

SAMPLE ONLINE SAFETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy provides guidance on how our club uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff and volunteers who work for us, and the members of our club to behave online.

AIMS

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- To protect all children, young people and adults at risk involved with our club and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care.
- To provide club staff and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents.
- To ensure our club is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

UNDERSTANDING THE ONLINE WORLD

As part of using the internet and social media, our club will:

- Understand the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for club staff, children and young people and the wider membership – when using websites, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication.
- Be aware that the same safety aspects apply whether digital interaction takes place on a computer, mobile phone or game console.
- When using social media platforms, ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.
- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies, procedures and guidance to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
 - Making sure concerns or abuse disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures
 - Incorporating online bullying ('cyberbullying') in our anti-bullying policy
- Provide training for the person responsible for managing our club's online presence.

MANAGING OUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 3 members of club staff will have access to each account and password.
- The account will be monitored by a designated person, who will have been appointed by the club committee.
- The designated person managing our online presence will seek advice from our Club Welfare Officer lead to advise on safeguarding requirements.
- A designated supervisor will remove inappropriate posts, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents/carers of any children involved).
- Accounts, pages and event setting will be set to 'private'; so that only invited club members can see their content.
- Identifying details, such as an individual's home address, school, name, telephone number or username of an U18 will not be posted on social media platforms.
- Posts from U18's which identify their social media username or any other identifying details will not be shared, posted or interacted with on social media platforms.
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims.
- We'll make sure members are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account.
- Parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, or by any means of communication.
- Parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media.
- All of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate and fit for purpose.

WHAT WE EXPECT OF CLUB STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

- Club staff and volunteers should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- Club staff and volunteers should seek the advice of the Club Welfare Officer if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Club staff and volunteers should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children and young people to the designated person responsible for the organisation's online presence.
- Club staff and volunteers should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people from personal accounts on social media.
- Club staff and volunteers should make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate.
- Club staff and volunteers should not communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages.
- Rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, staff should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisation account, profile or website.
- Parents should be copied into any emails sent to children or young people.
- Emails and messages should be signed off in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as 'kisses' (X's).
- Any disclosure of abuse reported through social media will be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures.
- Smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.
- Club staff and young people must not engage in 'sexting'¹ or send pictures or videos to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing.

¹ Further information and guidance for club staff and parents can be found on the NSPCC sexting pages <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/sexting/>

WHAT WE EXPECT OF CLUB MEMBERS

- Club members should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms.
- We expect club members' behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement.

USING MOBILE PHONES OR OTHER DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO COMMUNICATE

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by video, voice or text (including texting, email and instant messaging), we'll take the following precautions to ensure our member's safety:

- Club staff or volunteers will avoid having children's or young people's personal mobile numbers and will instead seek contact through a parent or guardian.
- We'll seek parental permission on each occasion we need to contact children or young people directly; the purpose of each contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon.
- A method of accountability will be arranged, such as copies of texts also being sent to the Club Welfare Officer or to parents/guardians.
- Texts will be used for communicating information – such as reminding members about upcoming events, which kit to bring or practice timings – and not to engage in conversation.
- If a member misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a club staff member or volunteer in conversation the club staff member or volunteer will take the following steps:
 - end the conversation or stop replying
 - suggest discussing the subject further at the next practice or event
 - if concerned about a child or young person, contact the Club Welfare Officer.

USE OF OTHER DIGITAL DEVICES AND PROGRAMMES

The principles in this policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used – including computers, laptops, tablets, web-enabled games consoles and smart TVs – and whether an app, programme or website is used.

If any digital devices are used as part of activities within the club:

- We expect members to adhere to the guidelines surrounding online use and behaviour set out in our acceptable use policy.
- We'll establish appropriate restrictions (e.g. parental controls), on any device provided to prevent misuse or harm.

AS A CLUB, WE COMMIT TO IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY AND ADDRESSING AND CONCERNS QUICKLY AND WITHIN THESE GUIDELINES.