

SOUTHAM UNITED SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY 2021/22

Southam United Football Club understand everyone involved in football must recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play.

Coaches, club officials, players, volunteers and others in a position of trust in football need to act responsibly both on and off the field and this includes social media platforms including WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Email and Text Messaging.

Clubs and leagues that set up websites have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. Coaches, officials, players and those in a position of responsibility in clubs 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 and Regulations of The Football Association (FA).

Section A: The Club

The Club should:

1. Refrain from publishing comments about other Clubs, Players or Match Officials 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. If it maintains a website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board or other social media that promotes their club, should 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. If a blogger or any other online participant posts an inaccurate, accessory or negative comment about the club or anyone associated with the club, do not respond to the post and contact The Club Secretary for guidance/advice.

Section B - Club Staff & Coaches

Club Staff & Coaches must not:

1. Use, or share, the Club issued communications, including but not exclusive to, texts, emails, WhatsApp, that is presumed private, for personal conversations, sending pictures, jokes, or other items of a personal nature, or engage in any 'banter' or comment with or about children, or other players at the club. Failure to adhere to this rule may result in suspension, or being asked to leave the club, and is at the discretion of the Club Committee.
2. Use Club issued 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 under the age of 18.
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, this includes liking or retweeting posts of this nature.
5. Accept as a friend, young players or any person employed or volunteering at the club who is under 18 on social networking sites.
6. Share your own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved at the football club or ask them to be your '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. Post inflammatory or abusive personal comments as a club representative in relation to any related football matters including officials or players performance of any games being shown on TV or other general media platforms.
10. Delete any inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation.
11. Disclose confidential information about the Club or any person associated with the club who has not given express authority to disseminate.
12. Share or make personal copy of material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights, or which invades the privacy of any person or the club.
13. Club staff have the right to highlight / challenge in confidence to any other club member any social media activity that they have directly been involved in that contravenes this policy and ask them to amend or delete as necessary.

Section 3 - Parent / Guardian Guidance

1. Know who the club Safeguarding 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. Current Safeguarding officer is Joy Washbrooke (safeguarding@southamunited.com)
2. Ensure you are aware of how coaches, managers and other members of the club should communicate with your child
3. 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 more easily
4. Familiarise yourself with the FA's guidance for clubs in relation to websites, text messaging and social networking sites
5. Understand 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
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/guardian or coach about the communication

7. Remember as a parent/guardian of a child at the club you and your child are responsible for and need to abide by the club policy, The FA Rules and Regulations regarding comments that you place online about the club or club officials, the league, players, managers, match officials, opposing teams players or family members of any of those groups
8. Inform the club Safeguarding Children 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
9. Parents, and/or guardians must not use social media to speak ill of the club, or any staff or associates, or to comment on players, training or matches – failure to adhere to this rule may result in the parent and players being excluded from the club.
10. Post inflammatory or abusive personal comments as a club parent in relation to any related football or other sporting matters including officials or players performance of any games being shown on TV or other general media platforms.
11. Parents must not reveal or share any personal information they may have received about a player.
12. Club staff have the right to highlight / challenge in confidence to any parent / guardian any social media activity that they have directly been involved in that contravenes this policy and ask them to amend or delete as necessary. The Club Committee reserves the right to exclude any parent / guardian who is in breach of the Club's social media policy.

Section 4 - Player's Guidance

Players must not:

1. Post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, sexist, 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 management or operation of the club, club officials, match officials, players, opposition team member(s), or any family members of those above.
2. Engage in any personal communications classed as 'banter' with fellow players, staff / volunteer(s) or players' of opposition teams.
3. Give out personal details online including mobile numbers, email addresses or social networking account access to people you don't know well offline. Applicable to players under the age of 18.
4. Invite any adult involved with the club to become your friends online or accept them as a friend on any social network site. They have been told they must not to accept such invitations. Applicable to players under the age of 18.
5. Use Club internet, web-based, phone or any other form of communication to send personal messages of a non-football nature to any member of staff/volunteer at the club without their express permission.
6. Delete inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation
7. Use inappropriate or abusive language.

8. Players must not use social media to speak ill of the club or any staff or associates or to comment on other players, training, matches or team selection. The Club Committee reserves the right to exclude players from the club who are found to have done so.

9. Reveal information about training, fixtures and contractual agreements etc. using social media posts.

10. Post inflammatory or abusive personal comments as a club player in relation to any related football or other sporting matters including officials or players performance of any games being shown on TV or other general media platforms.

11. Club staff have the right to highlight / challenge in confidence to any player any social media activity that they have directly been involved in that contravenes this policy and ask them to amend or delete as necessary. A breach of this policy will be considered by the Club committee.

All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where Southam United Football Club is obliged to do so.

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from Southam United 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 Southam United Football Club will have no control.

Southam United Football Club reserves the right to refuse an application by any persons to volunteer, or become a member of the committee, should there be evidence off a breach of the Club's Social Media Policy.