



RFA Social Media Policy

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Responsible Officer: Phil Atkinson

Applicable for: This policy is mandatory. It applies to Clubs, Management Boards, Tournament organisers and all members, players, participants, connected participants, volunteers, coaches acting in any capacity within the RFA.

Summary: This Policy provides guidance for all members, participants, connected participants, volunteers, staff, organisations and 3rd parties to help them understand the acceptable standards of use of social media in the RFA.

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Purpose & Scope

The Rugby Fives Association (RFA) recognise the developing the range of technologies used to interactively share, create, discuss issues and content as extremely positive. We encourage individuals and communities to use social media to promote themselves, their clubs, their achievements and the sport of Fives.

However, the RFA will challenge anyone using social media either intentionally or by association to insult, slander, create a risk to personal safety, abuse, or attempt to deceive any individual, organisation or the sport of Fives.

This Policy provides guidance for all members, participants, connected participants, volunteers, staff, organisations and 3rd parties to help them understand the acceptable standards of use of social media in Fives. It sets out best practice designed to assist everyone in understanding what the potential risks are in using social media and how these can be managed.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and adults at risk is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices.
- Provide all staff, volunteers, members and connected participants with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety.
- Ensure that as an organisation we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

The pace of change in technology means that it is not possible to identify a definitive list of all forms of social media which this Policy applies to, hence it is to be read as applying to all forms commonly understood to be social media and used as such. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct and you are reminded that misuse of social media can result in Disciplinary Action being taken against a member, connected participant, volunteer or employee. Therefore this policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved RFA activities.

Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance which seeks to protect all children and young people in the UK. Summaries of the key legislation can be found below:

- Online abuse: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- Bullying: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- Child Protection: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system
- Working together to Safeguard Children – HM GOV - 2018
- Care Act 2014



Definitions

Social media

Is the collective of online communications and media channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration via a range of technologies such as desktop, laptop, tablets, smartphones, gaming consoles and platforms and other internet enable devices. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media and examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Reddit.

Young person

Is used to refer to any person below the age of 18.

Disciplinary Action

Means action taken under the Disciplinary Regulations of the RFA.

Usage

Whilst clubs and Players are encouraged to use social media to positively promote their clubs, themselves and their achievements and the sport of Fives, the balance between the right to free speech and the responsibility not to insult, slander, abuse or create risks to anyone's personal safety must be borne in mind. This Policy seeks to assist all platform users in knowing how to achieve that balance.

Good Practice Guidance

As a general principle it is recommended that the club, Players, organisation or individual who has a webpage/profile which is used for their Fives involvement keep their personal identity, pages and profile separate. This will help in distinguishing between what is part of a person's private life, and what is part of their life in Fives. Whilst there will always be grey lines between the two, having separate online identities should assist in focusing the mind on what is and what is not appropriate content and usage, before anything is posted.

Social media as defined above, presents a unique set of challenges for protecting personal safety as all information posted is available to the whole world, indefinitely. Generational differences in understanding the implications of what is being posted means that there are very different perceptions of risk operating. Whilst young people get great benefits from the online communities they belong to and the instant access they have to friends from across the world, they may need guidance for their safety as to what is acceptable and safe use. The use of social media to target



individuals, whether for grooming, exploitation or the increasing incidences of cyber bullying, has created a set of risks to vulnerable people which is a real challenge to manage. Everyone is creating potential risk to themselves when they post personal information.

Instant messaging applications (informal communications)

- As a person in a position of trust, do not instant message anyone under the age of 18 directly.
- Any group conversations should not be used as formal points of communication.
- Any group conversation must not contain any players U18 with someone who is over 18 in a position of trust. Any Group conversation set up with U18s must have permission of their parent or guardian to proceed.
- Any Group conversation which in acting for the purposes of communicating between person in a position of trust and U18s may only contain the parent or guardian of the person U18.
- Any group conversations should have at least 2 administrators in it.

Emailing (formal communication)

- Emails should never be sent to U18s on a 1-2-1 basis.
- An additional club member should always be copied in as well as parents or guardians, if deemed appropriate the U18 can be copied in.
- Where possible send emails from an RFA account not a personal email account.
- If using an RFA email account ensure that 2 people can access that account.
- If in an emergency direct communication is required with an U18, ensure that another club member and a parent or guardian are copied in.

Social Networks

Social networks are the communities which develop on media applications or via the internet, such as Facebook and Twitter.

Those in a position of trust and young persons should not be “friending” or “following” each other, outside of the Fives relationship, (adults who are not in a position of trust may choose to have friends U18 which from outside the context of a Fives setting however, as best practice we advise against this). Communications for Fives purposes should be through sites/identities which are public and managed by the club, not through personal accounts. RFA and Fives Club accounts should have multiple administrators. This applies to adults in a position of trust as well as to the adults who come into contact with young people through Fives.



Guidance for Social media

Do:

- Keep all information private. Do not share any information with anyone you don't know personally
- Restrict your profile, ensure that only people who you want to see your post can
- Think carefully about what your posting and from which account if you have both a personal and RFA or club account
- Keep Club pages to invite or private only, this way you can monitor who is on the page.

Don't:

- Add U18s if you are in a position of trust on any social media network
- Message, react or comment on any U18s social media account
- Post personal opinions as an administrator of an organisation page.

It is accepted that some parents/carers are friends with their children, in order to monitor the material posted and seen by them. If the adult then accepts their child's friends, this is not something which the RFA has any jurisdiction over. We are concerned about social media usage where the primary relationship is one gained through Fives. Everyone needs to be mindful that:

Social media must not be used to insult, belittle or criticise other teams, players, officials or staff of the RFA.

Expressing Opinion Online

Expressing your opinion is fine, being rude in the way you express it or expressing discriminatory views is not and could lead to the individual who posted the comment, anyone who forwards or positively affirms the comment, and the person with administration rights for the site used, being subject to Disciplinary Action or criminal investigation. Anyone who has posted an offensive message or image is advised to remove the comment as soon as possible, to reduce its impact.

The speed and variety in the development of social media forums, means that posts can be generated rapidly and spread to a wider audience in a very short space of time. All members, connected participants, staff and members of the public can and should report any misuse of social media to the RFA so that appropriate action can be taken to maintain the high standards of behaviour expected within the sport of Fives. Any reports should be well founded and not as a matter of person opinion, additionally to this any reports should be provided with evidence.



Reposting/Sharing

When using Twitter or similar tools, reposting other people's comments or posts can be taken as you adopting the views they have expressed and you would be accountable for the content. Comments made should clearly be attributable to the individual and not to the RFA.

Setting Up Club Webpages

Clubs setting up webpages, including Facebook pages, are advised to ensure that they retain ownership and administration rights over that site. No one individual should have exclusive ownership or administration rights, including the Chair. The Club Safeguarding Officer must be informed about and involved in the administration of any site(s). All these people should be aware of the laws and good practice for protecting children from the potential risks of social media.

The primary purpose of the site should be for promoting the club and the sport of Fives and for communicating between members of the club. Privacy settings should be set so that members of the public cannot contact individuals from the club by first establishing a link with the club, via their webpage.

A young person's (U18) social media account may link to the club page, but additional links between the pages of an adult and a young person should not be made. Remember that privacy settings change frequently – keep them under review and update as necessary.

Photos and tagging should be used with consideration for the safety implications which these bring. A photo of the team in play, without any tagging of individuals is fine. Do not use tags as this allows people to be identified and then traced. Whenever a photo is going to be taken and used make sure the individual knows and get parental consent if the player is u18. The RFA website has photography policies for this situation.

Reporting Concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, as is creating and maintaining the high standards of behaviour expected of people in the sport of Fives. For these reasons, everyone is encouraged to report concerns of misuse or inappropriate usage of social media to the Appropriate Authority, within the world of Fives, or outside it.

The first point of contact will usually be the Club Safeguarding Officer, President or Treasurer. At school it will usually be the school teacher in charge of Fives. Ultimately all reports should be raised to the RFA Safeguarding Officer who can be contacted via the RFA website.

Threats of immediate harm or danger should be reported to the police.



Whilst the law does not move as fast as technology, there is legislation and government guidance which applies to social media usage, including:

- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Protection from Harassment Act 2003
- Defamation Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- Equality Act 2010
- Working Together 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Prosecutions may be taken for comments/content posted on line.

Useful Contacts

There are a number of organisations who can provide advice and guidance on internet safety and usage, which have been referred to in the development of this policy. They are great resources to reference for the most up to date guidance:

- CPSU Online Safety
- CPSU
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- CEOP Safety Centre

Contact the RFA

Report a concern via the RFA website.

Urgent cases should be referred to the Police and emergency services by calling 999.

The NSPCC are available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year on 0808 800 5000