



## Social Media Policy

Maynooth Town Football Club understands that the use of Social Media helps promote football within the Republic of Ireland if used appropriately. This Policy outlines the standards Maynooth Town FC requires when using social media.

### Personal Use of Social Media

Maynooth Town F.C. respects your right to use Social Media for personal use however it is important to be mindful of the impact Social Media can have on others. The following conditions must be met for personal use to continue:

1. You are responsible for your conduct when using any form of Social Media. Your personal views should not conflict with your existing role in football.
2. You should be aware that what you publish will be public for many years.
3. Be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the club and its associated bodies (North Dublin Schoolboy League, Metropolitan Girls League, KDUL, and the Football Association of Ireland).

Maynooth Town F.C takes a zero-tolerance policy in relation to all forms of bullying (including cyber bullying). All incidents of bullying will be dealt with under our bullying policy.

### Use of Social Media for Coaches and Committee Members

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 electronic communications.

Clubs and leagues that set up websites have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. Coaches, officials, and those in a position of responsibility in clubs and must ensure they communicate responsibly. Clubs are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abide by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) and its [Social Media Policy](#).

- When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent. For example, don't discuss colleagues, competitors, coaches and / or players without their prior approval.



- Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish someone else's contact details.
- Do not engage with irate players, parents or coaches on a public forum. Organise a meeting to allow all parties to discuss possible outcomes.
- If you are a manager, coach, club official, referee or medic you should not:
  - accept any player or referee who is under 18 as a friend on your personal Social Media page.
  - communicate with any person under 18 through Social Media, text message, phone or email.
- All communications concerning under 18's should be made through parents / guardians. It is important to ensure all communications relate to specific club matters e.g. fixtures, training etc.

### **Setting up and running a Social Media page**

- All account log in details must be kept safe and secure to avoid possible hacking.
- Club website and Social Media pages should be accessed by at least three administrators. These administrators should be responsible for up-loading content and monitoring posts on the site. If any of these administrators or any other person are behaving inappropriately their access should be removed immediately.
- It is important to ensure everyone within Maynooth Town FC is aware of who is administering your Social Media page(s).
- Each administrator should be familiar with the privacy and safety settings on their Social Media page to ensure it is for use by Maynooth Town FC only.
- Do not accept anyone under the age of 13 on your Social Media page. Report underage users to the Child's parents or the Social Media outlet.
- Any user under the age of 18 looking to join your Social Media page should have provided written parental/ guardian consent in advance.
- No images or personal information of under 18's should be posted online without prior written consent from each parent / guardian. It is critical that no user is asked to post any personal details of under 18's as certain information could be used to identify or locate them.
- To avoid any inappropriate material appearing on Club Social Media page the administrator must enable the appropriate privacy settings. This will allow the Club to manage the content on its Social Media page to avoid any distress or reputational damage.
- The content on the Club website and social media page should be accurate and up to date and any material that is no longer required should be removed.
- Any inappropriate use, such as bullying, is strictly prohibited and should be reported to the Child Protection Officer within your organisation.



- Misuse of Social Media, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence and suspicious behaviour towards under 18's should be reported to the Statutory Authorities.
- If you are unsure about something you are about to post, then you should not do it. Always consider who will be able to view it and if in doubt, always discuss it with the Child Protection Officer within the Club.

## **Practical advice relating to Social Media Usage**

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. Harassment is 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 Equal Status Act 2000-2018.
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.
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 Coach or Child Protection Officer for advice.

### **A member of the club (Coach, Assistant coach, Executive board member etc) 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) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.
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 ask them to be 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.

### **Parent Guidance**

1. Know who the club Child Protection Officer is 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 FAI's 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 FAI Policy Guidance and Rules and Regulations regarding comments that you place online about the club or club officials, players, managers, match officials, opposing teams players or family members of any of those groups.



8. Inform the club Child Protection 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 save the communication.
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.

## **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.

A breach of this policy will be considered carefully by the Executive Committee and you may be asked to a meeting with Executive Committee.

All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where Maynooth Town Football Club is obliged to do so. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from Maynooth Town Football Club. Everyone must be aware that in certain

circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by the police over which Maynooth Town Football Club will have no control.

