



## **Social Media Policy**

This policy aims to support the Rugby Club management and its members in safely and effectively using social media to communicate with club members and the wider community. This social media club policy aims to protect the reputation of the club, committee and members it serves. Newry RFC also supports the IRFU guidance on social media. (Appendix 1)

### **Background**

A recent survey of clubs identified a number of challenges that have been faced by clubs. This covers many basic principles of using social media but is not exhaustive. If you are uncertain about anything contact the Secretary or the Child Protection Officer before proceeding.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all social media forums and accounts both existing at the time of its publication and that may emerge over time.

This policy applies to all club members, parents of juniors and anybody wishing to establish an account bearing any identification of or alluding to, association with Newry RFC.

### **Definitions and Abbreviations**

The Club - Newry RFC

Social Media - Any computer-based platform where members can create and share content including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Club Committee - The Executive Committee of the Club

### **Regulations**

#### **Designated social media accounts**

- It is not permitted for a social media account to carry the official name or badge of the club or imply an association in any way with the club without the official approval of the club committee.
- Social media accounts registered and approved by the club committee will become subject to these social media guidelines and uphold this policy at all times.
- Any representative of the club wishing to establish a social media presence on behalf of the club must apply in writing to the club committee, outlining the purpose of the social media channel, demonstrating the benefits to the club and how the practical aspects of capturing and sharing content over the channel will be managed, in addition to outlining how this policy will be upheld in relation to security and risk to reputation.



- The club reserves the right to decline any requests received on reasonable grounds including lack of resource to effectively manage and engage across the channel, the reputation risks or if the purpose outlined is contra to the general interests/ focus of the club as a whole.
- The club can remove permission for a social media account to exist as an official account where the committee feel that the rationale for the benefit to the club has dissolved, management of the account has become problematic or there has been a repeated breach of the social media policy.

### **Ownership of official social media accounts**

- All social media accounts established on behalf of the club remain under the ownership of the club at all times. Administration access to the accounts must be given up when requested by the club committee.
- Social media accounts established on behalf of the club will present a professional image/ shop window at all times with a description of the club and link to the official club website where appropriate.

### **Administrators of accounts**

- Accounts will have a minimum of three representatives acting as administrators (one of which will be a club committee member) to ensure that accounts can be accessed easily during times of holiday and absence.
- Administrators of the clubs official social media accounts must agree to sign up to this social media policy and conduct themselves in a way that is appropriate in upholding and building a positive image of the club at all times.
- Administrators of the clubs official social media accounts agree to use password protocols, and agree that responsibility for protecting this password and access to the account (e.g. logging out effectively of browsers) remains their responsibility at all times. Any breach of this protocol must be immediately communicated to the club committee and steps taken to limit the impact.
- Administrators of the clubs official social media accounts will agree not to act on any conflicts of interest, and must not promote their own products or services across the official social media accounts of the club unless expressly agreed in advance by the club committee.
- Where an administrator is associated with more than one club, E.g. Rugby Coach, the committee reserve the right to restrict the promotion of activities through the official club channels to those relevant specifically to the club.
- Administrators looking to endorse, promote or engage in a national campaign on behalf of official partners such as RFU or sponsors or unofficial partners such as community groups, must first seek approval from the club committee to mobilise the social media channel to this effect.
- For the purpose of effective management and measurement, administrators will agree when requested to do so, to use relevant social media management tools/ protocols as requested by the club committee. The committee reserve the right to evolve these tools/ approaches in keeping with new trends and approaches to managing and being effective in social media delivery.
- Administrators are encouraged to attend relevant training and workshops relevant to the delivery of social media on behalf of the club as deemed appropriate.



## **Responsibility to Club Members**

- Any representative of the official social media accounts for the club must not by their actions jeopardise the privacy of any member associated with the club. Data gathered through social media channels should not be published without the consent of the membership. This includes allowing members the option of opting out of any social media directory produced.
- Administrators agree not to spam or communicate with members of social media groups/forums in a way that could be determined as being of detriment to the reputation of the club.
- Administrators agree not to pursue public debates that could bring the club and/or the game of Rugby into disrepute more widely or proactively provoke members of the club to do the same.
- Confidentiality must be upheld across the club social media channels at all times, no direct messages should be made public without the consent of the person responsible for the original post and content discussed within committee meetings may not be disclosed on social media unless agreed by those present.

## **Social Media Content**

- The content posted across official social media accounts must be relevant, age appropriate and uphold the club's reputation at all times.
- Administrators distributing content on behalf of the club will ensure that the appropriate agreements have been sought on any photographs or film footage uploaded and shared within social media environments across the official accounts.
- Administrators of club official accounts must be aware that any content (photos and film) posted on social media passes on ownership of the material to the social media provider e.g. Facebook Therefore, caution must be extended in passing on rights over club material (of value) to a third party.
- Administrators must make all best efforts to ensure privacy of players etc. especially when injuries etc. occur. Videos/photos of injuries should not appear on official sites without express consent of the individual.
- Any content shared from online environments will link and/or credit the original source of the content.

## **Safeguarding Children on Social Media**

- Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to establish a Facebook account. The nature of social media and cookie tracking in digital environments puts children under this age at considerable risk.
- No official club social media channel or Administrator of the clubs official accounts will use social media to communicate or engage with children aged under 13. Please note that parental permission does not constitute permission to breach this element of the policy. For further information please see the CPSU guidelines for protecting children in digital environments.
- The club committee reserves the right to update this policy.



## Appendix 1

### IRFU Guidance: Social media for clubs

With the increased use of technology (video, photographs, social media) in rugby it is important for clubs to adopt a policy in relation to the use of photographic images of Age-Grade Players. The use of any images on websites and publications has raised concerns about the risks posed directly and indirectly to children and young people. The issue is not to ban such technologies but rather to assess and limit the risk of harmful behaviour that may arise due to their use.

Clubs should consider the following when using any images of young players:

- Ensure parental/ guardian agreement for the use of images/ photographs – see Parental Consent agreement in Appendix One of the IRFU Safeguarding Policy.
- Issue consent/approval/accreditation is given prior to a major event for professional photographers
- Establish what information will accompany photographs/ images, use group photographs, identifying the club rather than the individual. Use only images/photographs that are suitable

### Mobile Phones

Most children have the use of a mobile phone. This can be a good safety tool for keeping in contact with Age-Grade Players but as phones become ‘pocket-computers’ users need to be mindful of the risks that can also be associated with their use.

- Seek parental permission for communications (calls/text/photographs) by players and coaches//volunteers as a method of communication regarding club events.
- Encourage the use of group texting among players and parents to inform them of activities.
- Avoid prolonged non-rugby related text conversations.
- Constant communication with individual players is not necessary
- Allow sufficient time to get information to players/parents/guardians and agree
- suitable times to send messages so as to not interfere with family life, work or school.

Encourage responsible use of phones (camera/video) in certain locations of the club (e.g. changing rooms/toilets)

### Age grade players should be advised:

- If you receive an offensive photo, e-mail or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent, coach or the Club Welfare Officer within the club.
- Be careful about who you give your number to and do not respond to unfamiliar numbers.
- Consider changing your phone number in cases of abuse, bullying or harassment, discuss this with your parents.
- Avoid using your phone in certain locations e.g. changing rooms – inappropriate use of a camera or phone may cause upset or offence to another person.



- Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item to guard against theft.

### **Club Website**

- Use a club website to post information regarding training times, fixtures and events.
- Agree a policy regarding match reports / photographs – who submits the information and who will monitor the content on the website?
- Establish a club policy regarding blogs and social interaction through the club website.

### **Social Networks (Facebook, Twitter, Bee Bo etc.)**

- Clubs should encourage members to be responsible regarding club activities and players and establish a guideline policy for same.
- This form of communication may not be suitable to discuss matches, performances, the opposition and match officials.
- Clubs should ensure all members are aware of policies regarding interaction between adults and age-grade players through social network sites.
- Age Grade players should be advised to communicate only with persons they know directly through such sites.



## Appendix 2

### Safeguarding Guidance for Children and Young People in Sport

In all their contacts and communications with the members of their organisation/group, leaders must be seen to be open and transparent. This is the case whether communications are by traditional means or by electronic means.

NB: Leaders must not communicate with children or young people via leader's personal social networking profiles, email accounts, or chat rooms.

For an Organisation/Club Using/Publishing a Social Networking the following principles should be applied:

- The page/profile must be password-protected, and the password must be held by at least three leaders of the organisation.
- The site should be monitored by a designated supervisor. This person should have access to the login details of the site. This supervisor will be appointed by the Designated Person/Safeguarding Panel in Charge of Child Protection.
- Any inappropriate posts by children/young people or leaders should be removed by the designated supervisor. Reasons should then be explained to the person who posted the content. Where possible sites should be monitored before content is put up.
- The site should be kept 'Private' i.e. only permitted members or 'friends' can see what is posted on the site.
- The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers etc., should be avoided as, while sites are 'private', there is the potential for items to be copied and shared.
- Content of any postings should be consistent with the aims of the organisation. In cases of doubt leaders should seek advice.

#### For Leaders Using a Social Networking Site

- Leaders should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people on social media. (Children or young people may 'follow' leaders on social media so leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)
- Messages left to or from children or young people on social network sites should be written on an open page (e.g. A Facebook 'Wall') and not in a private message or by using 'chat' [one-on-one].
- Leaders should not network with members of their organisation/group via closed [one-on-one] chats e.g. Facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc. This should be done only through 'Group Chat.'
- Any events or activities run by the organisation that are organised or publicised on the site should be a closed event so as non-members cannot access the event without suitable permission by the site administrators.
- Any emails sent to children or young people via the site must be sent to at least one other leader. (This can be done by 'bcc' if necessary.)



- Leaders should avoid communicating with children or young people in their organisation/group via email/message late at night.
- In signing off a post or email leaders should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient, e.g. “Luv X”; “xoxoxo”. Simply sign your name.
- Parents/carers should be asked to give their approval for leaders to communicate with their children/young people via social networking sites, or by any other means of internet communications (e.g. email).
- Parental and child’s permission is required before pictures or videos of children or young people are posted online.
- Any disclosures of abuses reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to your reporting procedures.