



Social Media Policy

Last updated: February 2025

STATEMENT OF INTENT

In an ever changing world of technology, it's important that we, as a club, ensure that we are safeguarding our young people online. Facebook, Instagram, X, Snapchat, blogs, instant messaging and photo and video exchange sites are now common ways of communicating. All of these online tools provide a useful way for everyone in football to connect. However the use of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people.

It's important that we keep a track of how our young people are being communicated with and follow the best practice guidance provided by The FA. As a member of the club you are responsible for and need to abide by the FA Rules and regulations regarding comments you place online about the league, club, players, managers or match officials.

GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

- Children and young people should be advised to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer about the communication.
- Consent must be given to the club to post any photos or videos on our social media channels or when sharing in parent group chats.
- It is against Club and FA rules to post comments that are or maybe conceived as offensive, insulting, abusive, threatening, racist, and discriminatory or any other reference that may cause offence or harm to others.
- The club must NOT post comments about other clubs, players or referees and any controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects.
- Avoid hostile or harassing communications in any posts or other online communications.
- Harassment is any offensive conduct based on a person's race, sex, gender identity, national origin, colour, disability, age sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, religion or any other status protected by law.
- Our social media channels are regularly monitored by volunteers.
- Members must always report any inappropriate communications you receive from a child.
- Coaches, administrators and other members acting on behalf of TJFC must always communicate information via the parent/carer group chats.
- Parent group chats are set up in the name of the team and are only used by coaches and/or administrators and parent/carers. At no time should these be used for personal communications, 'banter' or comments.
- Coaches or administrators must not accept any invitations or requests from our young people on social media
- Personal details of volunteers must not be passed onto players or others. Any contact should be made via the appropriate point of contact.
- If there are any concerns regarding the use of social media, or you feel a member of the club is not adhering to the above policy, please contact the club immediately.

FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

- www.net-force.org.uk
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- <https://www.youngstonewall.org.uk/>

Club Welfare Officer Contact

Ruth Davis

E: tjfcwelfare@yahoo.com



Respect



1. Social networking, websites, mobile phone and email communications

Summary of Best Practice Guidance

The FA's intention and responsibility is to safeguard children and young people involved in football. As with other leading world brands The FA uses Facebook, YouTube and Twitter as a way of getting messaging across to the widest audience possible.

Alongside the very beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies we have to recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. These risks must be appropriately managed.

Everyone involved in football must recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play.

This guidance has been developed in response to requests for advice. It's essential that clubs, parents, members and players make informed decisions about how they use the internet, mobile phone and email communications.

Clubs and leagues that set up websites have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. Coaches, officials, referee mentors and those in a position of responsibility in clubs and leagues must ensure they communicate responsibly.

The FA recommends that texting is not used as the primary method of communication between adults and child/young people in football.

If it's decided that the most effective way of communicating to young people is via a social networking site then the club/league is strongly advised to set up an account in the name of the club/league and explicitly for use by named members, parents and carers solely about football matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selection. At no time should there be any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.

Leagues and clubs are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abide by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association.

Clubs and leagues should appoint appropriate adults to monitor the content of their websites. Social networking is a cost effective way to communicate and easy to set up, but labour intensive to run.

Children and young people should be advised by their coaches, parents/carers and CWO to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer about the communication.

The FA has developed a series of guidance to encourage best practice when communicating with and about children and young people; the following range of best practice guidance is available to you via the downloads area of www.TheFA.com/footballsafes

- 1 **Social networking, websites, mobile phones, and email communications**
- 2 Running a website - Do's and Don'ts
- 3 Responsible use of Social Networking sites
- 4 Communicating responsibly with Young Leaders, Coaches and Referees Under 18
- 5 Using Texts and Emails with U18s – Do's and Don'ts
- 6 Guidance for parents/carers - Responsible use of text, email and social networking sites
- 7 Guidance for U18s using: Club WebPages, Social Networks, Email and Texts

Acknowledgements

The FA would like to acknowledge that the development of this guidance has been assisted by guidance written by the Amateur Swimming Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, Child Protection in Sport Unit and Child Exploitation Online Protection centre.



Respect



3. Responsible use of social networking sites

Guidance for Clubs and Leagues

The following guidance is provided not as an obstacle but to support clubs and leagues to manage their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. It aims to ensure children, young people, coaches, referees and adults in a position of trust are not subjected to improper online behaviour or improper allegations.

If a club decides that the most effective way of communicating to young people is via a social networking site then the club is **strongly advised to set up an account in the name of the club** and explicitly for use by named club members, parents and carers solely about football matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selection.

Coaches, referee mentors, club officials and others in a position of trust in football need to act responsibly both on and off the field and this includes the use of electronic communications.

Therefore The FA would suggest that as a general principle coaches, managers etc should avoid using social networking sites as the primary way of communicating with players. Children and young people should be advised by their coaches, parents/carers and CWO to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer about the communication.

The following is best practice in relation to social networking.

Do

- ensure all the privacy settings are locked so that that the page(s) are used explicitly for club or league matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations
- nominate a club/league official to monitor the club/league social networking page regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately
- make sure everyone within your club knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking areas and how to contact them
- provide all users with The FAs best practice guidance on using social networking sites

- gain written parent/carer permission before access is given to U18s
- inform the CWO if you have received inappropriate communications online, keeping a record of any inappropriate, threatening or offensive material as this may be needed as evidence.

Don't

Unless a child/young person is a direct relation, the coaches, managers, referees, medics and club officials should not:

- accept as a friend, players or referees U18 on social networking sites they are members of or share their own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved in youth football
- make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites
- use internet or web based communications to send personal messages of a non football nature to a child or young person
- engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.

Further FA guidance is available on the following areas:

- 1 Social networking, websites, mobile phones, and email communications
- 2 Running a website - Do's and Don'ts
- 3 **Responsible use of Social Networking sites**
- 4 Communicating responsibly with Young Leaders, Coaches and Referees Under 18
- 5 Using Texts and Emails with U18s – Do's and Don'ts
- 6 Guidance for parents/carers - Responsible use of text, email and social networking sites
- 7 Guidance for U18s using: Club WebPages, Social Networks, Email and Texts

Acknowledgements

The FA would like to acknowledge that the development of this guidance has been assisted by guidance written by the Amateur Swimming Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, Child Protection in Sport Unit and Child Exploitation Online Protection centre.