



# Social Media Policy

This Policy is intended to provide guidance to help understand acceptable standards of use of social media by members and to assist everyone in understanding what the potential risks are in using social media and how these can be avoided and managed. Social media offers the opportunity for people to participate in online communities of shared interest and to create, share or consume content. We recognise the benefits of social media as an important tool of communication, engagement, and enrichment. The Club promotes the safe use of social media and encourages all its members to act responsibly and with courtesy when using social media. Misuse of social media can result in disciplinary action being taken against a member.

## Good Practice Guidance Usage

Whilst we encourage the positive use of social media, the balance between the right to free speech and the responsibility to respect the rights of others, not to insult, slander, harm, abuse or create risks to anyone's personal safety and wellbeing is a priority. As a general principle, unless specifically authorised, it is recommended that individuals keep their personal online identity, content and online profile separate. This will help in distinguishing between what is part of a person's private life and what is part of their public and accountable activity in the Club. This removes potential conflict and should assist in focusing the mind on what is and what is not appropriate content and usage before anything is posted.

Use of a social media account for Club activity must be authorised by the Club and respect all the requirements of both GDPR and Safeguarding guidance and this Policy. The ease, unrestricted and immediate access to the internet presents a unique set of challenges for protecting personal information, safety and wellbeing as all information posted is available to everyone with online access. Generational differences, use of unfamiliar language and a lack of perception about how messages and information will be understood are major dangers with wide ranging consequences. Speed to send a message at the expense of care can cause great harm – time to consider is an important duty of care to avoid harm and unintended negative outcomes. Often what is being posted can have unintended consequences if there are different perceptions of what a reader may understand. It is the entire responsibility of all to make sure that messages posted and shared will not cause harm or will be seen as abusive. Whilst young people get great benefits from the online communities they belong to and the instant access they have to friends, they may need guidance from the people with responsibility for their safety as to what is acceptable and safe use. The use of social media to target individuals, whether for grooming or the increasing incidence of cyber bullying, has created new risks to young and vulnerable people who may not understand the risk to themselves when they post personal information.

## General Guidance

- Social Media must not be used to insult, belittle, falsely accuse or criticise other club members, officers, coaches or other volunteers.
- Links between the pages of an adult and a young or vulnerable person, should not be made. Remember that privacy settings change frequently – keep them under review and update as necessary.
- Photos and tagging should be used with consideration. A photo of the Team at an event, without any tagging of individuals is fine. Use of tags allows people to be identified and then traced.
- Whenever a photo is going to be taken and used, make sure the individual knows, agrees to it's us and get parental/carer consent for use of all images of young and vulnerable adults.
- Performance Athletes as role models are in a position of greater prominence to set standards and this needs to be considered in their use of social media.
- Publicity consent must be obtained prior to posting images or text which may be used on social media to promote the Club. If you are uncertain or concerned about the appropriateness of any statement or posting you may be intending to make that relates to the club or another club member refrain from making the communication until you discuss it with the relevant club officer. Remember that you have a responsibility to report any posts or online content which contravene our Code of Conduct Policy.