



OLD LEAMINGTONIANS RFC SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The RFU and Old Leamingtonians RFC is keen to promote the safe and responsible use of social networking technology but also to make its members aware of the potential risks and to share best practice.

Participants should be aware that comments which bring the game into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting, may lead to disciplinary action. These include comments that include a reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Comments can also attract civil and criminal action. Nearly 5,000 offences involving Facebook and Twitter were reported to police in 2012 and 653 people charged.

General guidance

- These are public forums, so treat them as such
- Individuals and organisations are responsible for any posting on their account/s
- 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

Safeguarding

The OLRFC website and linked Facebook or similar websites

There are two key risks to guard against, abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text), on the site itself or on linked sites (including adverts, especially from Google or other 'sponsored links) and disclosing personal information about a child to people accessing the website. 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.

Another aspect of inappropriate content can be perceived as bullying. This could be material on the site 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 club's activities.



Blogs, Chat/Comms tools such as WhatsApp or Twitter

Blogs are a type of content becoming commonplace on websites. The creation of a blog is straightforward. It does not require technical or design expertise, and it can be updated remotely.

Blogs present two particular challenges: a central part of the attraction of a blog is that it is updated frequently. However, the same risks apply to its content as apply to all other content on web sites.

Contact with children

The [RFU's Safeguarding Policy](#) advises against coaches having direct personal communication with children unless in exceptional circumstances and coaches and club officials should not communicate with children through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, nor should they be "friends" with children or comment on their status.

The RFU works closely with the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit, which provides comprehensive guidance and resources relating to this issue.

If you become aware of any inappropriate activity you should inform the Club Safeguarding Officer – Dennis Fisher, denandjanet@uwclub.net , 01926 778639

Players and officials

Individuals need to understand that they are personally responsible and liable for their comments and postings. At all times you should exercise discretion and be respectful of other players, teams, officials, organisations and brands. What you regard as "banter" could be regarded as embarrassing or hurtful by a wider audience and bring the game into disrepute.

In short, follow the general guidelines above and:

- 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

But

- Do show your personality and be approachable
- Do share your achievements
- Do let people know what it is like to be a player/official/member
- Do post regular comments to grow and engage with an audience

The Old Leamingtonians RFC website is monitored and in accordance with the guidelines above any offensive posting will be removed and the person responsible for that posting will be requested to attend a club disciplinary meeting.

OLRFC June 2017

