



# THE SIR TOM FINNEY FOOTBALL CLUB

## SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Sir Tom Finney Football Club understands that everyone involved in football must recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play. Coaches, club officials, players, parents, volunteers and others involved with the club need to act responsibly both on and off the field and this includes the use of electronic communications.

Clubs have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. Coaches, officials, and those in a position of responsibility in the Club must ensure they communicate responsibly. Clubs are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abide by the Rules of The Football Association.

### **The Club should:**

1. Refrain from publishing comments about other clubs, players or referees and any controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects.
2. Avoid hostile or harassing communications in any posts or other online communications. Harassment is any offensive conduct based on a person's race, sex, gender identity, national origin, colour, disability, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, religion or any other status identified by The Equality Act 2010.
3. Identify all copyrighted or borrowed material with citations and links. When publishing direct paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, give credit to the original publisher or author.
4. For the website, blogs, chat rooms, video-sharing sites, bulletin boards or other social media that promotes their club, remember they are responsible for reviewing responses to online posts and resolving any concerns about the propriety of the responses before they are posted.
5. Seek guidance from the Communications Officer or Club Secretary (or any member of the Committee if they are unavailable) if a blogger or any other online participant posts an inaccurate or negative comment about the club.

### **Volunteers in any position (Managers, Coaches, Parent Helpers, Committee Members) must not:**

1. Use text or emails for personal conversations, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature or engage in any 'banter' or comments with or about any member of the club.
2. Use social media, mobile phones or any other form of electronic communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person.
3. Respond to emails or texts from young people other than those directly related to Club matters.

4. Use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.
5. Accept as a friend, young players or any person employed or volunteering at the club who is U18, on social networking sites.
6. Share their own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved at the football club or ask them to be a 'friend'.
7. Make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites.
8. Post personal comments in relation to the management or operation of the club, club officials, match officials, children, parent/guardian or opposition teams or any family members of those groups.
9. Delete any inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation.

**Parent Guidance – Parents Must:**

1. Know who the Club Welfare Officer is and how to contact them if they have any concerns about the content of club web pages or in relation to the welfare of your child.
2. Ensure they are aware of how coaches, managers and other members of the club should communicate with their child.
3. Show an interest in the communications between the club and their child.
4. Understand the club's communication practices. If the club uses text messages or emails as a source of communication they may request to be copied into anything sent to your child.
5. Ensure their child understands that they should tell someone that they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or when they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer or coach about the communication.
6. Remember as a parent/carer of a child at the club that they and their children are responsible for and need to abide by the club policy and the FA Rules regarding any comments made via social media or other electronic communication.
7. Inform the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible if they or their child receives any inappropriate communication from anyone connected to the Club.
8. Not use social media to speak ill of the Club or any one of its volunteers (Managers, Coaches, Parent Helpers, Committee Members etc), or to question the decisions made by managers coaches or committee members.
9. Reveal any information they may have received about a player.

**Player's Guidance. Players must not:**

1. Post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, or racist as this would go against football club's rules and could also be against the law. Or post personal comments in relation to the operation of the club, club officials, match officials, players, opposition team members, or any family members of those above.
2. Engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments with volunteers or players from opposition teams.
3. Give out personal details online including mobile numbers, email addresses or social networking account access to people they don't know well offline

4. For U18 players invite any adult involved with the club to become their friend online, or accept them as a friend on any social network site
5. Use internet, web-based, phone or any other form of electronic communication to send personal messages of a non-football nature to any volunteer at the club
6. Delete inappropriate text or email messages sent to them as they may form part of any subsequent investigation

Any breaches of this policy will be considered by the Club Committee. All reported breaches will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where The Sir Tom Finney Football Club is obliged to do so. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from the Football Club.

Everyone must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by the police over which The Sir Tom Finney Football Club will have no control.

The Sir Tom Finney Football Club Committee

Policy Approved: July 2024