**12. ILKESTON RUGBY CLUB SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Social networking, such as Twitter, Facebook, internet blogs and other online sites, offers tremendous opportunities for rugby to communicate and engage with a growing audience as well as its existing members, supporters and players.

Ilkeston RUFC is keen to promote the safe and responsible use of social networking technology but also to make members aware of the potential risks and to share best practice.

Participants should be aware that comments which bring the game or club into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting, may lead to disciplinary action.

Comments that include a reference to a person’s ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability may attract a high disciplinary sanction.

Comments can also attract civil and criminal action. Nearly 5,000 offences involving Facebook and Twitter were reported to police in 2012 and 653 people charged.

**General guidance for users**

* These are public forums, so treat them as such
* Individuals and organisations are strictly responsible for any posting on his/their account/s
* Re-posting or re-tweeting inappropriate content represents an endorsement of that content and can be actionable
* Do not use abusive, derogatory, vulgar or sexual language
* Do not criticise or imply bias in match officials
* At all times, exercise discretion and respect for clubs, players, fans and the game’s partners
* Deleting or apologising publicly for an improper posting does not prevent disciplinary action being taken
* Consider ‘protecting’ Tweets and changing security/visibility of Facebook accounts
* Individuals need to understand that they are personally responsible and liable for their comments and postings. At all times you should exercise discretion and be respectful of other players, teams, officials, organisations and brands.

**What you regard as ‘banter’ could be regarded as embarrassing or hurtful by a wider audience and bring the game into disrepute. In short, follow the general guidelines above and:**

* Don’t comment if you have any concerns about the consequences
* Don’t link to unsuitable content
* Don’t get into disputes with audience
* Don’t share or elicit personal detail

**But**

* Do show your personality and be approachable
* Do share your achievements
* Do let people know what it is like to be a player/official
* Do post regular comments to grow and engage with an audience

**Guidance for moderators and webmasters**

Please be aware that the club may be vicariously liable for material published by a member of the club, for example on an official website, Facebook site or Twitter feed, or published by members via a club email address or a club Twitter handle.

Clubs can also be liable for third party (non-member) comments and postings made in their website forums or on their Facebook pages.

* All Websites and Social media carrying Ilkeston RUFC name in any way, must be cleared with the club before they are set up. It must be clearly identified, at all times, to the club who is responsible for editing and maintaining any social networking and internet sites
* All content generated must be in line with the RFU’s Core Values and the guidelines above
* Those who are identified to the club as being responsible must monitor output, moderate content and removing offensive postings or content.
* Members will be held accountable for any breaches of the above and may also face disciplinary action by the club

**Safeguarding guidance Social Media**

The RFU’s Safeguarding Policy advises against coaches having direct personal communication with children unless in exceptional circumstances and coaches and club officials should not communicate with children through social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, nor should they be “friends” with children or comment on their status.

Please refer to our MOBILE AND ON-LINE COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN POLICY.

The RFU works closely with the NSPCC’s Child Protection in Sport Unit, which provides comprehensive guidance and resources relating to this issue. Copy and paste this link onto your browser to view:

http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/Governance/ClubSupport/01/30/54/98/Social-media-promoting-safe-and-responsible-use\_Neutral.pdf