



## **GUILDFORD & GODALMING ATHLETICS CLUB LIMITED**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY 2023**

#### 1.0 The Function of GGAC Social Media

Guildford and Godalming Athletic Club Limited ('the Club') will use Social Media including its website to inform members and others of news and events, activities, or work of the Club within the sport of athletics. The Club may also share the achievements and successes of athletes, coaches, clubs, volunteers, and officials, to engage with members and others to promote the good name of the club and its members.

For this policy social media can be defined as any facility for online publication and commentary including and without limitation to:

- Blogs (Written, Video, and podcasts)
- Micro-blogging websites e.g. Twitter
- Social media networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc)
- Forums and Message Boards
- Content Sharing (photos, video, audio) e.g. Instagram, You Tube, Flickr, and others
- Any web site including those where user comments are an available feature.

#### 2.0 The Role of Social Media Policy

The Club is responsible for ensuring that all online content is suitable for publication and does not breach any laws or common decency.

This policy is designed for that purpose and covers how the Club will ensure this is achieved. Because the Club can be held liable for third party comments and postings made on social media platforms and websites, this policy also details what is expected from all members, be they athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, and parents or persons with parental responsibility, when engaged online.

#### 3.0 The Aims of the Social Media Policy

- To protect all members especially children who have access to technology, or when accessing the Club social media platforms.  
(A child, as defined by the 'Children's Act 1989' is a person under the age of 18)
- To provide coaches and volunteers, as well as adult members, all persons with parental responsibility with guidance on procedure and information regarding the use of social media as it relates to the Club
- To ensure that Club is operating in line with the Club Code of Conduct for all Athletes as well as our Child Protection Policy Statement, and furthermore within the law regarding how to behave online.

#### 4.0 The Management of Social Media.



- The content of the Club Social Media is overseen by the Directors and Committee who ensure the content of all messages and photographs is appropriate.
- They have the authority to delete all inappropriate posts or comments and reserve the right to block, unfollow, ignore, and report those making posts, messages or contact that is deemed to be irrelevant, repetitive, abusive, bullying or harassing in nature without notice.
- Club members should be aware that social media is not monitored 24/7 and there may be a delay in responding to posts, comments, and messages.
- No photograph of a child may be included on social media without the consent of their parent or those with parental responsibility.
- If any adult member's name or photograph is included in Club social media and they would like it to be removed they should contact a director or committee member. The post will be removed as soon as possible on request.

### 5.0 The General Guidance

This guidance applies to all Members (athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers), and others (parents and persons with parental responsibility) alike. All participants on social media must:

- Clearly identify themselves.
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Use discretion and be respectful.
- Users must not use abusive, insulting, discourteous or sexual language which could be deemed to discriminate, bully, or harass any individual relating to age, sex, gender reassignment, race and nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or belief.
- No one should use social media to bully another person or post photographs or videos that are discriminatory or offensive.
- No comment should ever be made about an individual that exposes them or their family to hatred or ridicule.
- No comment should be made that causes someone to be either persistently ignored, rejected, avoided, or reduces their value in the estimation of ordinary, well-balanced people or undermines them personally or professionally.
- Re-posting or retweeting any inappropriate content represents approval of that content and will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Members and others should avoid using private messages through club Social Media but instead be open and clear and always respectful of others.
- Due to the nature of social media you should not be offended if your comment or message is not responded to, shared, liked, or seen.
- Adults should carefully consider the nature of all comments and communication made via social media where it is likely to be seen by those U18.
- To safeguard both adults and children, it is not appropriate for a coach, official or any adult volunteer to accept a friend request from a child/junior athlete. If



you receive such a request, you must decline it and inform a Director or committee member.

- Caution must also be exercised by Club coaches, officials, and volunteers in personal communications between themselves and any child to avoid potential miscommunication. Best practice guidance is for coaches and other adults to only contact under 18's through their parent, or person with parental responsibility.
- Parents, and those with parental responsibility who wish to give their 13+ access to Club social media must take the responsibility for determining what is appropriate for their child, and families are advised to always use caution when revealing personally identifiable information via any of the platforms and services.
- No personal information concerning a child may be posted on any Club social media. This includes their name, address or any information about a child's life interests or activities which may help a stranger target a child.
- In all cases photographs which include children should always be group shots and under no circumstances should personal data be included which identifies a single child.
- No photographs, videos or text content should be posted which could be deemed abusive or inappropriate in that it criticises or humiliates a child, or which may put undue pressure on that child.
- Members and others should be aware that online activity is entirely at their own risk and in addition must always make it clear that their views are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Club.
- Remember social networking websites are public forums, particularly if they are part of a network. Club members and others should not assume that their posts on any social media platform will remain private.
- Providers of Social media platforms have their own rules and guidelines which all club members must follow.

#### 6.0 Personal Social Media Conduct Relating to Guildford and Godalming Athletic Club

The Club respects all members' and others' right to a private life. However, the Club must also ensure that matters of a confidential nature and its reputation are protected. Therefore, any communications that Club members and others make in a personal capacity in relation to the Club through any personal social media platform must in addition to the guidance above also not:

- Bring the Club into disrepute by making insulting or slanderous comments about individuals or other organisations or by posting images that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate content; or being seen to support a comment or post that would fall into the above two categories.
- Breach confidentiality by revealing information about an individual or organisation.
- Disclose information about the Club where there would be a reasonable expectation of confidentiality.



- Breach copyright, for example reproduction of a photograph or text without permission or fail to acknowledge where permission has been granted.
- Use social media to bully a member or post images that are discriminatory or offensive.
- No Member or other person, regardless of position should make a comment on social media, in any way that suggests they are doing so on behalf or in connection with the Club, unless they have received written permission of the Directors.
- If a member wishes to set up any new social media account relating to their activity or group within the Club, be it through different or more specific pages or online channels, they must first contact the Directors to discuss the options available.
- Under no circumstances may Club members and others use the Guildford and Godalming Athletics Club name, logo, or resources without consent of the Directors, nor or should they write about their role within the club, or discuss athletes, coaches, members, or volunteers without the written consent of those concerned.

## 7.0 Website and Email Guidance

In addition to the above policy guidance when using the Club website communication facilities such as emails, or online forms and applications, all individuals are required,

- To maintain the confidentiality of their username and password for the website.
- To inform a director or committee member if they think there may have been a breach of the Club Privacy Notice, personal data, or password.
- Not to use another person's email account without their permission, when contacting the Club.
- Not to use the website or any official Club email address to send junk email and spam, chain letters, pyramid schemes or any other unsolicited messages commercial or otherwise.
- Not to make available or upload files to the website or any Club email address that contains any malicious programme or malware or corrupt data that may damage the operation of the computer or property of another person or organisation.
- Not to collect or store personal information about others for any purpose besides that related to personal or family members' membership of the Club.
- Not to use the Club Website or Club emails to advertise or offer to buy or sell goods or services for any commercial purpose.
- Not to use a Club email address to impersonate any person or the Club with the intention of misleading others.
- Not to attempt to gain unauthorised access, through hacking, password mining or any other means to any of the Club website, email accounts, computer systems or networks connected to the personnel or Directors of the Club



The Club website and social media may from time to time contain links to other third-party websites that are controlled and monitored by other organisations. In doing so the Club does not give any assurances about these websites nor is it responsible for their content, availability, or operation.

### 8.0 Reporting Concerns and Breaches

If Club Members or others believe that they have witnessed possible criminal activity on any social media site, they should report it to the police.

In all circumstances:

- Club members are responsible for reporting misuse and inappropriate content as soon as it is identified to the Child Welfare/ Protection Officer
- If any person has a concern about what they see or are told on a Club or other social media networking site, about the club or an individual member they must report this to the Child Welfare/Protection Officer who, together with the Directors and other committee members will determine what action is appropriate. Depending on the outcome is the Club may:
  - Remove comments or posts and if appropriate ban the user from Club social media or request the online provider to do so.
  - Report individual users to the appropriate social media provider (Facebook/Twitter etc), following the reporting procedures of those companies.
  - Initiate the Club Disciplinary Procedures process
  - Report misconduct to a relevant external organisation, who may take their own action.

### 9.0 Sanctions and Disciplinary Action

- Members should be aware that a breach of any part of this policy guidance will be fully investigated by the Directors and may trigger action in accordance with the Club's Disciplinary Procedures process.
- In the circumstances where a crime has been committed the Directors will inform the police.

Guildford & Godalming Athletic Club Limited reserves the right to alter the terms of this policy at any time without notice. The latest version of this policy will include the most up to date terms, and the guidance in the latest version will supersede any previously stated. The social media version applicable at the time of any incident will be used to settle a breach or concern relating to social media. This policy is in addition to, and compliments, any future or existing policies which include the use of technology, computers, email, and the internet.

**Club Child Welfare/ Protection Officer – Marilyn and Will Parsons**

March 2023