



Social media for clubs – Dos and Don'ts

In today's world, safeguarding children and young people applies as much online as it does face-to-face.

If you're a coach, a club official or in any position of trust in football it's your responsibility to help us protect children and this includes digital communications and online activity.

Do you have a Facebook page for your team? Do you communicate with parents via social media or apps like WhatsApp?

Social media is really useful – it allows us to get important messages out there and helps everyone feel part of the team.

But information you put online can unfortunately be misused so it's important to follow some basic guidelines to ensure we keep our children safe.

DO

- If you have a social media group or page for your team – make sure it's private. On Facebook for example, ensure it can't be viewed publicly and make sure that the only people who have access to it are people who you personally know.
- Ensure you have at least one person administering the site – and check your members regularly to make sure everyone who has access to your page is someone you know.
- Keep messages limited to football matters – training, match venues and team selection for example. There shouldn't be any personal communication or comments.
- Get written parent/carer permission before access is given to U18s

DON'T

- Don't put personal info about children on a social media page – even if it's in a private group. Information such as birthdays, kids' favourite players, where they go to school or what games they play online can all be used for grooming.
- Never contact a young person via a one to one message. Any texts, emails or WhatsApp messages should only ever be sent as part of a group communication and you MUST copy in every young person's parent or carer into ALL messages.
- Conduct webinars or Zoom calls with young people unless they have a carer or parent present.
- If you are a club official, don't accept an U18 as a friend on social media sites (unless a child/young person is a direct relation) or share your own personal social media site with them.

The FA has produced some guidance on digital communications to help clubs and leagues to use them safely. We know that digital communications can be misused and in football, we take these risks very seriously. Please click on the link below to download the guidance and share it with your volunteers.

<http://www.northumberlandfa.com/about/rules-and-regulations/safeguarding-and-welfare/social-media-guidance>