



Cuckfield Cosmos FC

Social Media Policy and Internet Safety Guidance

1. INTRODUCTION

Cuckfield Cosmos FC is committed to safeguarding all children and young people involved in our Club. This policy and guidance should be read in conjunction with The Club Safeguarding Children Policy.

The Internet is now an accepted part of our everyday life and The Club recognises both the benefits and potential risks of using the Internet. It is important we all use the Internet, electronic communication and social media in a safe and responsible way to protect all young players at Cuckfield Cosmos FC. The term Social Media generally refers to ways of communicating and sharing regular content electronically over The Internet e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, but there are many other Apps and methods for electronic communication to take place such as the usual text and email but also online gaming and live cam chat which carry their own safeguarding risks.

The Club runs a Club website which has an Administrator and Moderator to ensure that appropriate levels of access are given to Club Officials in the course of running The Club and individual teams. Individual teams may have other methods of electronic communication such 'Closed Facebook Groups', WhatsApp etc.

All on-line activity within The Club must be conducted in an 'open environment' through the official Club website or other social media approved by The Club.

Club Managers, Coaches and Volunteers should always communicate electronically in the first instance, with parents and never engage in one to one communication with players or become 'friends' with young players on social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp etc.

It is also imperative that care is taken by adults working at The Club to protect young player's personal details, and will not under any circumstances, pass those details to **any person, Club or organisation** without the consent of the player's Parent(s) or Carer(s). If in any doubt guidance should be sought from the Club CWO.

It is also imperative that care is taken by all individuals when accessing the Internet away from The Club so that confidential information about The Club, Adult Volunteers and Young Players is not compromised, for example, personal details and photographs.

2. The 3 R's of SOCIAL MEDIA IN FOOTBALL

Responsible

- What is responsible use?
- Everyone at The Club recognises their responsibility to post and share only appropriate information and content that protects our young players and The Club's reputation.

Relevant

- What is relevant use in youth football?
- All online communication should relate to football, e.g. match details, kit requirements, team meeting times and places, generic match reports, football technical information such as coaching practices or **team** match analysis. This list is not exhaustive.

Report

- What should be reported, to who and when?
- Any inappropriate content posted in Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) or any other part of the Internet such as Blogs or Forums that is discriminatory, sexual, bullying or may cause risk of harm physically or emotionally to young players must be reported immediately to the Club Welfare Officer.

3. GUIDANCE FOR YOUNG PLAYERS

- Beware not everyone who communicates on the Internet is who they say they are.
- Know how the Club and your Coaches will contact you so that you can recognise it as being genuine.
- Tell your parents/carers, the Club Welfare Officer or Coach about any communication you receive that you are unsure or not happy about or anything posted about you on the Internet, in social media apps or other electronic communication such as text messages or emails.
- Do not give out your private information or details over the Internet to people you have never met offline or know personally.
- Do not give out personal details of family or team-mates including mobile numbers, home addresses, email addresses etc. without permission of the person whose details you are sharing.
- Do not post or send anything electronically that is threatening, abusive or discriminatory as this could be against the law and lead to an investigation by the police or The FA.
- Be careful with your personal information as this could be used to steal your identity or impersonate you in an online environment.
- Beware of the risks to you, your close family and friends from people who want to gain access to you, check your privacy and security settings on all social networking sites, be very selective about who you allow access to your personal social media profiles.
- Do not add or accept 'friends requests' on social networking sites of people you have never met offline, even if they are 'friends of friends'.
- Do not post personal, risky or inappropriate photos of yourself or content that you may regret in the future, remember once it is out there anyone can save, share or send it!

- If you have any concerns or need advice around online safety seek advice from the Club Welfare Officer.

4. GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

In addition to the guidance given to players above, Parents and Carers should be aware of their own Internet use and how it can impact on their own children or children they have responsibility for.

- Avoid **public** comments about children and young people and their activities.
- Consider what you post online as this can affect the safety of your children or other team members in the offline environment, e.g. giving out advanced detailed timings and locations of training sessions or matches.
- Beware who can read your comments in your social media such as Facebook and Twitter, own what you say, use privacy settings.
- Do not post anything that will place undue pressure on a young player to perform.
- Have realistic expectations of young players, they will develop at their own pace, but your encouragement is a key factor in their development.
- Do not send out personal information about players over the Internet to third parties purporting to be involved in football – if in doubt, seek advice from the Club Welfare Officer.

5. PHOTOGRAPHY AND USE OF IMAGES (Club Safeguarding Policy)

Cuckfield Cosmos FC takes its guidance on the use of images from guidelines issued by the FA.

The FA would like to assure parents, carers, coaches, spectators, players and local media that they encourage the responsible taking of appropriate images of children in football.

- Before taking images of Children, parental consent is sought in writing on the player registration form at the start of the season or prior to a specific event if necessary. Parents/Carers/Guardians are responsible for informing the Team Manager of any change of circumstances within the Season which may affect consent.
- All Children featured in Club publications will be appropriately dressed. Use of mobile devices in any changing areas is forbidden.
- Where possible, the image will focus on the activity taking place and not a specific Child.
- Where appropriate, images will represent the broad range of people participating safely in the event.
- Team appointed photographers will be part of that team's management structure and where frequency applies, undertake the necessary DBS Enhanced disclosure, attend a Safeguarding Children workshop and will be personally responsible for keeping up to date with the latest Photography Guidelines from The FA.
- Children who are under a court order will not have their images published on the Club website, in any press release or used on Club literature. **The continuing responsibility lies with the child's Parent(s) or Carer(s) notify the Club of such circumstances.**
- No images of children at the Club will be accompanied by personal details such as their full name, date of birth, school or home address.
- Any instances of inappropriate images in football should be reported to the Club Welfare Officer(s).
- Cuckfield Cosmos FC will not put young player profiles with images and personal information on its website.

Photography during Games

Cuckfield Cosmos FC Team managers should seek the permission of the opposition Team Management and agreement by both teams before any photography of the game is allowed.

6. REPORTING AND REFERRALS

Reporting Concerns

The process for reporting safeguarding concerns relating to the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person in an environment involving use of The Internet is the same as when any other concern is raised over the treatment of a child. The key issue is that **the welfare of the child is paramount**.

Responsible Adults at The Club must report any incident, allegation or concerns to the Club Welfare Officer, who will ask for a written factual account from the person making the report.

This report should be confined to facts and should not include any opinion, interpretation or judgement.

Where possible the Club Welfare Officer should be contacted as early as possible, however it is recognised that an individual may need to respond to an urgent situation immediately. With this in mind the following guidelines offer help and support in responding to a disclosure or a suspicion of abuse:

React calmly and:

- ensure the immediate safety of the child - **Call the Police if you feel the child is in immediate danger or at risk**
- reassure the child and take what they say seriously
- don't make promises not to tell
- keep questions to a minimum – use them to clarify what you have been told
- make a full record of what was said, seen or heard
- Notify the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible and follow their advice.

IT IS NOT OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE IF ABUSE HAS TAKEN PLACE - BUT IF WE HAVE CONCERNS IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT AND REPORT THOSE CONCERNS

Confidentiality

Any reports of concerns or disclosures will be treated discreetly and sensitively in so far as, only those who **need to know** will be privy to details of a concern, allegation or disclosure. On this basis, no-one should have any reservations about referring any issue to the Club Welfare Officer. However, undertakings of confidentiality should not be given to the person making the allegations as there are actions which have to be taken once a report is received.

Club Welfare Officer – Dan Wiscombe

Mobile – 07493 235535

Club Welfare Officer – Gary Bye
Mobile – 07877 264154

Email – cuckfieldcosmos@hotmail.com

9. FURTHER INFORMATION & EXTERNAL CONTACTS

EMERGENCY SERVICES: 999

CHILDREN SERVICES: WSCC Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 01403 229900
mash@westsussex.gcsx.gov.uk

THE FA / NSPCC HELPLINE: 0808 800 5000 help@nspcc.org.uk

CHILDLINE: 0800 1111 childline.org.uk for advice and support

CHILD EXPLOITATION & ONLINE PROTECTION CENTRE (CEOP): <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Sussex County FA (County Welfare Officer): Sandra Redhead - 01903 753547

For further advice and information on the FA Safeguarding Children Guidelines, please visit
<http://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding>

Make football safe, not sorry!