

ST. ALBANS CITY YOUTH F.C.

Affiliated to:
Hertfordshire County F.A.

Social Media Policy

St Albans City Youth Football Club believe in the importance of maintaining a safe environment for all who are involved within the club both on and off the pitch. Coaches, club officials, volunteers and others in a position of trust in football need to act responsibly both on and off the field and this includes the use of social media.

As a public-facing organisation, St Albans City Youth Football Club (StACYFC) recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool of engagement, to communicate with, market activity to our players, parents, coaches, managers, volunteers, supporters and support both our commercial and community partners.

It is important that the reputation of StACYFC, as well as its affiliated sponsors and partners, is not tarnished in any way by anyone using social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that directly references StACYFC.

When someone clearly identifies their association with StACYFC, or can easily be associated with StACYFC through their employment, contractual or voluntary status, in this type of open forum, they are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately and in a manner that is consistent with StACYFC's social media policy.

The club and teams that set up any form of social media account or website have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. Coaches, officials and those in a position of responsibility within the club and must ensure they communicate responsibly. Clubs are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas abide by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association (FA).

Club officials, managers, coaches or volunteers at the club should:

1. Refrain from publishing comments about other clubs, players or referees and any controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects.
2. Avoid hostile or harassing communications in any posts or other online communications. Discriminatory harassment can be deemed as 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. All forms of harassment, identified as aggressive pressure or discrimination in any form is completely unacceptable in any form of online communications.
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.

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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.
6. When a team participating in non-competitive football, scores and results must not be published on any form of media, including social media.

Employees or volunteers at the club must not:

1. Use text or emails for personal conversations, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature or engage in any 'banter' or comments with or about children at the club.
2. Use 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.
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) discriminative in any way.
5. Accept as a friend, young players or any person employed or volunteering at the club who is U18 on social networking sites.
6. Share your own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved at the football club or request they become 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. Delete any inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation.

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Parental Guidance

1. Know who StACYFC's Club Welfare Officers are 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.
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 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/carer or coach about the communication.
7. Remember as a parent/carer 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 FA, players, managers, match officials, opposing teams players or family members of any of those groups.
8. Inform a Club Welfare 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 evidence the communication if and where possible.
9. Parents must not use social media to speak ill of the club or any staff or associates or to comment on players, training or matches.
10. Parents must not reveal any information they may have received about a player.

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Player's Guidance

Players must not:

1. Post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, 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, 'banter' or comments with staff / volunteer(s), players' 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.
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.
5. Use 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.
6. Delete inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation.
7. Use inappropriate language.
8. Reveal information about training, fixtures and contractual agreements etc using social media posts.

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for StACYFC players, parents, staff, volunteers and supporters in the area of social interaction. StACYFC players, parents, staff, volunteers or supporters who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online and seek clarification should contact the club committee.

A breach of this policy will be considered by senior management. All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where St Albans City Youth Football Club is obliged to do so. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from St Albans City Youth Football Club. Everyone must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed,

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they may be subject to a criminal investigation by the police over which St Albans City Youth Football Club will have no control.



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