



SWF Social Media, Online, and Media Policy

Introduction

This policy has been developed by Scottish Women's Football (SWF) in response to requests for advice and due to the growth of the game. The aim of this policy is the following:

- To ensure that clubs are aware of their responsibilities when it comes to social media, online content, and quotes in the media.
- To provide guidance to clubs and our members on what is deemed acceptable and unacceptable by SWF and that disciplinary action may be taken against clubs and/or individuals for failure to follow this guidance.
- To ensure all our members are responsible when using online platforms in order to help safeguard our members
- To remind our members of what support SWF can provide if they are approached or approach the media.

SWF appreciates that social media (including personal and professional websites, blogs, chat rooms and bulletin boards, social networks, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter; video sharing sites such as YouTube; and e-mail) are a common means of communication and self-expression. SWF also strongly believe that media coverage of the game can be a huge benefit and will strive to work with media outlets when and where possible.

However, because online postings and content provided by clubs/individuals can conflict with the interests of SWF its affiliated clubs, volunteers, coaches and players, SWF has adopted the following policy.

As will be outlined, it is essential that clubs make informed decision about how they use online platforms. It's also essential that clubs make their own members i.e. coaches, players and officials, aware of their own responsibility and how failing to do so could result in disciplinary action against the club as a whole.

As will also be outlined, it is essential that clubs and their members understand the increasing media interest in the game and sometimes extra scrutiny that comes with this. It's therefore important that clubs and individuals are able to respond to this appropriately.

As outlined above, breach/es of this policy will result in disciplinary action in line with SWF's Disciplinary Procedures.



Everyone involved within the game hopefully recognises the responsibility to promote the game both on and off the field of play. Coaches, club officials, volunteers and others in a position of trust in football need to act responsibly both on and off the field. This includes the use of electronic communications and especially given the increasing interest from media outlets to cover the game.

Clubs have a responsibility to ensure policies are in place and that these are followed by all members of that club. This includes coaches, officials, players, and those in a position of responsibility at clubs. While individuals are responsible for their actions, clubs must work with their members to show importance of good conduct online to the benefit of their club and the game as a whole.

Because of this, clubs have a responsibility for what is posted by their coaches, officials, players, and those in a position of responsibility within the club. This includes, but is not limited, to those who affiliate with the club directly i.e. Twitter Bio, where online content is posted.

Clubs also have a responsibility for what is published in the media directly themselves, by their coaches, officials, players, and those in a position of responsibility within the club. This includes, but is not limited to, content created on clubs own channels and interviews with media.

Clubs are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their website, social networks, any associated message boards/blogs, or any other form of online content, abide by the Rules and Regulations of Scottish Women's Football and this policy.

The Club (and those affiliated with it) must;

- 1) Ensure that their club secretary will monitor the clubs' online and media content. These individuals will be contacted in the initial instance should SWF have any concerns or questions.
 - a) The Club Secretary and any appointed representatives should monitor the clubs social networking pages, online, and media content regularly.
 - b) Where possible, clubs are recommended to establish committees to avoid any situations where any one individual can take accounts or online accounts hostage. This occurs when one individual has total control on an account with no way of any other person having access.
- 2) Refrain from publishing unfavorable comments about other clubs, players, match officials, or Scottish Women's Football and/or commentary on any controversial or potentially inflammatory subject.



- a) Clubs and their members are welcome to contact SWF with any complaints or issues via email or phone. Comments within the media or online are not appropriate for resolving any issues and may lead to disciplinary action.
- b) If in dialogue with the media in any capacity, SWF would like to remind clubs and their members that they are allowed to not answer questions or provide no comment.
- 3) Make SWF aware if they or a member of their club have approached or have been approached by the media to provide comment or information.
 - a) SWF requests this in order to have the opportunity to provide a statement to the media.
- 4) Contact SWF if inaccurate, accessory or negative comment about the club or anyone associated with the club is posted within the media or online.
 - a) SWF will be willing to provide assistance where possible in these situations but it must be noted that media outlets and their individuals are responsible for their content and/or conduct.
- 5) Not share any private or confidential matters without seeking the consent of all the parties involved to the media. This includes, but is not limited to, communications between clubs and Scottish Women's Football.
- 6) Avoid hostile or harassing communications to any individual or organisation in any posts, online communications, or within the media.
 - a) Harassment is an 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 SWF and protected by law.
- 7) 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.
- 8) 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 SWF for guidance/advice.
 - a) SWF recommends taking screenshots where applicable as proof of evidence.
- 9) Comply with other SWF policies and any laws or regulations.



Recommendations:

- 1) Appoint an appropriate representative as 'Media Manager'. These individuals should be responsible for all media enquiries and monitor media/online content regarding their club in support of the Club Secretary.
- 2) Clubs and their members should be wary of what is said around the media, especially at events where attendance is expected. This includes being wary of on and off the record comments.
- 3) Clubs should provide media training for their members when and where possible. This is especially so for those most likely to face the media i.e. first team players and coaches.
- 4) Ensure all privacy settings for any page(s) run by the clubs or their members that are not meant for public access are correct.
 - a) GDPR regulations should also be considered at all times.
- 5) Provide all members of the club with best practice guidelines for dealing with the media and for online conduct.
- 6) Always consider WHERE any content you're publishing has been sourced. You should avoid using copyrighted or borrowed material but if used, citations and links should be provided where possible and laws/regulations must be followed at all times. When publishing direct paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, give credit to the original publisher or author.
- 7) If your club decides that the most effective way of communicating to your players is via a social networking site then the club is strongly advised to set up an account in the name of the club. The access to this account should be limited and used for named members, volunteers, parents and carers solely about football matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selections.
- 8) At no time should there be any personal communication or comments using a Club account on any platform.
- 9) Children and young people should be advised by their coaches and parents/carers to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they have been asked not to tell their parents/carers about the communication.
- 10) Coaches, manager etc. should avoid using social networking sites as the primary way of communications with players.

DO



- 1) Ensure all privacy settings are correct so that the page(s) etc. are used explicitly for club matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details, or have private conversations.
 - a) GDPR regulations should also be considered at all times.
- 2) Gain written parent/carers permission before access to online pages/content is given to anyone under the age of 18.
- 3) Any individual involved with a club should Inform SWF if they have received inappropriate, threatening, or offensive material as this may be needed as evidence.

DON'T

- 1) Unless a child/young person is a direct relation, the coaches, managers, referees and club officials should not;
 - a) Accept as friend, players or referees under the age of 18 on social networking sites they are a member of or share their own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved in youth football.
 - b) Make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social media networking sites.
 - c) Use internet or web based communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young people.
 - d) Engage in any personal communications, 'Banter' or comments.