



MAIDENHEAD RFU SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY (INCLUDING AGE GROUP WEBSITE)

Introduction

This policy is designed to provide helpful, practical advice to all members and staff in respect of using social media effectively and positively. As a club we encourage the responsible use of social media (which includes the age group websites). The club realises that social media has become increasingly popular in recent years, because it allows people to connect in the online world instantly.

Social media can be hugely beneficial in disseminating information about the Rugby Club. It is also a popular forum for developing personal and business relationships. It can take many different forms, including internet forums, internet blogs, social blogs, podcasts, pictures and video. Maidenhead Rugby Club recognises that there are a wide range of platforms that the term 'social media/networking' relates to, for example Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and WordPress.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from a variety of issues: the privacy provided, the wide range of content that can be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature, the ease with which images can be forwarded onto others and the difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with.

In sport, there are additional risks for children: inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children or inappropriate criticism of a child's performance. An official position or role within a club, such as coach, can carry with it a level of authority, and engender a level of trust, that facilitates the control of a child.

It is important therefore, that all parents, staff, volunteers, coaches, officials/referees, board/trustee members, or anyone working on behalf of Summit are aware of this policy and agree to the following principles.

Key Principles

- Safeguarding children is a key responsibility of all members and it is essential that everyone at Maidenhead RFC considers this and acts responsibly if they are using social networking sites out of club involvement
- All stakeholders at Maidenhead RFC have a responsibility to ensure that they protect the reputation of the club, and to treat fellow stakeholders of the club with dignity and respect
- It is important to protect Maidenhead RFC from allegations and misinterpretations which can arise from the use of social networking sites. Consequently, we would request that all social media commentary relating to Maidenhead RFC is of a positive nature – please think carefully before making comments that may lead to unintended consequences

RFU Recommendations (Use of photos):

- Use group images, rather than individual images
- For images of individual children (such as in action shots) where possible use models or illustrations
- Only use images of children in suitable dress, to minimise the risk of inappropriate adaptation of the image
- If a child is named on the site, do not include an image (individual or group). If a child features in an image on the site, do not use the child's first name or last name, either in text on the site or in the image file name
- Full names should not be used
- Maidenhead RFC will abide by all RFU recommendations regarding photo and video images and will obtain consent from the appropriate responsible person(s) before using any images of children or



vulnerable adults on its website. Consent request clauses are included in the registration form which is completed each season and are also held by the Club age group administrators

Code of Conduct

If you wish to set up a social media forum representing the Club in any capacity, you are required to obtain approval from the club board or committee prior to making the forum active.

The owner/administrator(s) of a forum using social media is required to ensure that:

- All content complies with the Club's and RFU's policies and Codes of Conduct
- No one posts material that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing discriminatory or hateful to another person or entity, including Maidenhead RFC, its stakeholders, any club associated with Maidenhead RFC, opposition teams, the RFU or the sport as a whole
- No one's personal information is disclosed
- All groups that contain children (under 18 years old) as members have security and privacy settings set to 'closed' or 'secret'; i.e. They are not open to the public
- Groups are organised so that they are either adult/coach/parent only or child/player only. Coaches can support the development of a team ethos by requesting that information to be shared with players is only added by one of the player representatives/captain
- All 'player only' groups will have TWO adult administrators who will be DBS/CRB cleared and will be known to the parents/carers of the group. They will have received written permission from each parent/carer for their child to be a member of the group
- Parents of players belonging to the group will be informed of the identity of the Group Administrators at the beginning of the season, when any new player joins the group, or when there is any change in administrator
- The role of Group Administrators on a player-only site is to ensure there is no inappropriate content posted on the site, such as indecent images or cyber-bullying etc. Group Administrators should not post comments, opinions or remarks on the site unless necessary for the safety of the group members
- When adding content to your website avoid taking personal details of children and young people
- All members of the forum are 'age aware' and do not invite anyone who is not a member of the team to become part of the group Adults acting on behalf of Maidenhead RFC as volunteers, in a position of trust with children, will not invite or accept invitations from children/players under 18 years to become their 'friends' on social media sites

The owner/administrator(s) of a forum is required to ensure that the content published is:

- Respectful of all individuals and communities with which you interact online
- Polite and respectful of others' opinions, even in times of heated discussion and debate

Whilst Maidenhead RFC recognises that a certain amount of 'banter' may take place on some forums, we would request that any language used is moderated by the group. Please remember that these forums may be viewed by a range of age groups from both genders. Do not comment in a way that you would not want to be seen in the public domain.

Any grievance, criticism or resentment should be directed in person to the individual (depending on age) or respective group administrators, managers or coaches. Matters of a more serious or contentious nature should be disclosed to the owner/administrator of the forum or [Club's Safeguarding Team](#), if a child is involved.

Serious instances or irresponsible use of social media platforms associated with Maidenhead RFC may be referred to the Board of the Club, although any action taken by the committee will be judge on a case by case basis. The club will take appropriate action to protect the club's reputation and that of its members, volunteers, children and anyone else who is directly linked to the club.



In summary:

- *Player only or adult only CLOSED/SECRET Facebook (or other) groups*
- *Requests to join CHECKED with membership database via MRFC Office before approval*
- *When posting children/young people's names full names are not to be used.*
- *Do not use children's names in photograph captions. If a child is named, avoid using the photograph*
- *Administrators of age group forums to be CRB/DBS cleared and made known to parents of player groups*
- *Any queries to the MRFC Safeguarding Team*

Further information about how to support children's safety online in sport can be found here: [Child Protection in Sport Unit](#)

Next Review date: - January 2018

Reviewer: - Club Safeguarding Officer