



St. Annes Football Club

Policy and Guidance on the Responsible Use of Social Media

This policy sets out the Club's expectations for the responsible use of social media and the potential consequences for those who use them improperly. It draws upon The Football Association's Respect guidance on using club webpages, social media, email and texts.

The Football Association's intention is to safeguard children and young people involved in football. As with other leading world brands The Football Association uses social media sites including Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter as a way of getting messages across to the widest audience possible.

Whilst the use of social media brings many opportunities and benefits it also opened up some new risks and challenges. That's why The Football Association has teamed up with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) centre, which is run by the Police to promote online safety and vigilance, and their Thinkuknow programme to keep Under 18s safe online.

Guidance for Under 18s

Within football we want you to use social networks, the internet, texts and email safely to get the information you need. We have produced this guidance to keep us all safe and to ensure that we respect each other:

- Tell an adult you trust about any communication that makes you feel uncomfortable or that asks you not to tell your parent/carer.
- Know who from the Club should be contacting you and how they should be contacting you.
- You can talk to the Club's Child Welfare Officer if you are unhappy about anything sent to you or said about you over the internet, social networking sites, text messages or via email.
- Don't post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening or racist as this would go against football rules and could also be against the law.
- Don't give out personal details including mobile numbers, email addresses or social media account access to people you don't know well offline.
- Facebook has different 'set up' guidelines for Under 18s to help to keep you safe – use them.
- Even if you get on with your coach, manager, administrator or Club officials, don't invite them to become your friends online, they have been asked not to accept such invitations.



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- Tell an adult you trust if an adult involved at the Club asks you to become their friend online and inform the Club's Child Welfare Officer.
- If you receive an image or message which you find offensive, threatening or upsetting tell an adult you trust. Make sure you copy and save the image/message elsewhere or print it off before you remove and destroy it because this may be needed as evidence.

To find out the latest information on the sites you like to visit, mobiles and technology. Visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk

You can also report concerns directly to the police via www.ceop.police.uk

Guidance for Coaches, Managers and Club officials

Coaches, managers, Club officials and others in a position of trust in football need to act responsibly both on and off the field and this includes the use of electronic communications.

Therefore, the Club advises that as a general principle coaches, managers, Club officials, etc. should not use social networking sites as the primary way of communicating directly with players.

Children and young people should be advised by their coaches, parents/carers and the Child Welfare Officer to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer about the communication.

Unless a child/young person is a direct relation, you should not:

- Accept as a friend, any Under 18 players or referees on social networking sites they are members of or share your own personal social media with children or young people involved in youth football
- Make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social media
- Use internet or web-based communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person
- Engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.



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Consequences of improper use of social networking sites

The Football Association has issued clarification on the use of social networking sites, including, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and internet blogs.

Users should be aware that comments made on such sites may be considered public comment, and that further to Football Association Rule E3, any comments which are deemed improper, bring the game into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting will lead to disciplinary action.

- Comments which are personal in nature or could be construed as offensive, use foul language or contain direct or indirect threats aimed at other participants are likely to be considered improper.
- Users are required to act in the best interests of the game at all times and should be aware of this when using social networking sites. Furthermore, users are reminded that postings on social networking sites which they believe to be visible to a limited number of selected people may still end up in the public domain and consequently, care should be exercised with regards to the contents of such postings.
- In addition, users are reminded that social networking site postings could also lead to civil proceedings being brought by affected parties.

Managers are advised to make players aware of this policy, and to politely warn players about the consequences of placing derogatory comments about other players or match officials on any social networking sites. Not only does it reflect badly on the Club but will result in disciplinary action and potentially could be reported to the Police via CEOP by the person affected.

