



Milton Keynes Dons

Social Media Guidance.

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Date of Approval	September 2022
Date for Review	January 2024

Introduction

MK Dons encourages everyone involved in football to recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play. Coaches, club officials, volunteers and others who are in a position of trust within football need to act responsibly. This includes the use of electronic communications.

The Club is responsible for ensuring that all content hosted on its websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abide by the Rules and Regulations of The English Football League (EFL) and The Football Association (FA).

The Club should:

1. Refrain from publishing comments about other clubs, players or referees and any controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects.
2. Avoid hostile or harassing communications in any posts or other online communications. Harassment is any 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 The Equality Act 2010.
3. Identify all copyrighted or borrowed material with citations and links. When publishing direct paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, give credit to the original publisher or author.
4. Be aware that any website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board or other social media that promotes the 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.

Act upon any blogger or other online participant who posts an inaccurate, accessory or negative comment about the club or anyone associated with the club, by not responding to the post and instead contact The Club Media Department for guidance/advice.

Employees whether full time or Part time must not:

1. Use text or emails for personal conversations, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature or engage in any 'banter' or comments with or about children at the club.
2. Use internet or web based mobile phones or other form of communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person.
3. Respond to emails or texts from young people other than those directly related to club matters.
4. Use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.
5. Accept as a friend, young players or any person employed or volunteering at the club who is U18 on social networking sites.
6. Share your own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved at the football club or ask them to be your 'friend'.
7. Make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites.
8. Post personal comments in relation to the management or operation of the club, club officials, match officials, children, parent/guardian or opposition teams or any family members of those groups.
9. Post comments criticising the club or its decisions.
10. Delete any inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation.

Parent Guidance

Parents should:

1. Know who the club Designated Safeguarding Officer is and how to contact them if they have any concerns about the content of club web pages or in relation to the welfare of a child.
2. Ensure that they are aware of how coaches, managers and other members of the club should communicate appropriately with a child.
3. Show an interest in the communications between the club, themselves and children. The encouragement of open communication about club activities/issues often means that concerns are picked up early and issues can be resolved more easily.
4. Familiarise themselves with The Football League's guidance for clubs in relation to websites, text messaging and social networking sites
5. Understand the club's communication practices. If the club uses text messages or emails as a source of communication they may request to be copied into anything sent to their child.
6. Ensure that children understand that they should tell someone that they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or when they've been asked not to tell their parent/guardian or coach about the communication.
7. Remember that as a parent/carer of a child at the club they are responsible for and need to abide by the club policy, The Football League Policy Guidance and The FA Rules and Regulations regarding comments that are placed online about the club or club officials, The Football League, players, managers, match officials, opposing teams players or family members of any of those groups listed.
8. Inform the club Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible if they or their child receives any inappropriate communication from any member of staff/volunteer or other person associated with the club. They should also save the communication.

9. Parents must present the club in a positive manner and not use social media to speak ill of the club or any staff or associates or to comment on players, training or matches.
10. Parents must not reveal any information they may have received about a player.

Parent Guidance:

Players must not:

1. Post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, or racist. This would contravene the football club's rules and could also be against the law. They should not post personal comments in relation to the management or operation of the club, club officials, match officials, players, opposition team member(s), or any family members of those above..
2. Engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments with staff / volunteer(s), players' or opposition teams.
3. Give out personal details online including mobile numbers, email addresses or social networking account access to people they do not know.
4. Invite any adult involved with the club to become 'friends' online, or accept them as a 'friend' on any social network site. They should also not to accept any invitations they may receive and should tell their parent/guardian immediately.
5. Use internet, web-based, phone or any other form of communication to send personal messages of a non-football nature to any member of staff/volunteer at the club.
6. Delete inappropriate text or email messages sent to them as they may form part of any subsequent investigation.
7. Use inappropriate language.
8. Reveal information about training, fixtures and contractual agreements etc using social media posts.

Any breach of this Social Media policy will be investigated and if necessary referred to the appropriate Manager/External Agency.

All reports of cyberbullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where and when the Senior Management Staff at MK Dons feel it appropriate to do so

Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from MK Dons. Everyone must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by the police.