



## **SOCIAL MEDIA AND MESSAGING POLICY**

This policy applies to social media, text, direct text/media messaging and email.

### **Scope and safeguarding context**

This policy applies to all members of Richmond Hockey Club, including players, parents and carers, coaches, volunteers, officials and spectators. It covers all online communication, social media use, messaging, texting and email activity that relates to club activities. This policy forms part of the club's safeguarding framework and must be read alongside the Safeguarding and Protecting Young People Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Photography and Video Policy, Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.

Social Media is a wonderful tool and one we want to use constructively and safely. Richmond Hockey Club promotes the healthy and appropriate use of social media. It's important to be aware of the potential pitfalls and safeguarding issues that arise when posting content in relation to:

- club activities
- team and club performance
- individual performance
- opposition performance
- officials' decisions/performance

We need all Richmond HC members and Parents of RHC junior members to be aware of this policy when sharing or posting content relating to the above from either personal or club accounts.

We also need to remind all players/parents/carers to refresh themselves with our updated Photography and Video policy. Here you will find a large cross over with regards our safeguarding of all our junior club members and personnel.

Common-sense approach: 'Could I say this face to face, or would I be happy to see my comments published in the newspaper? If you are unsure of the answer to these questions, or your answer is "no", then you should not be posting this on any social media or any direct messaging platform.'

Everyone involved with Richmond Hockey Club is reminded that the Club's Codes of Conduct and England Hockey's Code of Ethics and Behaviour apply to all online activity, social media use, direct messaging, texting and email communications, just as they do to



behaviour in person. Any inappropriate, abusive, discriminatory or antisocial behaviour online may be treated as a breach of club policy and may result in disciplinary action. Where appropriate, matters may be referred to England Hockey in accordance with England Hockey Complaints, Disciplinary and Reporting Procedures.

See below for additional advice and best practice around social media use within the family:

Social Media can seem strange and even intimidating for people who did not “grow up” with it. Facebook, Twitter, texting, Messenger, and other platforms, as well as online gaming and personal emails are vast and complex. By following some simple guidelines, potential pitfalls can be avoided, and Social Media can be safely used as a promotional tool and a means of communication for the club.

### **Guidance for Parents/ Carers on the use of Social Media, Texts, Snapchat, Instagram and Emails:**

Children today are growing up with the internet as part of their everyday lives, and that’s a good thing. It’s a great place for them to learn, to have fun and to chat to their friends. Of course, it’s important to make sure that they are safe whilst they do it.

Remember: it is against Facebook’s rules for your child to have an account if they are under 13 years old. This is to prevent them from being exposed to potentially inappropriate content. You will find all you need to know about keeping young teens safe on Facebook on their official safety page for parents: <https://www.facebook.com/help/1079477105456277>

### **Parents/Carers DO:**

- Make sure the family computer is in a main living area and that the screen is positioned so that you can see what is going on.
- Be open so that the child can approach you if they are being bullied online or if they have been exposed to something that has made them upset or uncomfortable.
- Make sure you are aware of who your child has contact with online and via text.
- Be aware of the club’s expectations of coaches and social media.
- Talk to your children about using social media.
- Provide your mobile number/email address if requested, so that the club can contact you regarding your child’s matches and training.



## **Guidance for Children and Young People on the use of Social Media, Texts and Emails:**

The internet is a great place to learn and have fun with your friends, and the best way to have fun is to make sure that you stay safe. You should think about the points below whenever you use the internet or speak to people online or by text.

- If someone isn't your friend in real life, they are NOT your friend on the internet. Be careful when accepting friend requests.
- Sometimes people on the internet are not who they say they are. If you are not 100% sure, don't risk it.
- Remember to change your privacy settings so that only your friends can see information about you, your wall posts and your photos.
- If someone is sending you messages or texts that you are worried about, you should tell your parents, an adult you trust, your teacher or our club's welfare officer. Ask another adult to help locate one of them should you need them and not find them anywhere.
- Remember any employed Richmond Hockey Coach is a professional, just like your teachers. They should not be your friend on Facebook and should not be texting or messaging you.
- You can expect them to make arrangements for coaching and matches via your parents.
- Bullying can happen online too (cyberbullying). If you, or someone you know, has had this happen to them you should tell an adult that you can trust.
- Don't be afraid to tell someone if you have concerns.

### Young People NEED to

- Keep your photos and personal information private.
- Conduct yourself in a respectful and courteous manner on social media as you would at home, in school or at hockey.
- Tell a professional or an adult that you trust if you are worried or concerned about online behaviour or unwanted contact/communication.

### Young People SHOULD NOT

- Send inappropriate text messages or post messages on social media that are offensive, nasty or derogatory in any way.
- Accept any friend requests from people you don't know, or you feel uncomfortable accepting.
- Connect with, follow or message coaches of Richmond HC on social media platforms, snapchat and other messaging sites.



## **Position of trust and contact with young people**

Coaches, volunteers and officials at Richmond Hockey Club are in a position of trust. They must not connect with, follow, message or communicate directly with children or young people under the age of 18 via social media platforms, private messaging services or email. All necessary communication relating to training, matches or hockey activity must be conducted through parents or carers, or via approved club communication channels, in line with the club's Safeguarding Policy.

## **Reporting concerns**

Any concerns about online behaviour, messaging, images, bullying, harassment or inappropriate contact must be reported as soon as possible to the Club Safeguarding and Welfare Officer. Where appropriate, concerns will be referred to England Hockey in line with England Hockey Safeguarding and Reporting Procedures. Individuals may also report safeguarding concerns directly to England Hockey if they feel unable to raise the matter within the club.

## **Cyber-bullying, discrimination and enforcement**

Cyber-bullying, harassment, discriminatory language, abusive behaviour or intimidation carried out via social media, messaging platforms, email or online forums will be treated as seriously as behaviour occurring in person. Any such behaviour may result in disciplinary action in line with the club's Disciplinary Policy and Codes of Conduct, and where appropriate may be referred to England Hockey in accordance with England Hockey Complaints, Disciplinary and Safeguarding Regulations.

Dated April 2026 by Richmond Hockey Club Committee