



St. Mary's Football Club

St Mary's Football Club Social Media Policy

OVERVIEW

Online, social media and other electronic communication tools such as text messaging have become a prevalent and effective means of personal and professional communication, and have fundamentally changed the way many people and organisations interact. This policy sets out our expectations with respect to the use of online and social media, as well as other forms of electronic communications, by all St Mary's Football Club coaches, players, parents, volunteers and Committee Members.

The term 'social media' as used in this policy encompasses a wide array of online media and communications and their scope is constantly evolving. For the purposes of this policy, the terms 'online media' and 'social media' are to refer to internal and external websites, blogs, online social networks (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), wikis, video and photo sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, SKYPE and Flickr), and other forms of personal online publishing and discourse. Policies regarding text messaging, email and individual telephonic communications are also covered by these policies.

Social media forums are typically public. Even when using social media for purely personal purposes, a person's public expressions might affect their professional identity and the interest of St Mary's Football Club and our members. Accordingly, anyone participating in social media must ensure that their participation is consistent with St Mary's Football Club policies. That said: St Mary's Football Club fully respects the interest our Committee and coaches may have in participating in online on a social media on a personal basis. What they do outside of Club work on their own time is normally their own business. However, activities of St Mary's Football Club Committee and Coaches that affect the Club's reputation, coach's performance, the safety of our players, or other St Mary's Football Club personnel are within the scope of this policy.

Both on and off the field, safety and youth protection should be a key focus. St Mary's Football Club is committed to being an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off, and safety is always at the forefront of any considerations where social media is concerned.

With these objectives in mind, all St Mary's Football Club coaches, volunteers, Committee Members must be familiar with and adhere to this policy, regardless of whether they personally use social media, and must share this policy with parents and players as appropriate.

INTERNET AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES FOR COACHES

- All social media communications must be public, and all communications on or through them must be public. Being 'public' means no private channels. For example, private Facebook groups, direct messaging or private invitations to personal Facebook pages, invite only YouTube channels, or Twitter, direct messaging to individual players and the like shall not be permitted between coaches and players. This enables administrators to monitor all communication and help ensure that this is no inappropriate communication between coaches and players. This also serves to protect coaches.
- Abide by a 'two-deep- policy for all communications and activities. This means that at least two St Mary's Football Club affiliated adults must be included or at least copied on all messages to players.
 - There should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through Facebook messages, Twitter, direct messaging, Skype, chats, instant messaging or other similar messaging features through social media sites. This two-deep policy also applies to all activities, outings, excursions, or other meetings between an adult and a player.
 - A coach may respond to a direct enquiry via text message or email from a player regarding practice times, cancellations, schedules etc. but our coaches should strive to include another adult on messages whenever possible.
 - Coaches and team representatives should only use text messages and email on issues that are football related and all communications should include a parent or guardian copied on the message where possible.
 - Coaches and team representatives should avoid mobile phone conversations with players to the greatest extent possible, and should only be used when absolutely necessary, and should be football related.
- Committee Members, coaches, volunteers etc. may not be 'friends' on Facebook with a player.
- If you post content on any social media site and it has something to do with your work for St Mary's Football Club or subjects associated with the club or any of its members, you should include a disclaimer in substantially the following form: *"The postings on this site are my own, personal views and do not represent the views or positions of St Mary's Football Club"*.
- When providing your contact information for personal business in social media, you should use your personal contact information and not your St Mary's Football Club contact information.
- Respect privacy and confidentiality obligations when posting photos and videos. Before you post online videos or photos that include images of players, it is your responsibility to obtain consent from their parent or guardian. This does not apply to official photographs taken by the Club Secretary who has prior consent through the Club registration forms.

INTERNET SAFETY FOR PLAYERS

- Do not give anyone online, not even your coach or parent volunteers, your phone numbers at home or school, your parents' workplaces, or the name or location of your school or home address unless you have your parents' permission first. Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other adult in your family.
- Do not 'friend' your coach on Facebook or other social media sites.
- Do not participate in 'one on one' conversations via email, text message or telephone with your coach for anything other than football related business.
- Do not participate in 'one on one' conversations via Skype, Facebook or other social media sites with your coach.
- If your coach or any other adult sends or shows you email or any type of direct message/ wall post or text message with images or words that make you feel uncomfortable, do not respond. Tell a parent or trusted adult about the message or what happened.
- Tell a parent or guardian about any calls or texts you receive from a coach that discuss anything other than football.
- If your coach or any adult tells you to keep what's going on between the two of you a secret, tell a parent or guardian immediately.
- Be careful who you talk to on the internet. If someone starts talking about subjects that make you uncomfortable, tell a parent or guardian. Keep in mind that a person you don't know who is trying to talk to you could be an adult posing as a child.
- Pay attention if someone tells you things that don't fit together. If one time an online 'friend' says he or she is 12, and another time says they are 14. That is a warning that this person is lying, and may be an adult posing as a child.
- Unless you talk to a parent about it first, never talk to anyone by phone or text message if you only know that person online.
- Never agree to meet someone, including a coach or St Mary's Football Club volunteer, at any place off-line unless you have a parents' permission.

INTERNET SAFETY FOR PARENTS

- Discuss internet safety, and the 'Internet Safety for Players' section above, with your child.
- Let your children know that their coach, and other adults, should not communicate with them without your explicit knowledge and approval.

- Review your child's online and electronic communications as appropriate to minimize risk.
- Report any suspicious online or electronic communications to the Club Secretary as soon as possible.
- If appropriate report any suspicious online to electronic communications to the appropriate authorities as soon as possible.

REPORTING, INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION OF SUSPICIOUS INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

- All suspicious internet and electronic communications should be reported to the Club Secretary, Denise Burns, deniseburns@icloud.com
- The Club Secretary will investigate all claims of inappropriate activity in concert with the Designated Child Protection Officer, John Meighan.
- Any reports of inappropriate activity will be reported to the Executive Committee.
- Reports of inappropriate activity may also be reported to law enforcement authorities as appropriate.
- Pending the investigation of reported suspicious activity, the Club Secretary may prohibit contact between a coach, Committee Member, volunteer and all members of the club as deemed appropriate.
- Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Club Secretary, acting on the advice of the Designated Officer, and the Executive Committee, shall make a determination regarding the future participation of the individuals involved in club activities. In the event of suspension or termination of a Committee Member, coach or volunteer the Club Secretary shall provide a means of appeal of the decision as required.

GUIDELINES FOR ST MARY'S FOOTBALL CLUB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Social media must be monitored. A qualified staff member or volunteer should have the responsibility of regularly monitoring social media channels, and back-up monitors should be designated so there is no gap.
- Be prepared to respond to negative or inaccurate posts only if a response is warranted. Some negative comments do not require a response, while others should be taken seriously and addressed. Factors such as the number of followers and the severity of the conversations should temper if and how you respond.
- Inappropriate posts or comments should be documented and removed immediately.
- Direct media inquiries to the appropriate person. Media inquiries coming through social media should be referred to the Executive Director or a designee for an official response.

- Be respectful. When disagreeing with others' opinions, remain appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation online that looks as if it's becoming antagonistic, do not get overly defensive and do not disengage from the conversation abruptly. Ask the appropriate personnel or the Executive Director for advice on how to disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on St Mary's Football Club.
- Safety and youth protection should be a key focus at all times. Any and all reports or allegations of inappropriate or potentially abusive behaviour must be promptly reported to the Club Secretary.
- The Club Secretary or appropriate designee must thoroughly investigate any and all reports or allegations of inappropriate or potentially abusive behaviour.

All St Mary's Football Club personnel must comply with this policy. In the event St Mary's Football Club perceives any online communication activities by an employee, coach or volunteer as compromising the integrity of the organization or the safety of our members in any respect, St Mary's Football Club may request such communications to cease. Such communications may be reported to authorities if deemed appropriate by the Executive Director or other members of the St Mary's Football Club staff. Violations of this policy will result in corrective action including disciplinary action or dismissal when appropriate.