



FAI Social Media Policy



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Glossary

- **Affiliated Member** of the Association shall mean all National Bodies, Provincial Associations, leagues, clubs and AGM Members who have affiliated directly to the FAI or to their respective governing body.
- **Board** shall mean the Board of Management of the FAI.
- **Child Welfare and Safeguarding Committee** shall mean a Committee of the FAI.
- **Children, Child or Young Person** shall mean individuals under the age of 18 other than a person who is or has been married.
- **Clubs/League Children's Officer** shall mean the person who the Child welfare day to day functions is delegated to. Their remit shall be a key component of the Safeguarding Statement and they shall be the Relevant Person for the Child Safeguarding Statement.
- **Designated Liaison Person** shall mean the person who is responsible for ensuring that reporting procedure within the Club/League are followed so that Child welfare and protection concerns are referred promptly to Statutory Authorities and will also liaise with outside agencies. Additionally, they will be a resource person to any employee or volunteer who has Child protection concerns.
- **National Bodies** shall mean the Colleges Football Association of Ireland (CFAI), Defence Forces Football Association (DFFA), Football Association of Ireland Schools (FAIS), Football For All (FFA), Irish Soccer Referees Society (ISRS), Irish Universities Football Union (IUFU), Junior Council and Schoolboys Football Association of Ireland (SFAI)
- **Provincial Associations** shall mean the Connaught Football Association (CFA), Leinster Football Association (LFA), Munster Football Association (MFA) and Ulster Football Association (UFA).
- **Social Media** shall mean any form of electronic communication through which users share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.
- **Stand Down Order** shall mean an order which is issued to any person who is the subject of a complaint or inquiry by a Statutory Authority in relation to any Child welfare or Vulnerable person concern. A Stand Down Order is issued to an individual to immediately refrain from particular activities within the FAI for a specified or indefinite period pending the outcome of an enquiry or investigation in accordance with FAI Rules.
- **Statutory Authorities** shall mean those state bodies which promote the welfare and protection of Children and Vulnerable person and have a legal responsibility for the investigation and / or validation of suspected child abuse, and these include An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive and the Child and Family Agency (Tusla).
- **The Association or the FAI** shall mean the Football Association of Ireland.
- **The Policy** shall mean this FAI Social Media Policy.
- **Vulnerable Person** means a person, other than a Child, who—
 - (a) is suffering from a disorder of the mind, whether as a result of mental illness or dementia,
 - (b) has an intellectual disability,
 - (c) is suffering from a physical impairment, whether as a result of injury, illness or age,
 - (d) has a physical disability,
Which is of such a nature or degree:
 1. As to restrict the capacity of the person to guard himself or herself against harm by another person, or
 2. That results in the person requiring assistance with the activities of daily living including dressing, eating, walking, washing and bathing.

Please note- within the Policy where Child/ Children is written there may be occasions when it may also be applicable to Vulnerable Persons.

1. Policy statement

- 1.1. The Football Association of Ireland (the "FAI") understands that the use of Social Media helps promote football in the Republic of Ireland if used appropriately. The Policy outlines the standards the FAI requires when using Social Media.

2. Who is covered by the Policy?

- 2.1. The Policy is applicable to all individuals working / volunteering within the game of Association football in the Republic of Ireland.

3. The scope of the Policy

- 3.1. The Policy is established to ensure the interests of Children, Young Persons and Vulnerable Persons participating in football is of paramount importance.
- 3.2. The Policy is also to ensure all Affiliated Members are aware of the negative impact social media can have on our all members and give guidance on how to avoid them.
- 3.3. Breach of the Policy may be dealt with using the disciplinary procedures which apply to each organisation and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to a Stand Down Order, ban from membership of the FAI and / or dismissal.
- 3.4. The Policy is approved by the Board of the FAI. Proposals for additions and / or amendments to the Policy are considered by the Child Welfare and Safeguarding Committee on an ongoing basis.

4. Responsibility for implementation of the Policy

- 4.1. The FAI and each Affiliated Member has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the Policy.
- 4.2. Each individual is responsible for their own compliance with the Policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied.

5. Personal use of Social Media sites

The FAI respects your right to use Social Media for personal use however it is important to be mindful of the impact Social Media can have on others. The following conditions must be met for personal use to continue:

1. You are responsible for your conduct when using any form of Social Media.
2. Your personal views should not conflict with your existing role in football. You should be aware that what you publish will be public for many years.
3. Be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of the FAI and its Affiliated Members.

6. Using Social Media

- 6.1. When making use of any Social Media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use.
- 6.2. Do not upload, post or forward any content belonging to a third party unless you have that third party's consent. For example, don't discuss colleagues, competitors, coaches and / or players without their prior approval.
- 6.3. Avoid publishing your contact details where they can be accessed and used widely by people you did not intend to see them, and never publish anyone else's contact details.
- 6.4. Do not engage with irate players, parents or coaches on a public forum. Organise a meeting to allow all parties to discuss possible outcomes.
- 6.5. If you are a manager, coach, club official, referee or medic you should not:
 1. accept any player or referee who is under 18 as a friend on your personal Social Media page.
 2. communicate with any person under 18 through Social Media, text message, phone or email.
- 6.6. All communications concerning under 18's should be made through parents / guardians. It is important to ensure all communications relate to specific club matters e.g. fixtures, training etc.

7. Setting up and running a Social Media page

- 7.1. Do not use personal details to set up your organisations Social Media page. You should for example use the organisations email address. All account log in details should be kept safe and secure to avoid possible hacking.
- 7.2. When setting up an email address and / or Social Media page for your organisation (for example, a club web-site), it should be accessed by at least three administrators. These administrators should be responsible for up-loading content and monitoring posts on the site. If any of these administrators or any other person are behaving inappropriately their access should be removed immediately.
- 7.3. It is important to ensure everyone within your organisation is aware of who is administering your Social Media page(s).
- 7.4. Each administrator should be familiar with the privacy and safety settings on their Social Media page to ensure it is for use by your organisation only.
- 7.5. Do not accept anyone under the age of 13 on your Social Media page. Report underage users to the Child's parents or the Social Media outlet.
- 7.6. Any user under the age of 18 looking to join your Social Media page should have provided written parental/ guardian consent in advance.
- 7.7. No images or personal information of under 18's should be posted online without prior written consent from each parent / guardian. It is critical that no user is asked to post any personal details of under 18's as certain information could be used to identify or locate them.
- 7.8. To avoid any inappropriate material appearing on your Social Media page you should enable the appropriate privacy settings. This will allow you to manage the content on your Social Media page to avoid any distress or reputational damage.

- 7.9.** The content on your page should be accurate and up to date and any material that is no longer required should be removed.
- 7.10.** Any inappropriate use, such as bullying, is strictly prohibited and should be reported to the Children's Officer within your organisation.
- 7.11.** Misuse of Social Media, in certain circumstances, constitute a criminal offence and suspicious behaviour towards under 18's should be reported to the Statutory Authorities.
- 7.12.** If you are unsure about something you are about to post, then you should not do it. Always consider who will be able to view it and if in doubt, always discuss it with the Children's Officer within your organisation.

8. Photography & Filming

- 8.1.** There are inherent risks in posting personal information about Children or Vulnerable Persons as it can lead to being able to identify the them and their location, or it is possible that images may be subject to inappropriate use. When posting photographs or videos the following points should be considered:
1. At the start of each season it is essential that written consent is received from every Child's parent / guardian before any photography or filming takes place. This should be obtained using an appropriate consent form.
 2. Children's names or additional detailed information about them **must not** accompany any image or video. Before up-loading any images or videos of Children, written consent **must** be received from each parent / guardian.
 3. Any person filming or taking photographs **must** be Garda vetted and have completed a relevant FAI approved Safeguarding 1 basic awareness training course.
 4. If a Child within your organisation is under a court order or is in the care of the Child & Family Agency (Tusla) / HSE, their image **must not** be placed in the public domain.
 5. Ensure that Children are appropriately dressed and only allow images to be taken on the field of play. Photographing / filming **must not** take place in areas of personal privacy such as, changing rooms, showers, toilets and bedrooms.
 6. Camera phones **should never** be allowed into Children's changing rooms, showers or toilets.
 7. If an individual who is engaged in filming / photography presents a serious concern or an immediate danger, please report the issue to your local Garda station or Tusla.
- 8.2.** If parents / guardians, professional photographers or other spectators are intending to photograph or video at an event they should also be made aware of the Policy.
- 8.3.** Specific details concerning the Policy in relation to photography and filming should, wherever possible, be published prominently and must be announced over the public-address system, prior to the start of an event.
- 8.4.** Organisations **must never** allow unsupervised access to Children, one to one photo sessions or photo sessions outside the event or at a Child's home.



APPENDIX 1

Sample Child/Young Person Social Media Consent Form



Football Association of Ireland

Organisation Name	
Child's Name	

In accordance with the FAI Social Media Policy, *(insert organisation name)* will not permit personal details, photographs or videos of children to be taken without the consent of their parents / guardians.

If at any time, the child or parent / guardian wishes images or their details to be removed from *(insert organisation name)* social media page(s) the administrators should be contacted as per the FAI Social Media Policy. This information should be removed within seven days.

To be completed by Parent/ Guardian

- I consent to *(organisations name)* using my child's name on social media.
- I consent to *(organisations name)* taking photographs or videoing my child.
- I confirm that I have been made aware of how the organisation will use these images or videos and how these images or videos will be stored within the organisation.
- I confirm that I have read, or been made aware of the FAI Social Media Policy.
- I confirm that my child is not subject to family, care or legal proceedings.

Signature of Parent/ Guardian	
Print name of Parent/ Guardian	
Date	

To be completed by the Club Chairman

Signature of Club Chairman	
Print name of Club Chairman	
Date	



Football Association of Ireland

Organisation Name	
Person's Name	

In accordance with the FAI Social Media Policy, *(insert organisation name)* will not permit personal details, photographs or videos to be taken without the consent of the individual.

If at any time, the individual wishes images or their details to be removed from *(insert organisation name)* social media page(s) the administrators should be contacted as per the FAI Social Media Policy. This information should be removed within seven days.

To be completed by the Individual

- I consent to *(organisations name)* using my name on social media.
- I consent to *(organisations name)* taking photographs or videoing me.
- I confirm that I have been made aware of how the organisation will use these images or videos and how these images or videos will be stored within the organisation.
- I confirm that I have read, or been made aware of the FAI Social Media Policy.

Signature of Individual	
Date	

To be completed by the Club Chairman

Signature of Club Chairman	
Print name of Club Chairman	
Date	

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