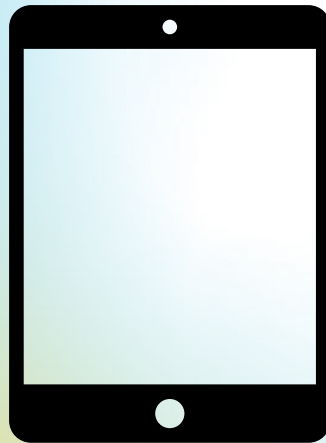


Athletics Ireland Social Media Guidelines



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Introduction

THIS POLICY IS DRAFTED IN LINE WITH OUR PILLAR VALUES OF INTEGRITY, RESPECT, INCLUSION & EXCELLENCE AND LOOKS TO PROTECT OUR ASSOCIATION, COMMITTEES, AND MEMBERS.

Athletics Ireland embraces technology across the spectrum of our sport and business. We value the importance of communication.

This document will provide guidance on procedures which support and underpin the use of social media and communication within our clubs.

The guidance applies to all staff, volunteers, coaches and officials, or anyone working on behalf of the Association and within our club network.

Each of our members takes personal responsibility for adhering to this guidance and understands the impact of what we publish on behalf of our sport as well as on our personal pages.

What is Social Media

The Definition

The term social media refers to many platforms which are constantly changing and evolving to suit the needs of our society. When we say social media, we are referring to the sharing of information and communication via the internet. Social media can be seen as anywhere we as a group or as individuals share stories and photos, videos and information using online technology.

The Platforms

- Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Visco , Snapchat, BeReal
 - TikTok, YouTube, Vimeo
 - Associated Websites
 - Messaging Platforms: WhatsApp, SMS, Viber
-

There is no requirement for all clubs to use all available platforms. Each club can choose based on how best to promote their club effectively, and safely. Consider your audience and then look at how best to get your message across to the largest number of people quickly.

Within our clubs the most effective way to disseminate information regarding training or events has become through platforms such as WhatsApp.

They are quick, accessible, and widely used among our club members. Their primary use is to communicate formally. Whichever way we choose to communicate with our members we ask that the guidelines outlined in this document are adhered to.

We value the importance of communicating with all stakeholders, whether listening or engaging and above all we value clarity of messaging. Across our strategic Pillars communication is key.

We understand that our members will have personal Social Media accounts for their own use. We ask that this remains separate to your club account and remain mindful of all content.

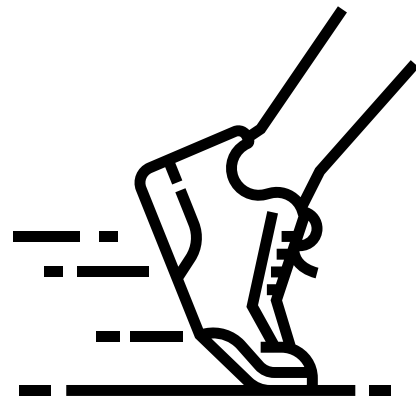
Guidelines for Account Set-Up

WHAT IS THE PLATFORM USED FOR?

Before setting up any social media accounts, it's important that we look at what they will be used for and more importantly who our audience will be.

In general, at a club level, we need to regularly inform our members about:

- training sessions
- competitions
- meetings
- coaching news
- fundraising
- AGM's



We use Facebook to inform our club members and friends of what our club is involved in within the community as well as outside of it.

We can add posters detailing races, competitions, or fundraising. We include photos, videos and live feeds providing a platform for interaction, feedback, and suggestions.



Guidelines for Account Set-Up



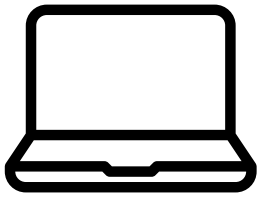
-
- All club social media accounts must be a group, organization and community or sports page. For example, on Facebook a Sports page, on Instagram an Organisation Account.
 - A personal page should not be used to communicate with children.
 - Any open community or group forums should include restrictions on members to share information. Club members should not add each other as friends. They simply "Like" the page to follow posts on Facebook or "Follow" on other social networks.
 - Understand the safety aspects including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when using digital technology such as social networking sites (e.g. Twitter and Facebook), mobile phones, game consoles and the internet.
 - When engaging with social media it is important to ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.
 - Review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated
 - a. Reporting online concerns about possible abuse to the Statutory Authorities (HSE/Gardai)
 - b. Reporting breaches of terms of Athletics Ireland policy to Club Management Committee
 - Decide how your sports webpage/profile will be managed within the club.
 - a. Vet administrators and those managing the webpage/profile
 - b. Training for the person/s managing the organisation's online profile
 - c. Involve the club's Designated Liaison Person (Children's Officer)
 - d. Ensure any interactive content is moderated e.g. club social network page/boards/posts/tweets/forums etc.



Guidelines for Account Set-Up

- Ensure that adequate privacy settings are in place either restricting or allowing access to photos, personal information, comments about others, friends, and followers.
- Ensure staff and volunteers, including coaches and athletes, are aware of the need to protect their privacy online. Staff and volunteers should be encouraged by the club/organisation to carefully consider who they give access to their personal information online. All staff and volunteers should ensure that a clear differentiation between their personal and professional profiles.
- Address safety when adding content to your webpage/profile:
 - a.Promote safe and responsible use #
 - b.Avoid taking personal details of children and young people
 - c.When uploading content – ‘think before you post’
 - d.Report fake or impostor webpage/profiles.
- Address safeguarding when promoting the club, sport, events, and competitions.





Social Media & Children

Our social media platforms are integral to the promotion of our clubs and our sport.

We place a great emphasis on making our platforms safe spaces and to provide guidance on the procedures that will support and underpin the use of social media and communicating with children in our athletics clubs.

It is important that all staff, volunteers, coaches and officials, or anyone working on behalf of the club are aware of this guidance and agree to the following terms.

Terms:

- To protect all children and young people attending the club who make use of technology to interact with the club eg Mobile phones, handheld devices and the internet.
- To provide staff and volunteers with guidance and procedure information regarding communicating with children.
- To ensure the club is operating in line with Athletics Ireland guidance. Coaches and Leaders should never place themselves in a compromising position by texting or communicating with children via social media.

All communications should be sent via approved club channels to the parents or guardians of the athlete.

The following should apply when communicating with children:

- Use a club group text or online system for communicating with parents/guardians of athletes.
- Do not communicate individually by text or online with children.
- Do not engage in communications with children via personal social media sites.
- Always use approved club group text or social media sites to communicate with children. All club Facebook pages must be a group, organization and community or sports page.



Moderating & Monitoring

The PRO

Social Media accounts are the responsibility of your club PRO who may enlist the help of other club members.

Their role is to monitor the content and provide responses to posts and feedback.

All PRO's and administrators should be aware of the privacy and safety settings on the social media page. The administrators of the Social Media page should be known throughout the club.

The aim of the club is to share our clubs' activities & plans to the widest audience possible to promote our club far and wide. This creates a need for a moderator who will follow up on comments made on Social Media posts, photo's & videos.

Feedback

We should be mindful that we will receive both positive and negative feedback allowing our followers to express their opinions if they are not offensive, libellous, or defamatory.

If we become aware of any breach of social media guidelines, we should contact the PRO or Club Chair immediately.

The best way to prepare for negative feedback is to firstly know that it may occur and to respond quickly and appropriately.

- Issues should be acknowledged and dealt with appropriately on all forums. If a resolution or change is required this should be affected swiftly
- Respond positively to any criticism, take it on board
- Take the necessary steps to address any issues arising



Moderating & Monitoring

Forums

There are a few ways that we can protect our social media forums.

Ensure that our content is accurate and up to date.

Outline the channels of communication and what is considered misuse of social media to your club members.

Regularly check in on platform updates and privacy settings.

Know your Platform – is there a moderation tool available to you when setting up your account? When using Facebook for example, you can block words and set up a profanity filter.

Snapchat is a mobile only messaging app which is difficult to monitor and from a Safeguarding perspective is not recommended for use by our clubs.

Use the Direct Messaging function on your social media platform only where appropriate. Coaches should never message underage athletes via DM's.



Guidelines for WhatsApp

WhatsApp is an instant messaging app that has become a popular way of sharing information in sport. It is often used to communicate training times to groups, share information on events as well as general dissemination of information to parents and coaches. The proprietary, cross-platform app uses the Internet to send text messages, images, video, user location and audio media messages. It has become very popular in clubs and societies who use it to communicate to groups. WhatsApp use is informal in its nature. There will be members who do not and will not wish to join the club's parent or adult training WhatsApp groups. These members will still rely on formal notifications from the club regarding their training or the training of their children.

If our clubs decide to use WhatsApp as an informal means of communication (in addition to official club channels), we must do so with explicit consent from the person to be included in the WhatsApp group. We should take time to research which is the safest format for our members and ensure that the group's intended use is clear from the outset. When setting up new groups it is imperative that the participants consent is always sought through a formal request to join and an option to decline. Participants should never be automatically added.

This is a requirement under GDPR legislation.



Guidelines for WhatsApp

Here are two ways to facilitate setting up a WhatsApp group:

WhatsApp Broadcasting – A Broadcast List “allows us to create, save, and message a list of contacts instantaneously. Recipients receive the message like a regular message. However – recipients do not know who else received the message Broadcast List and when responding it is to the sender only (like an email bcc)

WhatsApp Groups Invite Link – Members/Parents receive a text message to click on a link to join a WhatsApp group. Options offered are Cancel or Join Group.



The groups Administrator, generally the Sports Leader/Coach or Manager must be an adult. They will name the group and control who is invited to join and where necessary is responsible for removing people. The Admin is responsible for the members content and therefore should outline what the group will be used for from the outset. We would advise that the content of WhatsApp messages are as short and straightforward as possible. WhatsApp is not the correct medium for messages which are numerous lines long. Groups should not be used for private conversations with anyone else using the group. Children (U18) should not be included in WhatsApp groups.



Guidelines for WhatsApp

There are some concerns surrounding the use of WhatsApp for our Athletic Groups.

- General WhatsApp groups can add participants without their prior consent
- Participants telephone numbers are visible on the group as is their profile picture. This is a GDPR concern
- Unsuitable material is often posted to a WhatsApp group and can be difficult to remove
- Photographs and Videos shared on the group remain in the camera roll on all participants phones
- The Administrator does not have the ability to audit the groups content

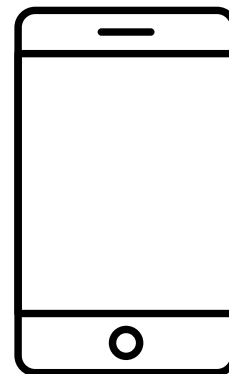
In summary we suggest that you:

- Set up Groups which require participant consent
- Never use WhatsApp to communicate with your Juveniles
- Children (u18) should never be part of a WhatsApp group. The safeguarding concern is that users can see personal phone numbers of users and their pictures
- Inform participants of its intended use and how it should be used
- Ensure members have a mechanism to report inappropriate content

WhatsApp is **not recommended** to replace email or SMS as an official communication channel.



Protect Yourself, Protect Your Club



All too often social media Platforms are used for negative and sometimes harmful reasons. Often seen as a safe space to share information and photo's it can become a dark place where bullying, intimidation, personal attacks, and even abuse can occur.

Cyberbullying is defined as the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature. Cyberbullying incidents have tripled since the last decade seeing typically 35% of children aged between 12 and 17 being victims of this crime.

Misuse of social media can in some cases constitute a criminal offence. As social media users we moderate our own contributions, and we urge our members to carefully consider each post and like. Think about who can see your post, would you like to see this written about you?

Consider the impact likes, comments or shares may have on those who read them. If you have any doubts or questions about what you are about to post then do not post, seek advice.

If you have been a victim of cyber bullying the best way to proceed is to

- Not respond to abusive or bullying messages
- Talk to someone about the messages received if they are causing distress
- Contact the relevant social media platform to have any messages or images removed
- Block the offender immediately
- Contact An Garda Síochána for further help

We should never underestimate the effect social media bullying, trolling and unwanted comments can have on our mental health. Remember there is always someone willing to listen.



CONTACT INFORMATION:

For more information related to Social Media please email: marketing@athleticsireland.ie

If you have any concerns about content shared or posted on social media you can speak with Tusla (tusla.ie) or your local Gardai. Alternatively you can email your concerns to childwelfare@athleticsireland.ie

If you wish to contact a social worker in Tusla click on the “reporting a concern” button on the Tusla.ie homepage and select your county. That will give you details for your local Duty Social Work office. The following link will also bring you to that page.

<https://www.tusla.ie/children-first/contact-a-social-worker3/>

For GDPR related information please see: <https://www.athleticsireland.ie/about/gdpr>

