



GUIDANCE NOTES NO:

**6.1**

# RUNNING WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

**FOR CLUBS AND LEAGUES**

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**FOR ALL**

# RUNNING WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

*The following guidance is to support clubs and leagues to manage their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.*

It aims to ensure children, young people, coaches, referees and adults in a position of trust are not subjected to improper online behaviour or improper allegations.

Remember that clubs and leagues are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abides by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association.

## THE RULES:

It is against FA rules to post comments that are or maybe perceived as:

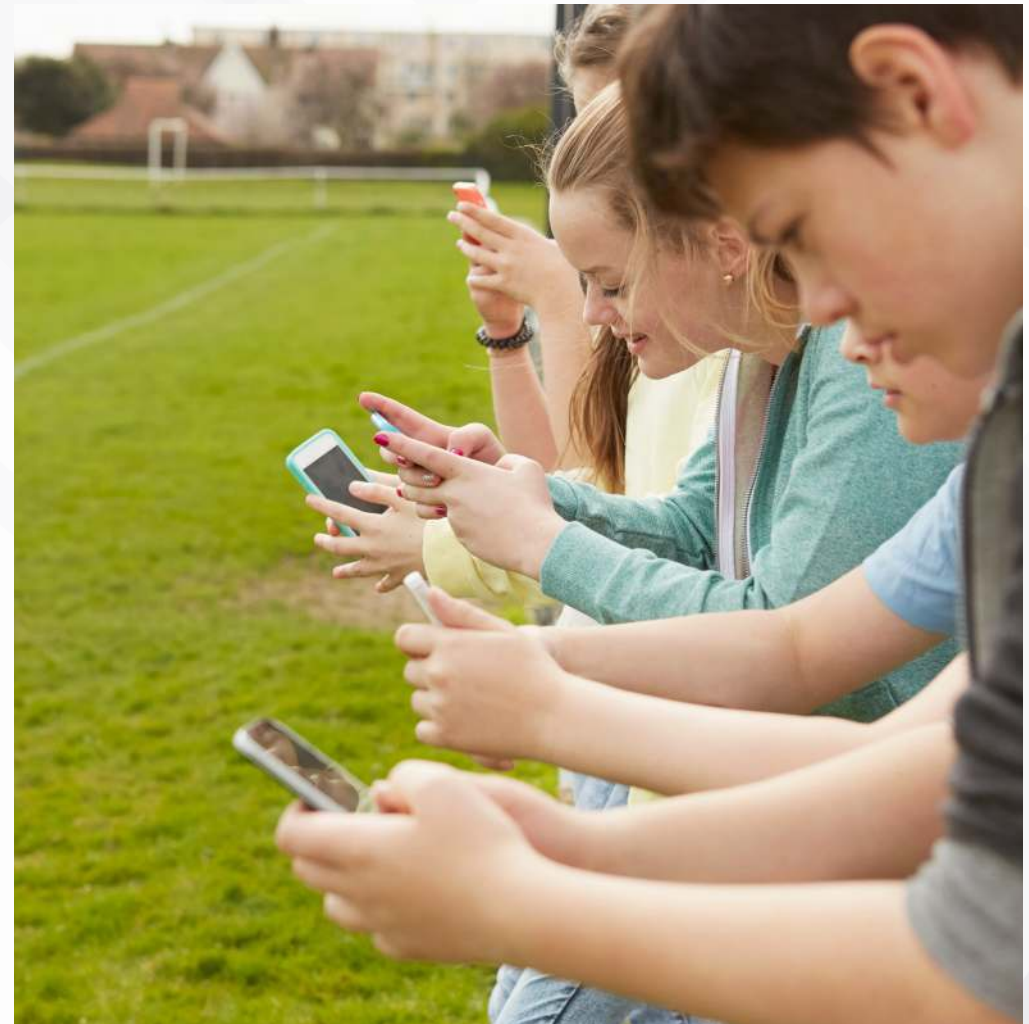
- Offensive;
- Insulting;
- Abusive;

- Threatening;
- Racist;
- Discriminatory;
- Any other reference that may cause offensive or harm to others.

Any such comment made on club or league websites and/or social networking sites regarding match officials may result in disciplinary action being taken in line with The FA's disciplinary policies and procedures.

Comments made on websites that are threatening, abusive or racist could lead to legal action being taken against those responsible for posting or hosting them. Comments made may attract libel claims and legal action through the civil courts if they are untrue or defamatory.

Children and young people should be advised by their coaches, parents/carers and Club Welfare Officer to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer about the communication.



## THE DO's & DON'T's:

Clubs/leagues are advised to adhere to the following:

### DO:

- Appoint an appropriate adult(s) to monitor the content of the website, who should also attend The FA's Safeguarding Children Workshop to carry out this role;
- Make sure everyone within your club/league knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the website and social networking areas and how to contact them;
- Apply the principles within The FA's photography guidelines. See **Guidance Notes 8.3: Photographing and Filming Children**;
- Place the CEOP, 'Report Abuse' app on your web site and links to the advice offered via its [ThinkUKnow.co.uk](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) programmes which give age appropriate advice to children as well as parents/carers;
- Provide a link to [TheFA.com](https://www.thefa.com) safeguarding section – [TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding](https://www.thefa.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding);
- Consider the benefits hosting message boards, forums or blogs will bring to your club/league against the potential risks. If you decide to use them ensure that they are password protected and only allow comments to be posted by individuals known and permitted access by the club/league;

- Remember that the club/league is responsible for all content contained on its website, forum blogs, tweets or social networking areas;
- Regularly monitor the content of the above and use The FA's 'Respect Codes of Conduct' and 'Relationships of Trust Statement' as a guide to acceptable behaviour online;
- Ensure privacy settings are locked so that the page(s) are used explicitly for club or league matters and not as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations;
- Get written parent/carer permission before access to view your club/league social media platforms is given to under-18s.

### DON'T:

- Host children's or young people's details where they can be seen or used by others to contact them. This includes the mobile phone and email of referees and coaches under the age of 18. Any details hosted should only be done with written parental/carer consent;
- Host pictures of individuals without the express permission of parents/carers;
- Post detail of individuals which may lead them to be identified e.g. school/class/year, player profiles detailing personal information e.g. favourite foods, movies, teams etc.;



- Post or host items which may be considered to be hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, racist or discriminatory or otherwise may cause offence or harm to another or might incite such behaviour in others;
- Post or host match results for teams that are under-11. Remember the focus is on participation not outcome at this age.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you need any further advice or information please contact your County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer who will be happy to help you.

[Click here](#) to find a list of County FAs and their websites. Then visit the relevant website to find your County FA's DSO.



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