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## Social Media Policy

Ballyclare Comrades Boy's Academy FC

The use of Social Media provides many opportunities to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the different communities we serve. However, when using these emerging technologies there are a number of risks and issues to consider, both for individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of Ballyclare Comrades Boy's Academy FC.

These risks need to be identified and managed to ensure the benefits can be realised in as safe a manner as possible.

Outside of the Club, personal use of social networking sites is also growing in popularity, and is used by many as a way of keeping in touch with friends and colleagues on a social basis. While in the vast majority of cases, the use of sites such as Facebook is trouble free, guidance is required to ensure Members of the Club do not act in a way that may negatively affect the reputation of the Club, or leave themselves open to allegation.

### Purpose

This policy relates to both the professional and personal use of social networking sites by individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of the Club.

It aims to provide guidance to individual committee members, coaches, parents and players on their personal responsibility as Members of the Club when using any social networking site.

### Scope

By definition Social Media is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

This includes blogs, message boards, social networking websites (such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Snapchat](#), [TikTok](#)), content sharing websites (such as [Flicker](#), [YouTube](#)) and many others

### Objectives

- To ensure safe, professional use of social media tools
- To make individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of the Club aware of the issues relating to the use of social media for both private and professional purposes, and aware of their responsibility to the Club.
- To ensure individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of the Club are aware of all relevant legislation and standards relating to online information, including codes of practice from related professional bodies.

## **Codes of practice**

Professional bodies may have issued their own code of practice relating to the use of social media.

Everyone has a personal responsibility to be aware of codes of practice relating to their professional body; however, the Club policy remains the definitive guidance for everyone in the use of social media.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

All individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of the Club are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take time to read and understand it.

**It is the responsibility of the committee members to investigate any reported breaches of this policy.**

## **SECTION ONE:**

### **Personal Use of Social Media**

Outside of the Club environment, whether or not an individual chooses to create or participate in an online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is their own business.

However, as a member of the Club it is important to be aware that posting information or views about the Club cannot be isolated from your working life. Comments about the Club or colleagues can bring the Club into disrepute and make individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of the Club liable to legal action. Therefore, keep your personal use of social media as separate as possible from the Club.

The following policy statements are designed to protect the Club, the individual committee members, coaches, parents and players from allegation, disrepute and liability.

**Individual committee members, coaches, parents and players should never do any of the following:**

- Share confidential information online
- Post inappropriate comments about individual committee members, coaches, parents and players.
- Use social media sites to bully or intimidate any member of the Club.
- Use social media in any way which is unlawful
- The above statements refer to the posting of all types of content on social media sites, including (but not exclusively) text, photographs and video.

## **SECTION TWO:**

### **Professional Use of Social Media**

Your relationship with social media changes as soon as you identify yourself as a member of the Club and speak in any kind of professional capacity or seek to deploy social media on Club business.

In such circumstances there are responsibilities, standards of behaviour and other organisational considerations which apply. Remember, you are publicly representing the Club and should participate in the same way as you would with other media, public meetings or forums.

Always remember that participation online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media.

You should also be aware that you may attract media interest in yourself and the Club, so proceed with care. If you have any doubts, take advice from the Club.

Professional Use of Social Media is defined as:

- Participation in third party professional forums and/or discussion boards relating to the Club;
- Creating and/or managing content on a social media site created, branded and managed by the Club;
- Social media monitoring for business purposes.

NB. Anyone wishing to develop a social media site or application on behalf of the Club should first contact the committee to seek the required approval.

The following policy statements relate to professional use of social media.

You are free to participate in professional forums relating to your area of work/club.

When participating in a professional capacity on behalf of the Club, you **must**:

- Seek approval from management before participating, or declare any existing interests.
- Only provide information about your club if it is absolutely essential
- Be professional - make sure you are always seen to act in an honest, accurate, fair and responsible way at all times.
- Respect copyright when linking to images or other online material.

When participating in a professional capacity on behalf of the Club you **must not**:

- Mention any information relating specifically to an individual
- Use offensive, sexist, racist, hateful or otherwise offensive or discriminatory language
- Publish information that is disparaging to the Club, or other club members
- Endorse or appear to endorse any commercial product or service
- Voice political opinion

### **Non-Compliance**

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether Club facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach.

Any member of the Club deemed to be committing a breach of this policy will be required to cooperate with our investigation. This may include removing internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach in this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

**Serious breaches may be reported to the PSNI, or other public authority for further investigation.**

### **Monitoring**

The Club regularly monitors social media as part of our media strategy. Any instances of policy breach identified through this process will be dealt as per the Club disciplinary procedure.