

THURROCK RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

(Members of RFU, ECRU, ECRFU, MCRFU, LSRFU, ESRFU)

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Founded 1928



Thurrock Rugby Club Social Media Policy (V1.1)

Introduction

It is expected that members of Thurrock Rugby Football Club will uphold the ethos of the Club in all social media interactions. Members will not act in such a way that the image of Thurrock Rugby Football Club is brought into disrepute nor in a way that harms it's immediate and wider rugby community.

Purpose

With social media a prominent method of communication and used as a method of engagement with the members of our club, along with the wider community.

Where it is possible to express opinions, it is important for us to have a policy to ensure we are represented in a suitable way and can take appropriate action should the need arise.

We would like to take this opportunity to remind our members of the importance of ensuring that all our social networking streams should be used thoughtfully and responsibly.

Defining Social Media

Social media" commonly refers to the use of electronic devices to create, share or exchange information, ideas, pictures and videos with others via virtual communities and network

Thurrock Rugby Club and its members take advantage of a number of social media sources; these are examples of what we currently use, but does not constitute an exhaustive list:

- Facebook groups (different sections or teams in the Club).
- Facebook pages (different sections or teams in the Club).
- Twitter (club and youth accounts).
- Instagram.
- LinkedIn.
- WhatsApp groups (different sections or teams in the Club).



There are many Social Media platforms which are not named here, but these should be considered as electronic communication, where individuals can interact online, be it within applications or on web pages, where the banner includes the Club's name or branding, in part or in full.

Content

While the Club positively encourages social networking among members, we are mindful of the need to ensure that all content is suitable and does not breach any laws or common decency.

It is not acceptable to post, amongst others, items that may include reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability, and any member found to have posted such items will be subject to disciplinary action.

Comments of this nature may also attract civil or criminal action against the author(s). In addition, any abuse of match officials, opposition etc may be deemed by the RFU to bring the game into disrepute and lead to disciplinary sanctions against both the author and/or the Club.

Participants should be aware that comments which bring the game into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting, may lead to disciplinary action.

Cyber Bullying

All reports of cyber-bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where Thurrock Rugby Club is obliged to do so.

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from membership of Thurrock Rugby Club.

Members must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by the police over which Thurrock Rugby Club will have no control.

General Guidance

These are public forums, so treat them as such.

- Members are expected to show respect to others, including other members of the wider rugby community, and to always act within the core values of the game.
- Individuals and organisations are strictly responsible for any posting on their account(s).
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Re-posting or re-tweeting inappropriate content represents an endorsement of that content and can be actionable.
- Do not use abusive, derogatory, vulgar, or sexual language.
- Do not criticise or imply bias in match officials.
- At all times, exercise discretion and respect for clubs, players, fans and the game's partners.
- Deleting or apologising publicly for an improper posting does not prevent disciplinary action being taken.
- Consider "protecting" Tweets and changing security/visibility of Facebook accounts.



Do's and Don'ts

Follow the general guidelines above and:

- Do show your personality and be approachable.
- Do share your achievements.
- Do let people know what it is like to be a player/official.
- Do post regular comments to grow and engage with an audience.
- Do report any content that you encounter that is in breach of this policy.
- Don't comment if you have any concerns about the consequences.
- Don't link to unsuitable content.
- Don't get into disputes with audience.
- Don't share or elicit personal detail.

Take down policy

Clubs are aware that they can be vicariously liable for material published by employees in the course of their employment, for example on an official website, Facebook site or Twitter feed, or published by employees outside work via a work email address or a work Twitter handle.

Clubs can also be liable for third party comments and postings made on any of their social media platforms.

We insist that:

- Participants clearly identify themselves.
- Participants follow standards mentioned above and align to the RFU's Core Values and the guidelines.
- Should an administrator deem an article, post or comment contradicts the guidelines above it will be taken down at the earliest possible opportunity.
- The club will hold members to account for any breaches.
- Only authorised social media sites are used for TRFC input

Reporting

Any grievance, criticism or resentment should be directed in person to the individual or respective managers or coaches. Matters of a more serious or contentious nature should be discussed with the Club Committee, via the Club secretary, by emailing Secretary@thurrockrhc.com

Use of the Club Badge

The Club badge should not be used by anyone without prior written request being made to Thurrock Rugby Club Committee and approval given, via the Club secretary, by emailing Secretary@thurrockrhc.com



Safeguarding

Thurrock Rugby Club has responsibility to ensure that there is nothing on its website or social media, which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. Thurrock Rugby Club is responsible for the content of its website.

Social media content, which can be posted by all members, will be moderated to ensure inappropriate content is removed.

When posting on social media there are two key risks to guard against:

1. **Disclosing personal information about a child on social media:** this could be the child's name, address, or any information about a child's life, interests or activities which would help a stranger target a child or engage that child in conversation.
2. **Abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text), on social media:** this includes material which criticises or humiliates a child. It could also be information which places undue pressure on the child to participate in some aspect of a clubs' activities.

Online Photos and video

Photos and video clips can make any child featured vulnerable to grooming if information about the child (name, address, activities or interests) is disclosed. Furthermore, posting an image on social media carries a risk that the image could be taken and adapted for an inappropriate use.

RFU Recommendations:

- Use group images, rather than individual images.
- For images of individual children (such as in action shots) where possible use models or illustrations.
- Only use images of children in suitable dress, to minimise the risk of inappropriate adaptation of the image
- If a child is named on the site, do not include an image (individual or group). If a child features in an image on the site, do not use the child's first or last name, either in text on the site or in the image file name.

Thurrock Rugby Club will abide by all RFU recommendations regarding photo and video images and will obtain consent from the appropriate responsible person(s) before using any images of children or vulnerable adults on its website. Consent request clauses are included in the registration form which is completed each season and are also held by the club age group administrators.

Webcams and Live Image Streams

Thurrock Rugby Club will not use webcams to stream live images of children or vulnerable adults and if use of a webcam to broadcast images of children or vulnerable adults is requested, the Thurrock Rugby Club Safeguarding Officer will contact the RFU for further guidance before permission is granted.



Mobile and Online Communication with Children

Technology is moving very fast in this area. There are now many ways for people to communicate. In addition to landlines, there are mobile phones for voice and text, and smart phones incorporate cameras that take still shots and video. Two-way video calling is commonplace. Online communication can be by email, instant messaging and social networking sites.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from:

- The privacy. It is often one-to-one
- The wide range of content that can be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature
- The ease with which images can be forwarded onto others
- The difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with. Where grooming happens, it often involves this type of communication.

In sport, there are additional risks:

- Inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children (such as to play when injured)
- There can be inappropriate criticism of a young player'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.

Against this background, Thurrock Rugby Club will abide by all RFU guidance regarding mobile and online communication with children and vulnerable adults and will cascade any information for them to the parents (or carer) of that child or vulnerable adult.

Club Guidelines:

All Age Group communications – Emails should only be sent using email groups comprising email addresses given by parents. Messages relating to children, sent via emails and texts, should be through their parents/guardians. Where appropriate, older players may be 'copied in' but this should always be done by blind copying in order to protect their data. Such emails should only come from age group Head Coaches or Administrators.

Other Online (Social Media) Services. No Club Member may initiate a social media outlet that is directly linked and intended to be used by Thurrock RFC members without the express permission of the Club Executive Committee or, for Mini or Youth matters, the respective Mini or Youth Committees.

Twitter can be used for broadcasting information but must not be used for 1-1 (Direct) Messaging between Adults and Young People.

Facebook. Communication via Facebook is permitted only via public club Facebook pages where the content is public. Private, closed groups and 1-1 messaging between Coaches and Young People must have the permission of the club



Other online and social media services whether public or private are not permitted. Requests to add other services to the approved list should be directed to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

SMS Messaging (Texting): Administrators and Coaches should only communicate directly with individual children by text at any time, on any matter, if the parent or carer is copied on such communication or there is an immediate risk to the welfare of that child which can be lessened by such contact.

Telephone: When communication by phone is needed, Administrators and Coaches can speak to individual young people on phones provided they have prior consent from the child's parents or carer and from the young person if old enough to understand.

Sanctions

Any club member failing to comply with this policy could face disciplinary action from the Club, which could lead to expulsion from the Club.

References:

RFU Guidance

<http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/club-support/promoting-your-club/social-media-for-clubs/#>

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