



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Introduction

Social networking activities conducted on line using the likes of Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and YouTube and involving the posting of material, images or comments can be an important and effective communication tool. However, if used inappropriately, they can have an extremely negative effect on an organisation's reputation or image. Additionally, Gosford All Blacks Rugby Club ("the Club") has a firm commitment to safeguarding children in all aspects of its work. This Policy has therefore been written to set out the key principles and Code of Conduct that the Club expects **ALL** members to adhere to in connection with the use of social networking sites.

Key Principles

- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members and it is essential that everyone at the Club considers this and acts responsibly when using social networking sites in any capacity.
- All members of the Club have a responsibility to protect the reputation of the Club and to treat fellow members of the Club with dignity and respect.
- It is important to protect the Club from allegations and misinterpretations that can arise from the use of social networking sites.

Codes of Conduct

The following are **NOT CONSIDERED ACCEPTABLE** at the Club:

- The use of the Club's name, logo or any other published material without the prior written permission of the Executive Committee. This applies to any material previously published on the internet or written documentation.
- The posting of any communication or images which links the Club to any form of illegal conduct or which may damage the reputation of the Club. **This includes comments that are threatening, abusive and insulting.**
- The disclosure of confidential or Club-sensitive information or the disclosure of information or images that could compromise the security of the Club.
- Coaches and Club officials must not communicate with children through social networking sites such as Facebook. Coaches should not be "friends" with the children they coach and they should not comment on their status as this can open the coach up to allegations.

In addition, every member of the Club must ensure that they:

- Obtain the permission of the Executive Committee before setting up a social media forum representing the Club in any capacity.
- Ensure that any forum content complies with the Club's policies and its Codes of Conduct.
- Comply with the RFU Anti-Bullying Policy and not make any derogatory, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory or obscene comments about the Club or anyone at or connected with the Club or those clubs that it plays against, the RFU or the sport of rugby. This includes referees and other clubs' members.
- Do not disclose other people's personal information.



Gosford All Blacks Rugby Union Football Club
"First Choice for Oxfordshire Community Rugby"

- Are mindful that photos and video clips can make any child featured vulnerable to grooming if information about the child (name, address, activities or interests) is also disclosed. Furthermore, posting an image on the website carries a risk that the image could be taken and adapted for inappropriate use.
- Are 'age aware' by not inviting young people or granting access to forums where topics contain adult themes/languages.
- Use third parties' social networking sites responsibly and ensure that neither their personal or professional reputation nor the Club's reputation is compromised by inappropriate postings.
- Are polite and respectful of others' opinions, even in times of heated discussion and debate.
- Are aware that many websites can contain links to other sites. This could be for commercial reasons, such as sites of sponsors or advertisers, or simply to communicate information to be found on other websites. Before creating a link and/or sending any link in connection with the Club's activities, the content should be thoroughly checked by the sender, both for child protection reasons, and to ensure the content poses no other risk to the Club's reputation. The content of any such link should also be checked periodically by the sender to ensure any links are removed immediately if concerns arise.

This policy applies to, but is not restricted to, the following social media tools:

- Social networking sites, eg Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Friendster.
- Video and photo sharing websites, eg Flickr, Instagram, You Tube.
- Micro-blogging site, eg Twitter.
- Weblogs, including corporate blogs, personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications.
- Forums and discussion boards such as Whirlpool, Yahoo! Groups or Google Groups.
- Online encyclopaedias such as Wikipedia.
- Any other websites that allow individual users or companies to use simple publishing tools.

Potential and Actual Breaches of the Code of Conduct

In the event that a member of the Club is alleged to have breached the above Code of Conduct, the following action will be taken:

- Any alleged breach of this policy will be fully investigated, initially by the respective team coach or manager. Should it be found that the policy has been breached, the respective team coach or manager will suspend the individual from all Club activity until the next relevant Executive Committee meeting. The matter will then be considered by the Executive Committee who will then deem the suspension sufficient punishment or take further action as it sees fit. **A breach of this policy will be considered to be a serious disciplinary offence and contrary to the Club's ethos and principles.**
- The Club will take appropriate action in order to protect the Club's reputation and that of its members, volunteers, children and anyone else directly linked to the Club.

If you have any questions about this Policy, please contact the Club's Safeguarding Officer or the Club's Chairman.

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