



Social Media Policy

Definition of Social Media

Social media is defined as websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. Social media are web-based and mobile technologies that turn communication into active dialogue.

Introduction

This policy is designed to provide helpful, practical advice to all members, players, parents, volunteers and staff in respect of using social media effectively and positively.

As a club we encourage the responsible use of social media. The club realises that social media has become increasingly popular in recent years, because it allows people to connect in the online world instantly.

Social media can be hugely beneficial in disseminating information about the Rugby Club and /or specific groups within the club. It is also a popular forum for developing personal and business relationships. It can take many different forms, including internet forums and group chats, internet blogs, social blogs, podcasts, pictures and video. Newbury Rugby Club recognises that there are a wide range of platforms that the term 'social media/networking' relates to, for example Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from a variety of issues: the privacy provided, the wide range of content that be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature, the ease with which images can be forwarded onto others and the difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with.

In sport, there are additional risks for children: inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children or inappropriate criticism of a child's performance. An official position or role within a club, such as coach, can carry with it a level of authority, and engender a level of trust, that facilitates the control of a child.

It is important therefore, that all parents, staff, volunteers, coaches, officials/referees, board/trustee members, or anyone working on behalf of NRFC are aware of this policy and agree to the following principles.

Key Principles

Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members and it is essential that everyone at NRFC considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of club involvement.

All stakeholders at NRFC have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the club, and treat fellow stakeholders of the club with dignity and respect.

It is important to protect NRFC from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites. Consequently, we would request that all social media commentary relating to NRFC is of a positive nature – **Please think carefully before making comments that may lead to unintended consequences.**

Code of conduct

If you wish to set up a social media forum representing the club in any capacity you are required to obtain approval from the club board or committee prior to making the forum active.

The owner/ administrator(s) of a forum using social media is required to ensure that:

- All content complies with the club's and RFU policies and codes of conduct.

- No one posts material that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity, including NRFC, its stakeholders, any club associated with NRFC, opposition teams, the RFU or the sport as a whole.
- No one's personal information is disclosed
- All groups that contain children (under 18 years old) as members have security and privacy settings set to 'closed' or 'secret'; i.e. they are not open to the public. Information about the difference between these groups and how they are operated can be found ([hyper link to](#))
- Groups are organised so that they are either **adult/coach/parent** only or **child/player only**. Coaches can support the development of a team ethos by requesting that the information to be shared with players is only added by one of the player representatives.
- All 'player only' groups for children will have TWO adult administrators who will be DBS cleared and will be known to parents/cares of the group.
- Parents of players belonging to a group will be informed of the identity of the Group Administrators at the beginning of the season, when any new player joins the group, or when there is any change in administrator.
- The role of Group Administrators on a player-only site is to ensure there is no inappropriate content posted on the site, such as indecent images or cyber-bullying etc. Group Administrators **will not** post comments, opinions or remarks on the site unless necessary for the safety of the group members
- All members of the forum are '**age aware**' and do not invite anyone who is not a member of the team to become part of the group
- Adults acting on behalf of NRFC as volunteers, in a position of trust with children, **will not** invite or accept invitations from children/players under 18 to become their 'friends' on social media sites

The owner/administrator(s) of a forum is required to ensure that the content published is:

- Respectful of all individuals and communities with which you interact online
- Polite and respectful of others' opinions, even in times of heated discussion and debate.

Whilst NRFC recognises that a certain amount of 'banter' may take place on some forums, we would request that any language used is moderated by the group. Please remember that these forums may be viewed by a range of age groups from both genders. **Do not comment in a way that you would not want to be seen in the public domain. Even comments on private groups may become public at any time.**

Any grievance, criticism or resentment should be directed in person to the individual (depending on age) or respective group administrators, managers or coaches. Matters of more serious or contentious nature should be disclosed to the owner/administrator of the forum or **Clubs safeguarding Team** if a child is involved.

Serious instances or irresponsible use of social media platforms associated with NRFC may be referred to the Board of the club, although any action taken by the committee will be judged on a case by case basis. The club will take appropriate action to protect the club's reputation and that of its members, volunteers, children and anyone else who is directly linked to the club.

In summary:

- **Player only or adult only closed/secret Facebook (or other) groups,**
- **Requests to join CHECKED with membership database via NRFC office before Approval**
- **Administrators of age group forums to be DBS cleared and made known to parents of player groups**
- **Any queries to the NRFC Safeguarding Team or Club Board**

Further information about how to support **children's safety online in sport** can be found @ **Child protection in sport uni**

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