ensure that information published on social media sites complies with the club's Safeguarding Policy.

- How actions could be captured via images, posts, or comments online and how these would reflect on the club.

- Coaches should not have any under 18's whom they coach as friends and must not comment on individual players through their personal page.

Furthermore, all leaders should be aware of the potential problems associated with social media, which include: cyber bullying; grooming and potential abuse by online predators; identity theft; and exposure to inappropriate content such as self-harm, racism, sexting (which is the creation or uploading of inappropriate material), and adult pornography.

The capabilities of social networking services may increase the potential for sexual exploitation of children and young people. There have been a number of well reported cases where adults have used social networking and user interactive services as a means of grooming children and young people for sexual abuse.

Online grooming techniques include:

- gathering personal details, such as age, name, address, mobile number, name of school, and photographs.

- promising meetings with sports idols or celebrities or offers of merchandise or gifts

- paying young people to appear naked and perform sexual acts.

- bullying and intimidating behaviour, such as threatening to expose the child or young person by contacting their parents/guardians to inform them of their child's communications, or postings on a social networking site, and/or saying they know where the child lives, plays sport, or goes to school.

- asking sexually themed questions, such as 'Do you have a boyfriend?' or 'Are you a virgin?' asking to meet children and young people offline.

- sending sexually themed images to a child depicting adult content or the abuse of other children. Masquerading as a minor or assuming a false identity on a social networking site to deceive a child

- using school or hobby sites (including sports) to gather information about a child's interests likes and dislikes.

- Most social networking sites set a child's webpage/profile to private by default to reduce the risk of personal information being shared in a public area of the site.