

# Dorkinian FC – Social Media and Communication Policy



## Dorkinian FC supports The FA's Social Media and Communication Policy

Dorkinians FC priority and responsibility is to safeguard children and young people involved in football.

There are many benefits to modern communication technologies, but we also recognise these introduce increased risks to children and young people.

Therefore, it is essential decisions are made about how the internet, mobile phone and email communications are used.

Everyone involved in football, needs to recognise that we all share a responsibility to safeguard children both on and off the field of play.

Club officials, coaches, players and parents must ensure they communicate responsibly.

## As recommended by the FA – Dorkinian FC DOES NOT use SMS texting to communicate with children / young people.

### Communicating with players

Dorkinians FC promotes the use of Pitchero and WhatsApp group messaging. Messaging groups are set up for specific teams and leagues and include members, parents, carers, players and relate exclusively to football matters.

In the senior teams, these groups are all monitored by club officials who have Enhanced DBS checks and Safeguarding Training.

### Use of Social Media

#### Players under the age of 16

All communication will be direct to parents / carers. No communication whatsoever will be made to players under the age of 16.

#### Players aged 16/17

To help promote self-responsibility, under 18's are required to discuss the Dorkinian FC Social Media & Communications Policy with parents, in order to gain consent and manage their own communication.

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## Club Officials / Adult Members / Guidance

When using social media and digital communication channels, everyone must abide to the following policies to protect themselves and our youth players.

Anyone representing the club **MUST NOT**:

- Use text or emails for personal conversations, send pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature or engage in any 'banter' or comments with or about children at the club.
- Respond to emails or texts from young people directly and any response must be copied / shared in the Dorkinian FC Safeguarding channels / group to ensure open and transparent communication.
- Use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.
- Accept or invite as a friend, young players or any volunteer associated with Dorkinian FC who is under 18 on any social networking site.
- Delete any inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation.

## Parent Guidance

- You should know who the club Child Welfare Officer (CWO) is and how to contact them if you have any concerns about the content of club web pages or in relation to the welfare of your child.
- Ensure you are aware of how coaches, managers and other members of the club should communicate with your child. For 16 / 17 year old players you can request to be copied into any communication with them and which is also posted in the Dorkinian Safeguarding WhatsApp group.
- Show an interest in the communications between the club, you and your child. Open communication about club activities / issues often means that concerns are picked up early and issues can be resolved more easily.
- Ensure your child understands that they should tell someone that they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or when they have been asked not to tell their parent / carer or coach about the communication.
- Understand that as a parent / carer of a child at the club you and your child are responsible for and need to abide by the club policy.

## Under 18 Player Guidance

Players **MUST NOT**:

- Post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, or racist as this would go against Dorkinian FC's rules and could also be against the law.
- Invite any adult involved with the club to become your friends online or accept them as a friend on any social network site. They have been told they must not to accept such invitations.
- Delete inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation
- Use inappropriate, foul or abusive language.

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## Use of images, pictures and video

Club officials should not post any under 16 player images or video to any Dorkinian FC media channel without having gained prior consent from the parent / carer of the player(s) concerned. For 16 / 17 year olds their consent must be obtained.

Parents are also requested to refrain from posting images or videos of other players to their own social media channels without also having gained the consent of other parents / carers of all players involved.

No images, pictures and video should be posted on social media or the club's website of any player under the age of 16 without first ensuring prior consent has been provided by the parent / guardian. For 16 / 17 year olds their consent must be obtained.

Video and photos can be uploaded to the web site but are subject to the same guidelines and are vetted prior to upload. Only safe images are permitted, and content will only be uploaded if consent can be demonstrated.

Dorkinian FC recognises that there may be any number of reasons why a player's image may not be used, including personal choice and this needs to be respected and the policy will be **STRICTLY** enforced.

## Communication with referees under 18

Most referees are still minors and must be safeguarded and treated with respect. Some referees could be as young as 14 years old and are carrying out the activity for the purpose of Duke of Edinburgh awards (DofE).

This guidance is based on FA recommendations for best practice in relation to communication with U18's who hold a position of trust and/or responsibility within football:

- Parent / guardian consent must be given prior to email, social networking and mobile phone communications with young people holding a position of trust.
- Both parties to only communicate for the purpose of organising referees at matches.
- Email communication between club officials and referee should copy in the referee's parent / guardian

## Assistants

On occasions coaches may have under 18's assisting at training sessions or matches for the purpose of DofE etc. These assistants are still minors and the same rules of communication as for players and referees apply.

**IF ANY INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION OR CONTENT IS SHARED BETWEEN AN ADULT AND A PLAYER / REFEREE THIS SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE CLUB WELFARE OFFICER WHO, WHERE NECESSARY, WILL SEEK ADVICE FROM THE COUNTY FA WELFARE OFFICER, AFA WELFARE OFFICER AND / OR STATUTORY AGENCIES AS APPROPRIATE.**