



Social Media Policy

October 2023

Social media and networking platforms, such as Instagram, X (fka Twitter), Facebook, other online sites, offer tremendous opportunities for rugby clubs to communicate and engage with a growing audience as well as existing members, supporters and players. The RFU 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. Comments that include a reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability may attract a high disciplinary sanction. Comments can also attract civil and criminal action.

General guidance

- These are public forums, so treat them as such
- Individuals and organisations are strictly responsible for any posting on his/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 Clubs and Constituent Bodies Clubs and Constituent Bodies (CBs) are vicariously liable for material published by employees (including volunteers) 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 in their website forums or on their Facebook pages.

For these reasons, at Gordano RFC:

- The Club Social Media Manager is responsible for posting and maintaining Gordano RFC's official social networking and internet sites
- In the Mini & Junior Section, each age-group head coach is responsible for ensuring their Facebook groups are secure, i.e., only accessible by coaches and parents of that section
- The Club Safeguarding Officer should have access to each Facebook group, or other social media communication channels
- Each group will adhere to standards for content generated in line with the RFU's Core Values and the guidelines above

- The Club Chairman, Junior Chairman and Club Safeguarding Officer will jointly across Senior and Junior/Mini sections be responsible for monitoring output, moderating content in online forums and removing offensive postings
- The above responsible will hold members to account for any breaches

Safeguarding

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. Any concerns should be raised with the Club Safeguarding Officer.

The RFU works closely with the NSPCC's Child Protection in Sport Unit, which provides comprehensive guidance and resources relating to this issue. Further details can be found [here](#) 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 – and our Club - 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 club members or the wider community
- Don't share or elicit personal details

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
- Do post regular comments to grow and engage with the wider rugby community