



Telford Hornets RFC

## Social Media Policy

This Policy should be considered in the wider context and with reference to the club's existing Safeguarding Policy.

The Policy is in compliance with the RFU Safeguarding section's Cyber Guidance within the Safeguarding Toolkit. Use of the club's web site and social media outlets should be in accordance with the Code of Rugby and the Core Values of Trust, Respect, Enjoyment, Discipline and Sportsmanship.

Club members who wilfully ignore this Policy may be considered for discipline if the circumstances are considered to have brought the club into disrepute.

### 1. General Principles

The club's website and other internet media (Facebook pages and others) are an integral part of the daily operation of the club. They are a widely available and flexible way to communicate with club members and anyone interested in joining the club. When used responsibly and with care, they are a safe and effective way to communicate with all parts of the club, both children and adults. Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict the publication of social news, celebrate success of club teams and members and inform club members and the general public of the club's activities that are appropriate to the audience who can access the information.

### 2. The Club Website

In the same way that the club has responsibility for the physical safety of a junior member when visiting the club's premises, the club must also ensure that there is nothing on its web site which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. The club is legally and morally responsible for the content of its web site.

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Key risks to guard against are: -

- Abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text) on the site itself or on linked sites (including adverts, Google and other sponsored links)
- Disclosing personal information about a child to people accessing the website. This means name, address and so on - it does not preclude anonymous pictures of children being featured when engaged in rugby or other activities (see below).
- Any content that may be construed as bullying or Intimidator e.g. implying participation in an event is mandatory not optional, if directed to particular persons and, especially if directed at children.
- If a club member is uncertain about a posting to the website, the club Safeguarding Officer should be consulted before publishing material.
- Only persons over the age of 18 should publish items to the web site.
- If mini or youth teams have submissions from young people, the content must be checked and approved by an adult before entry onto the web site.

### 3. Linked Web Sites

Before any sponsor link is accepted onto the website, its content must be checked to ensure it is appropriate for all potential audiences. If necessary, access must be limited to adult club members only.

### 4. Photos and Video of Children

There is a risk when posting an image on the website that the image could be taken and adapted for an inappropriate use. Images of children should be chosen with care to avoid this where practicable. Where possible, images should be uploaded so they cannot be easily downloaded and altered.

It is the protocol of Telford Hornets RFC that photos of children should not be put onto personal social media sites or shared unless they are cropped and focus only on that person's own child.

Group and team photographs can be shared only on closed or private social media sites or the club's own website.

Junior players and young people should be encouraged not to post any photographs that show where they are and who they are with other than on closed website or social media sites. This is to promote safety and the safe use of the internet.

Videoining is to be used primarily by the coaching teams to aid coaching and performance of those players involved and only shown to those players. Express permission to take photographs or videos during training sessions, matches or

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tournaments must be sought via the safeguarding officer of the club and in consultation with the fixtures secretary.

This is to ensure that there are no children who cannot be photographed or videoed in any of the teams, due to safeguarding reasons.

#### 5. Mobile and on-line Communication with children

This is a rapidly changing technology. Any communication with children under the age of 16 should be directed to their parent/guardian. Squad managers should treat as confidential all e-mail addresses and mobile phone numbers; lists should not be widely circulated and children and young people's (under 18) information in the member area should be securely protected. Coaches and managers should not communicate to an individual child unless the parent/guardian is copied into the communication.

#### 6. Social Networking Sites related to the club

This is another area where new platforms are appearing regularly. Currently Facebook and Twitter are used by many club members for social and other communication. No club member may initiate a social media outlet that is directly linked and intended to be used by Telford Hornets RFC members without the express permission of the Club Management Committee or, if related to Mini & Youth Rugby, the M&J Committee.

Administrators of Facebook pages and Twitter addresses that are clearly linked to Telford Hornets RFC must ensure that the content is appropriate to the audience that could access the material. Junior club members should not be invited to link to the Facebook pages.

If it is found that a club member under the age of 18 has linked to an inappropriate social media vehicle, that junior member should be advised that this is against club policy and the Junior member's parent or guardian requested to manage this restriction on access.

As with the web site, the club is legally and morally responsible for the content of its social media use. Key risks to guard against are:

- abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text)
- any content that may be construed as bullying or intimidatory e.g. implying participation in an event is mandatory not optional, if directed to particular persons and, especially if directed at children or vulnerable adults.

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Any issues or concern regarding social media content should be referred to the club Safeguarding Officer, Chair of the Mini & Youth section or Chair of the club.

Any club member who has been given permission to manage a social media outlet who refuses to act on instructions of the Club Management regarding inappropriate content will have their permission to manage the site revoked and, If necessary, the club will initiate closure of the social media outlet.

Because on-line communication is a rapidly developing area, this Policy will be kept under regular review. The Club Management Committee reserves the right to take decisions regarding matters related to social media not currently included in the Policy if there are issues that affect the public image and reputation of the club.

Approved by the Club Management Committee: February 2017

Reviewed: ~~02/04/19~~: 02/08/23

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