



Barnet Football Club Academy

The Hive London Stadium

Camrose Avenue

Edgware

HA8 6AG

Social Media & Communications Policy

Version 1

Academy Policy C – 1 - 04

Reviewed July 2025

Social Media and Communications Policy

Forward

Barnet Football Club recognises that keeping our children safe in sport is not just about matchdays and training environments. We live in a society where safeguarding is required on a 24-hour basis. Safeguarding extends beyond the changing room into your homes via Social Media platforms, digital devices and mobile phones. Barnet Football Club wishes to keep our children and young people safe whilst online and on the pitch.

Senior Safeguarding Manager

Andrew Wigley

1.Aims

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- to protect all children and adults involved with our organisation who make use of online technology while in our care, or while engaging with our organisation
- to provide staff and volunteers with overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
- to ensure our organisation is operating in line with our values and within relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation and Online Safety Act 2023.

2. Purpose

Social media and digital communication are integral to modern football. This policy outlines how anyone affiliated with the Barnet FC Academy should use these tools responsibly and respectfully, while safeguarding young people and upholding the reputation of the club.

3.Applicability

This policy applies to all players, coaches, officials, staff, volunteers, and parents involved in Barnet Football Club Academy. It also applies to affiliated clubs, academies, grassroots, and commercial or community partners working with or through the Academy.

4.Our commitment

As part of our online safety policy, we will:

- ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using online platforms
- provide relevant training to all staff on online safety, and ensure all staff or volunteers using online platforms have had training appropriate to their role
- monitor how staff, parents and children use our platforms both inside and outside of our setting to ensure it adheres to our policy, acceptable use statement and code of conducts.
- regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure online safety is embedded throughout the organisation
- keep all apps and platform security up to date, use strong passwords and maintain privacy of all users

- effectively use security and privacy tools available on each platform
- have a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, hateful communication, cyberbullying, inappropriate, harmful or illegal content
- inform all staff, volunteers, parents, carers and children of who to report any online concerns to, or what to do in the event they see something that worries them online
- adhere to parental consents and permissions when sharing images, videos or livestreaming for promotional or celebrational purposes
- develop an online safety agreement for use with staff, volunteers, parents and carers and the children and young people
- ensure personal information gathered while using online platforms are stored securely and in line with our privacy policies

The policy and procedures will be widely promoted and are mandatory for everyone involved in football. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed and may ultimately result in dismissal or exclusion and, where appropriate, referral to statutory organisations.

5. Guiding Principles

- Use communication channels with responsibility, professionalism, and respect.
- Social media use reflects on individuals, clubs, and the game.
- All contact with players under 18 must occur within safe, transparent, and appropriate boundaries.
- Be respectful and inclusive.
- Think before posting: would you say this in public or to the media?
- Never post when emotionally compromised.

6. Communication Guidelines

- Private, one-on-one communication with players under 18 via email, text, or social media is inappropriate.
- Group chats or communications copied to a parent, guardian, or Club Safeguarding Officer are best practice.
- Content should be limited to football-related matters such as fixtures, training, or cancellations.

- Adults in positions of trust should not accept U18s as social media friends.
- Encourage young players to follow official club pages rather than personal profiles.

7. Image Sharing and Consent

- Parental/guardian consent is required before posting images or videos of individuals under 18.
- Ensure that content is appropriate
- Avoid content that could be misinterpreted or breach privacy.

8. Misuse of social media and communication

The following non-exhaustive actions may result in disciplinary action:

Sharing or forwarding inappropriate messages or media.

Posting discriminatory, offensive, or aggressive content.

Public comments that could bring the game or the club into disrepute

Engaging in inappropriate communication with children.

Implying bias or questioning integrity of match officials or other individuals.

9. Safeguarding and Reporting

- Individuals in Trusted roles/Positions of Trust must act as role models online and offline.
- For players under the age of 16: Please obtain parental consent for communication between an adult and a young person. This consent can be acquired at the beginning of the season.
- For players under the age of 18: It is essential to inform parents regarding any communication between adults and young people.
- If a child or young person expresses discomfort about online communication, encourage them to speak to a parent, guardian, trusted adult or Club Safeguarding Officer.
- If a player shares a message, email, or image that may be inappropriate, this must be reported immediately to the Club Safeguarding Officer.
- Serious online concerns should be reported to CEOP (www.ceop.uk).

10. Disciplinary Measures

- Breaches may lead to suspension, FA referral, or reporting to statutory authorities.
- Individuals are accountable for their online and communication conduct.

11. Support and Advice

If you're ever unsure about appropriate online conduct, please contact the Club Safeguarding Officer (Senior Safeguarding Manager) for guidance.

The UK Safer Internet Centre offers specialist resources on a range of topics, including:

- Sexting
- Impersonation
- Digital ghost stories
- The dark web

They also provide a dedicated helpline for professionals and volunteers working in sports organisations.

You can access their resources and support here:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline>

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers>

12. Training

The UK Safer Internet Centre runs regular CPD sessions either free or a minimal cost.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/events>

13. Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually, or in the following circumstances:

- changes in legislation and/or government guidance
- as required by the Football Association or English Football League
- because of any other significant change, event or case reviews.

13. Summary (In Review)

Do:

- Get signed consent from parents/carers before using either of these methods of communication with children or young people. These should be stored on a shared device with the Safeguarding team.
- Explain to parents/carers and other members the purpose and method which coaches, team managers, Academy officials etc will use to communicate by either text, email or both with their son/daughter
- Only use group texts or emails and always copy in the parent/carer or the designated member of the Academy to all communications with children and young people
- Make sure texts or emails are only in relation to specific Academy related activities e.g. informing young people about changes in travel arrangements, training times or venue changes etc
- Report to the Senior Safeguarding Manager any instance(s) where you have received any inappropriate communications from a young person. The SSM will then agree what action the club will take, notifying parents/carers and any other appropriate individuals or agencies

Don't:

- Use text or emails for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature
- Respond to emails from young people other than those directly related to Academy matters and advise your Senior Safeguarding Manager of any non-Academy related emails you receive
- Use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.

Senior Safeguarding Manager:

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Version	Date	Changes	Action