



# Newport County AFC Electronic Communications & Social Media Policy

*Updated March 2018*

Newport County Association Football Club's commitment to safeguarding subsists both on the field of play and in the wider context and operation of the Club. Coaches, club officials, volunteers and others in a position of trust in football need to act responsibly both on and off the field. This includes the use of electronic communications and social internet interaction.

Clubs and leagues that set up websites and use web-based applications have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. 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 and Regulations of The English Football League (EFL) and The Football Association (FA).

Electronic communications and social media includes, but is not limited to:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- Content sharing including using sites such as Flickr (photo sharing) and YouTube (video sharing).
- Commenting on blogs or vlogs for personal or business reasons.
- Leaving product or service reviews on retailer sites or customer review sites.
- Taking part in online votes and polls.
- Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums (message boards).
- Editing a Wikipedia page.

The web is not anonymous. Newport County Association Football Club, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers should assume that everything they write online, especially in open forums, can be traced back to them. Individuals should be aware that they may be personally liable to prosecution, and open to claims for damages, should your actions be found to be in breach of the law. In cases of harassment, a claim that you had not intended to harass or cause offence will not in itself constitute an acceptable defence.

This policy applies to all players, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers of Newport County Association Football Club.

Newport County AFC abide to the following policy measures to ensure safeguarding exists within the realms of electronic communication and social media engagement.

### **The Club:**

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 the act of systematic and/or continued unwanted and annoying actions of one party or a group, including threats and demands.
3. Abstain from comments 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.
4. 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.
5. In regards to any website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board or other social media that promotes the Club, the Club accepts responsibility for reviewing responses to online posts and resolving any concerns about the propriety of the responses before they are posted.
6. If a blogger or any other online participant posts an inaccurate, accessory or negative comment about the club or anyone associated with the club, the Club shall not respond to the post and contact The Club Secretary for guidance/advice.

### **Employees:**

1. Do not post personal remarks 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.
2. Do not use text or emails for personal exchanges, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature or engage in any ‘banter’ or comments with or about children or young persons at the club.
3. Do not use internet or web based mobile phones, or other form of communications, to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person.
4. Refrain from responding to emails or texts from young people other than those directly related to club matters.
5. Under no circumstances should language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone, be used in any electronic communication or post.
6. Do not accept as a friend, young players or any person employed or volunteering at the club who is under the age of 18, on social networking sites.
7. Abstain from sharing your own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved at the football club, or ask them to be your ‘friend’.
8. Do not make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites.
9. Do not use the Club’s official communication platforms to make posts or comments of a personal or non-footballing nature.

### **Players:**

1. Must not post, host, text or email communications that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, or relating to the protected characteristics noted in The Equality Act 2010.
2. Refrain from personal comments in relation to the management or operation of the club, club officials, match officials, players, opposition team member(s), or any family members of those above.
3. When engaging with fans, be it of Newport County AFC, any other club or the sport as a whole, players must not be, or be perceived to be: insulting, threatening, abusive or inciting, as well as following the aforementioned guidelines surrounding protected characteristics.
4. Must not bring (or be perceived to bring) Newport County Association Football Club or the sport and any affiliated governing bodies into disrepute
5. Do not give out personal details online including mobile numbers, email addresses or social networking account access, regardless of whether they are your own or a separate individuals.
6. Posts must not contain, nor link to, pornographic or indecent content.
7. Do not reveal information about training, fixtures, contractual agreements, or any other player or club operational details and procedures using social media posts.
8. Must not post information pertaining to the Club, its employees, other clubs and wider employees of governing bodies and the sport as a whole, which the Player knows to be false, inaccurate or exaggerated.
9. Ensure that the intellectual property and brand of Newport County AFC and its partners, sponsors and associations in which Newport County AFC are members are not compromised or bought into disrepute from posts or comments across social platforms. If in doubt when using brand imagery, slogans and other property, please consult with both the Club's CEO and Media and Engagement Manager.
10. May not use official Newport County AFC materials, intellectual property or copyrighted material to promote personal projects, without the prior written consent of both the CEO and Media and Engagement Manager.
11. As well as direct communications, care must be taken to avoid any affiliation with posts or comments which breach any of the above noted guidelines. This includes 'likes', 'retweets' or any other form of redistribution or approval of such communications or interactions.

### **Parent Guidance:**

1. Know who the Club's Child Protection Officer is and how to contact them if you have any concerns about the content of club web pages or in relation to the welfare of your child. This information can be found on the Club website, or can be asked by phoning or emailing the Club.
2. Ensure you are aware of how coaches, managers and other members of the club should communicate with your child.
3. Become familiar with the Club's communication practices. If the club uses text messages or emails as a source of communication you may request to be copied into anything sent to your child
4. Show an interest in the communications between the Club, you and your child. Open communication about club activities/issues often means that concerns are picked up early and issues can be resolved in a swifter and more efficient manner.
5. Familiarise yourself with both the FA and The Football League's guidance for clubs in relation to websites, text messaging and social networking sites.
6. Ensure your 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.
7. Inform the club Child Protection Officer as soon as possible if you or your child receives any inappropriate communication from any member of staff/volunteer or other person associated with the club and save the communication
8. Parents must not use social media to speak ill of the Club or any staff or associates or to comment on players, training or matches.
9. Remember as a parent/carer of a child at the Club, you and your child are responsible for and need to abide by the club policy, The Football League Policy Guidance and The FA Rules and Regulations regarding comments that you place online about the club or club officials, The Football League, players, managers, match officials, opposing teams players or family members of any of those groups.

A breach of this policy will be considered by senior management. All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where Newport County Association Football Club is obliged to do so. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to: verbal warning, written warnings, suspension, or banning/termination from Newport County Association 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 Newport County Association Football Club will have no control.