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Social Media Policy

Social networking, such as Twitter, Facebook, internet blogs and other online sites, offers tremendous opportunities for rugby to communicate and engage with a growing audience as well as its 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. Nearly 5,000 offences involving Facebook and Twitter were reported to police in 2012 and 653 people charged.

Twitter - general tips and etiquette can be found at <http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/club-support/promoting-your-club/social-media-for-clubs/twitter-tips/>

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

Further Information

Clubs and Constituent Bodies

Safeguarding

Players and officials

For guidance on the above - <http://www.englandrugby.com/governance/club-support/promoting-your-club/social-media-for-clubs/>

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
- Do post regular comments to grow and engage with an audience

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