

Dawley Wanderers Football Club

Social Media and Communications Policy

Reviewed and updated 8th September 2024

1. Introduction

Dawley Wanderers Football Club's key priority and responsibility is to safeguard all children involved in the football club.

Alongside the beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies we recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. These risks must be appropriately managed.

It's essential that club officials (committee members, coaches and managers) parents and players make informed decisions about how they use the internet, mobile phone and email communications.

Club officials and those in a position of responsibility at Dawley Wanderers must ensure they communicate responsibly.

2. Communicating with players

All communications from Dawley Wanderers Football Club officials with players will only be via the parents / guardians specified as the contact when the player is registered with the club.

CLUB OFFICIALS MUST NOT CONTACT PLAYERS DIRECTLY THROUGH ANY FORM OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION (e.g. emails, text, social media such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp etc).

If a player contacts a club official directly, any replies from the club official must only be via the parent /guardian (and not to the player) and advise that the player must only contact a club official via their parent / guardian.

3. Use of social media

The club's website and social media accounts are used to provide information to parents / guardians and players and as a promotional tool. These are to be monitored by the 'Club Welfare Officer' Only club officials (committee members, managers and coaches) will have the relevant privileges to post content.

Other social media profiles / groups are created by club officials for team specific communications (e.g. WhatsApp or Facebook groups), must be with the parent / guardian only and not include any players. Communications must be solely about football matters such as fixtures, cancellations and team selection. At no time should there be any personal communications, 'banter' or comments. It is the responsibility of the club official who setup the group to maintain this policy. The CWO will also be part of all groups to help monitor and maintain good practice.

The FA have published the following as best practice in relation to social networking:

Do

- Ensure all the privacy settings are locked so that that the page(s) are used explicitly for club or league matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations
- Nominate a club official to monitor the social networking pages regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately (Dawley will use the CWO)
- Make sure everyone within your club/team knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking areas and how to contact them
- Provide all users with The FAs best practice guidance on using social networking sites
- Gain written parent/guardian permission before access is given to U18s
- Inform the Child Welfare Officer if you have received inappropriate communications online, keeping a record of any inappropriate, threatening or offensive material as this may be needed as evidence.

Don't

Unless a child / young person is a direct relation, the club officials should not:

- Accept as a friend, players or referees U18 on social networking sites they are members of or share their own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved in youth football
- Make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites
- Use internet or web based communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person
- Engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments

4. Use of images

Any images or videos posted on social media or the club's website must not include named individuals and the club official taking the photo must ensure that consent has been provided by the parent / guardian to use safe images on digital media (this consent is requested upon registration to Dawley Wanderers Football Club).

PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO NOT POST IMAGES OF PLAYERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITHOUT THE EXPRESS CONSENT OF THE PARENTS OF THOSE PLAYERS.

FOR REFEREES UP TO THE AGE OF 16 (AGED 14 & 15), COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE THROUGH THE PARENT / GUARDIAN AND CLUB OFFICIALS MUST NOT CONTACT REFEREES DIRECTLY THROUGH ANY FORM OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION.

5. Communicating with referees under 18

For referees that are aged 16 and 17, It's important that we recognise that they are not 'adults' and as such we have a responsibility to safeguard them as we do any other young person involved in football.

FOR REFEREES UNDER 18 (AGED 16 & 17), COMMUNICATIONS CAN BE DIRECT BUT MUST INCLUDE A COPY TO THE PARENT / GUARDIAN.

The guidance below is based on FA recommendations for best practice in relation to communication with 16 - 17 year olds who hold a position of trust and/or responsibility within football:

Parent / guardian consent should be given prior to email, social networking and mobile phone communications with young people holding a position of trust. Both parties to only communicate for the purpose of organising referees at matches. Email communications between the club officials and referee should copy in the referee's parent / guardian.

6. Safeguarding Children & Young People

Children and young people must be advised by their coaches, parents / guardians and Child Welfare Officer to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/guardian about the communication.

IF ANY INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION OR CONTENT IS SHARED BETWEEN AN ADULT AND A PLAYER / UNDER 18 REFEREE THIS SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE CHILD WELFARE OFFICER WHO, WHERE NECESSARY, WILL SEEK ADVICE FROM THE LEAGUE AND / OR COUNTY FA WELFARE OFFICER AND / OR STATUTORY AGENCIES AS APPROPRIATE. Please refer to the club's full Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

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