

## **Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club**

### **Social Media Guidance Policy**

*Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club reserves the right to add to or amend the terms of this policy at any time without notice. The latest version of this document should always be reviewed for the most up to date terms, as its rules will supersede any previous versions.*

#### **Purpose of the Guidance**

The purpose of this guidance is to provide guidelines on the proper use of social media communications. 'Social Media' in the context of these guidelines refers to a number of online platforms:

- Blogs (written, video, podcasts)
- Micro-blogging websites e.g. Twitter
- Social Networks e.g. Facebook, foursquare, LinkedIn, MySpace, Bebo
- Forums/Message Boards
- Content-sharing (photos, videos, audio) e.g. Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, Flickr, Flotrack
- Any other website where user comments are an available feature

#### **Online Conduct and Codes of Conduct**

This guidance applies to all club members and individuals involved in the athletics. The roles which have a specific code of conduct include:

- Athletes
- Coaches
- Officials
- Team Managers
- Volunteers
- Parents/Guardians

The behaviours covered in these codes of conduct include online behaviour, such as when using social media.

#### **Personal Conduct**

Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club respects all of our member's right to a private life. However, the Club must also ensure that confidentiality and its reputation are protected at all times. If committee members, coaches, officials or others holding a formal position or position of authority within the club do discuss club related activity on social media (for example, giving opinions on their specialism), they should include on their profile in their comments a statement along the following lines: "The views I express here are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club."

Those who hold positions of responsibility in the club, Committee, Coaches and Technical Officials should not make comment on controversial issues with which they have a connection in their role at the club as it may be taken as a statement indicating the position of Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club.

Any communications that club members make in a personal capacity through social media must not bring the club into disrepute by:

- Making defamatory comments about individuals or other organisations or groups
- Posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content
- Being seen to support (for example by 'liking' on Facebook or retweeting on Twitter) a comment or post that would fall into any of the above categories (note: a comment may be retweeted purely to make people aware of it but this may be misconstrued as showing support for the statement retweeted)
- Breaching confidentiality by giving away information about an individual (such as a fellow volunteer or athlete) or organisation revealing information held by the club where there would be reasonable expectation of confidentiality
- Breaching copyright by using someone else's images or written content without permission or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something

Do anything that could be considered discriminatory against, or bullying or harassment of, any individual by:

- Making offensive or derogatory comments relating to sex, gender reassignment, race (including nationality), disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief or age
- Using social media to bully another individual
- Posting images that are discriminatory or offensive

No comment should ever be made about an individual or subject that:

- Exposes someone to hatred, ridicule or contempt
- Causes them to be shunned or avoided
- Lowers them in the estimation of 'right thinking' members of society
- Disparages them in their office, profession or trade

Social media can be used in a positive way, for example, to make people aware of events, activities or work that you are involved in within the sport and to make positive statements about the successes and activities of athletes, coaches, clubs, volunteers and officials. You may be able to use Social Media to raise awareness of work done by organisations you are involved in or to answer queries people make have about the availability of support, information or services.

Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club recognises that Social Media can be a useful tool for staff, coaches, athletes and officials to share information. The primary source of social communication are the club's social media channels are through our club website, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Please also see the Guidelines given by England Athletic at [www.EnglandAthletic.org/socialmedia](http://www.EnglandAthletic.org/socialmedia) which includes advice and information that should be considered for your own security, wellbeing and peace of mind when using Social Media.

### **Contact with Under 18s**

We recommend against adults using personal (as opposed to public) messaging functionality available on Social Media channels to communicate with under 18s. We would recommend adults also consider carefully any communication made on public functionality, such as Facebook Pages, where this is likely to be seen by Under 18s and that adults should act in an appropriate way on these Social Media resources too. Information on club activities including details associated with competitions, training and social events will be communicated on the recognised club online presence.

As a user of a social networking site, you may at some time have a concern about what you are seeing or being told about by another user. Concerns may range from negative or abusive comments, and cyber bullying to suspected grooming. If you have any such concerns you should contact your club's Welfare officer in the first instance for guidance.

For matters relating to inappropriate contact with Under 18's, in line with procedures in the sport, these should be reported to the Lead Safeguarding Officer for the sport of Athletic:

*Lead Safeguarding Officer* – David Brown CBE | [dbrown@uka.org.uk](mailto:dbrown@uka.org.uk) | 07841 504 300

For matters relating to bullying and club member conduct, in line with procedures should be reported to the Lead Welfare Officer for England Athletic:

*Lead Welfare Officer* – Jane Fylan | [jfylan@uka.org.uk](mailto:jfylan@uka.org.uk) | 07803 671 975

### **Reporting Concerns & Disciplinary Action**

Members should note that any breaches of this guidance may lead to disciplinary action. Serious breaches of this guidance, for example incidents of bullying of other club members, inappropriate usage or social media activity causing serious damage to the club, may lead to club membership being terminated. Codes of conduct for roles including coaches, athletes, officials, parents and team managers are published by UKA and are available on the club website. Breach of these codes of conducts, including in the use of social media, may also result in disciplinary proceedings by UKA and/or England Athletics.

### **Personal Websites and Web Blogs**

Members are free to set up such sites on the internet but must not use the Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club logo or resources without the consent and authority of the Committee, such authority should be requested in writing and will be considered at the next available monthly committee meeting.

Members should be aware that in writing a web blog, it is at entirely at their own risk and should not contravene their responsibilities detailed in this policy. If members choose to write about their role within Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club, or discuss athletes, coaches or volunteers, they should first seek consent from the club and the individuals concerned, they should also state on the site that the views they express are theirs only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Club. Individuals should also take care to ensure that information contained on web blogs does not breach confidentiality especially those holding roles such as coaches and team managers.

### **Security and Identify Theft**

People should be aware that social networking websites are a public forum, particularly if you are part of a "network". You should not assume that your entries on any website will remain private. Most online communities have their own rules and guidelines, which you should always follow.

If you believe that you have witnessed possible criminal activity please report this activity to the police.

## **Welfare**

If any club members or parents of young athletes have concerns regarding conduct on Rugby and Northampton Athletic Club Social Media channels or by club members as outlined in this document they should contact the Club Welfare Officers at Rugby or Northampton. The Club Welfare Officers are below:

Rugby Welfare Officer: *Ian Goldthrop and Claire Truslove*

Northampton Welfare Officer: *Mark Barrowclough*

The Welfare Officers, working with other officers in the club will then ascertain what action is appropriate. Depending on what actions are deemed necessary the club may:

- Notify the Club Administrator of the relevant social media / online channel to
- remove comments or posts
- and / or ban users from club social media / online channels
- Report individual users to the appropriate social media provider (such as Facebook/Twitter/Instagram), following the reporting procedures of these organisations/ companies
- Initiate club disciplinary procedures
- Report misconduct to other external bodies if this is deemed necessary. These bodies may then take their own action as they deem appropriate