



Ballymena United Youth Academy

Social Media Policy

Introduction

The use of Social Media provides many opportunities to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the different communities we serve. However when using these emerging technologies there are a number of risks and issues to consider, both for individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of Ballymena United Youth Academy. These risks need to be identified and managed to ensure the benefits can be realised in as safe a manner as possible.

Outside of Ballymena United Youth Academy, personal use of social networking sites is also growing in popularity, and is used by many as a way of keeping in touch with friends and colleagues on a social basis. While in the vast majority of cases, the use of sites such as Facebook is trouble free, guidance is required to ensure Members of Ballymena United Youth Academy do not act in a way that may negatively affect the reputation of the Ballymena United Youth Academy, or leave themselves open to allegation.

Purpose

This policy relates to both the professional and personal use of social networking sites by individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of Ballymena United Youth Academy.

It aims to:

- Provide guidance to individual committee members, coaches, parents and players on their personal responsibility as Members of the Ballymena United Youth Academy when using any social networking site.

Scope

By definition Social Media is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves the building of online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement.

This includes blogs, message boards, social networking websites (such as [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Snapchat](#), [TikTok](#)), content sharing websites (such as [Flicker](#), [YouTube](#)) and many others



Objectives

- To ensure safe, professional use of social media tools
- To make individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of Ballymena United Youth Academy aware of the issues relating to the use of social media for both private and professional purposes, and aware of their responsibility to Ballymena United Youth Academy.
- To ensure individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of Ballymena United Youth Academy are aware of all relevant legislation and standards relating to online information, including codes of practice from related professional bodies.

Codes of practice

Professional bodies may have issued their own code of practice relating to the use of social media.

Everyone has a personal responsibility to be aware of codes of practice relating to their professional body; however the Ballymena United Youth Academy policy remains the definitive guidance for everyone in the use of social media.

Roles and Responsibilities

All individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of Ballymena United Youth Academy are responsible for the success of this policy and should ensure that they take time to read and understand it.

It is the responsibility of the committee members of Ballymena United Youth Academy to investigate any reported breaches of this policy.



SECTION ONE:

Personal Use of Social Media

Outside of the Ballymena United Youth Academy environment, whether or not an individual chooses to create or participate in an online social network or any other form of online publishing or discussion is his or her own business.

However as a member of Ballymena United Youth Academy it is important to be aware that posting information or views about Ballymena United Youth Academy cannot be isolated from your working life. Comments about Ballymena United Youth Academy or colleagues can bring the Club into disrepute and make individual committee members, coaches, parents and players of Ballymena United Youth Academy liable to legal action. Therefore keep your personal use of social media as separate as possible from Ballymena United Youth Academy.

The following policy statements are designed to protect Ballymena United Youth Academy the individual committee members, coaches, parents and players from allegation, disrepute and liability.

Individual committee members, coaches, parents and players should never do any of the following:

- Share confidential information online
- Post inappropriate comments about individual committee members, coaches, parents and players.
- Use social media sites to bully or intimidate any member of Ballymena United Youth Academy.
- Use social media in any way which is unlawful

The above statements refer to the posting of all types of content on social media sites, including (but not exclusively) text, photographs and video.



SECTION TWO:

Professional Use of Social Media

Your relationship with social media changes as soon as you identify yourself as a member of Ballymena United Youth Academy and speak in any kind of professional capacity or seek to deploy social media on Ballymena United Youth Academy business.

In such circumstances there are responsibilities, standards of behaviour and other organisational considerations which apply. Remember, you are publically representing Ballymena United Youth Academy and should participate in the same way as you would with other media, public meetings or forums.

Always remember that participation online results in your comments being permanently available and open to being republished in other media.

You should also be aware that you may attract media interest in yourself and Ballymena United Youth Academy, so proceed with care. If you have any doubts, take advice from Ballymena United Youth Academy,

Professional Use of Social Media is defined as:

- Participation in third party professional forums and/or discussion boards relating to Ballymena United Youth Academy;
- Creating and/or managing content on a social media site created, branded and managed by Ballymena United Youth Academy;
- Social media monitoring for business purposes.

NB. Anyone wishing to develop a social media site or application on behalf of Ballymena United Youth Academy should first contact the committee to seek the required approval.

The following policy statements relate to professional use of social media.

You are free to participate in professional forums relating to your area of work/club. When participating in a professional capacity on behalf of Ballymena United Youth Academy, you **must**:

- Seek approval from management before participating, or declare any existing interests.
- Only provide information about your club if it is absolutely essential
- Be professional - make sure you are always seen to act in an honest, accurate, fair and responsible way at all times.

Respect copyright when linking to images or other online material.

When participating in a professional capacity on behalf of Ballymena United Youth Academy you **must not**:



- Mention **any** information relating specifically to an individual
- Use offensive, sexist, racist, hateful or otherwise offensive or discriminatory language
- Publish information that is disparaging to Ballymena United Youth Academy, or other club members
- Endorse or appear to endorse any commercial product or service
- Voice political opinion

Non-Compliance

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether Ballymena United Youth Academy facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach.

Any member of Ballymena United Youth Academy of committing a breach of this policy will be required to co-operate with our investigation. This may include removing internet postings which are deemed to constitute a breach in this policy. Failure to comply with such a request may in itself result in disciplinary action.

Serious breaches may be reported to the PSNI, or other public authority for further investigation.

Monitoring

Ballymena United Youth Academy regularly monitors social media as part of our media strategy. Any instances of policy breach identified through this process will be dealt as per Ballymena United Youth Academy disciplinary procedure.

Reviewed May 2021