

## **Social Media Guidance.**

In today's world, safeguarding children and young people applies as much online as it does face-to-face. This guidance covers the use of digital platforms in a football context. Such platforms include websites, email, mobile messaging and use of social media sites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter.

Of course, these technologies have huge benefits. For example, it is so much easier nowadays for a team or club to let its players know the times of training sessions, meet-ups and match venues. However, we must recognise that digital platforms can be misused, with increased risks to children and young people. Newcastle Benfield Juniors FC takes these risks extremely seriously.

It is essential that everyone involved in our club makes informed decisions about how they use the internet, social media, mobile phone, and email communications – particularly when children and young people are involved.

### **Websites**

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. Clubs and leagues 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.

It is against FA rules to post comments that are or maybe conceived as:

- Offensive
- Insulting
- Abusive
- Threatening
- Racist
- Discriminatory
- Any other reference that may cause offensive or harm to others

Any such comment made on club or league websites and/or social networking sites regarding officials may result in disciplinary action being taken in line with The FA's Disciplinary policies and procedures.

Comments made on websites that are threatening abusive or racist could lead to legal action being taken against those responsible for posting or hosting them. Comments made may attract libel claims and legal action through the civil courts if they are untrue or defamatory.

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.

Clubs and leagues are strongly advised to adhere to the following Do's and Don'ts:

<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ appoint an appropriate adult(s) to monitor the content of the website</li> <li>➤ make sure everyone within your club knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the club website and social networking areas and how to contact them</li> <li>➤ apply the principles given within The FA's photography guidelines, Celebrating Football Thorough Photographs and Video</li> <li>➤ place the CEOP, 'Report Abuse' app on your web site and the link to the <a href="http://www.ThinkUKnow.co.uk">www.ThinkUKnow.co.uk</a> internet safety site provided by CEOP which gives highly effective and age appropriate advice to children, young people, parents, and carers</li> <li>➤ provide links to <a href="http://www.TheFA.com">www.TheFA.com</a> 'Staying Safe Online' pages</li> <li>➤ consider what benefits you feel hosting message boards, forums or blogs will bring to the running and organisation of your club/ league against the potential risks. If you decide to use these methods of communication, ensure that they are password protected and only allow comments to be posted by individuals known and permitted access by the club/league</li> <li>➤ remember that the club/league is responsible for all content contained within websites, forums blogs, tweets or social networking areas maintained by the league/club/team</li> <li>➤ regularly monitor the content of the above and use The FA's Respect Codes of Conduct as a guide to acceptable behaviours both on and off field including behaviour online.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ host children's or young people's details where they can be seen or used by others to contact them. Any details hosted should only be done with written parental/carer consent</li> <li>➤ place pictures of individuals on Webpages without the express permission of parents/carers</li> <li>➤ post irrelevant detail of individuals which may lead them to be identified e.g. school class/year, player profiles detailing personal information e.g. favourite foods, movies, teams etc</li> <li>➤ regarding U7-U11 matches please remember there should be no information published that reveal the result to the reader.</li> <li>➤ post or host items which may be considered to be hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, racist or discriminatory or otherwise may cause offence or harm to another or might incite such behaviour in others.</li> </ul>

All coaches will receive login details to allow them to access private information on the website. This is for your own use; do not share you details with any other coaches/parents etc...

## **Social Media**

The following guidance is provided to help manage Newcastle Benfield Juniors FCs 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.

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:

<b>Do's</b>	<b>Don'ts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ ensure all the privacy settings are locked so 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</li> <li>➤ nominate a club/league official to monitor the club/league social networking page regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately</li> <li>➤ make sure everyone within your club knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking areas and how to contact them</li> <li>➤ provide all users with The FAs best practice guidance on using social networking sites</li> <li>➤ gain written parent/carer permission before access is given to U18s</li> <li>➤ inform the CWO if you have received inappropriate communications online, keeping a record of any inappropriate, threatening</li> </ul>	<p>Unless a child/young person is a direct relation, the coaches, managers, referees, medics, and club officials should not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 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</li> <li>➤ make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites</li> <li>➤ use internet or web-based communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person</li> <li>➤ engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.</li> </ul>

The club will be having 2 Facebook accounts, an open one (Newcastle Benfield Juniors FC) that anyone can see, where we can advertise trial dates, events etc... and a private one (Benfield Juniors) for members of Newcastle Benfield Juniors FC, where you can post photos, match reports, man of the match etc... only members of the page will be able to see these posts. If you have your own team page, please let Welfare and/or Barry Faetz know so they can check it complies with the guidance set out.



## Social media for clubs – Dos and Don'ts

In today's world, safeguarding children and young people applies as much online as it does face-to-face.

If you're a coach, a club official or in any position of trust in football it's your responsibility to help us protect children and this includes digital communications and online activity.

Do you have a Facebook page for your team? Do you communicate with parents via social media or apps like WhatsApp?

Social media is really useful – it allows us to get important messages out there and helps everyone feel part of the team.

But information you put online can unfortunately be misused so it's important to follow some basic guidelines to ensure we keep our children safe.

### DO

- If you have a social media group or page for your team – make sure it's private. On Facebook for example, ensure it can't be viewed publicly and make sure that the only people who have access to it are people who you personally know.
- Ensure you have at least one person administering the site – and check your members regularly to make sure everyone who has access to your page is someone you know.
- Keep messages limited to football matters – training, match venues and team selection for example. There shouldn't be any personal communication or comments.
- Get written parent/carer permission before access is given to U18s

### DON'T

- Don't put personal info about children on a social media page – even if it's in a private group. Information such as birthdays, kids' favourite players, where they go to school or what games they play online can all be used for grooming.
- Never contact a young person via a one to one message. Any texts, emails or WhatsApp messages should only ever be sent as part of a group communication and you MUST copy in every young person's parent or carer into ALL messages.
- Conduct webinars or Zoom calls with young people unless they have a carer or parent present.
- If you are a club official, don't accept an U18 as a friend on social media sites (unless a child/young person is a direct relation) or share your own personal social media site with them.

The FA has produced some guidance on digital communications to help clubs and leagues to use them safely. We know that digital communications can be misused and in football, we take these risks very seriously. Please click on the link below to download the guidance and share it with your volunteers.

<http://www.northumberlandfa.com/about/rules-and-regulations/safeguarding-and-welfare/social-media-guidance>

