

Social Media Policy/Guidelines for Local Clubs

1. Policies and Rules

All clubs ideally have a policy to address issues arising from social media use. The policy sets expectations for member behaviour, provides a framework for using social media responsibly, and outline procedures for addressing issues.

Clubs may develop a dedicated **Social Media Policy** or rely on existing policies that encompass social media conduct, such as:

- **Member Protection Policy (MPP)**
- **Codes of Conduct**
- **Child Protection Policy**
- **Photography and Image Policy**
- **Disciplinary Rules and Processes** as per National Community Football Handbook

2. Monitoring

Assign a responsible person or team within your club to monitor official social media platforms. Ensure you also designate a contact person for members with concerns. These roles should be defined so your players, members, parents, guardians know who to speak to.

Given the rapid evolution of social media, appoint individuals familiar with current platforms and trends to manage this area effectively.

3. Reporting and Response

A clear process for reporting and addressing social media issues is crucial. Prompt action and the removal of offensive material can help maintain a positive environment.

Key steps to include in your policy:

- **Collecting Evidence:** Before removing material, gather relevant evidence should you require it later on. It is important this is kept secure and not widely shared with others where this can be disseminated out again.
- **Removing/Reporting Content:**
 - Delete content posted on your club's managed pages.
 - Request members remove inappropriate material posted elsewhere (e.g., YouTube, Facebook).
 - Contact site owners to remove content posted by non-members (e.g., negative remarks on another club's page).

For serious cases like cyberbullying (involving minors) or image-based abuse this can be reported to the [AFL's Integrity team here](#). Club's may also seek assistance from the [Office of the eSafety Commissioner](#). Illegal activities, especially those involving child protection, should be reported to the appropriate authorities immediately.

Should your local club require external support on a matter, we encourage you to speak with your league representative who can provide advise on next steps.

Ensure thorough documentation and follow-up as part of your club's record-keeping practices.

4. Education

Proactively educate members about acceptable social media behaviour and promote awareness of your club's policies.

Effective strategies include:

- **Volunteer Training:** Brief committee members, coaches, and volunteers during meetings and inductions.
- **Child-Friendly Communication:** Explain policies in ways children and young people can understand, such as face-to-face talks or venue signage with simple examples of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- **Dissemination of Information:** Share policies through your website, newsletters, handbooks, and information sessions.
- **Creative Engagement:** Regularly remind members of social media expectations via newsletters, emails, or game-day announcements.

By fostering a culture of respect and responsibility on social media, your local club can maintain a positive reputation and a safe environment for all members.