



Online and Social Media Policy

Policy Statement:

Rathnew AFC (The Club) understands that the use of Social Media helps promote football and The Club, if used appropriately. Members should use social media in a responsible, respectful, and friendly manner. When using sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. members should not post negative comments about referees/opponents/teammates/coaches or any other member of The Club, or any other club. Cyber/online bullying is completely unacceptable and will not be tolerated, and poor behaviour online will be treated as a breach of the Code of Conduct of The Club.

This Policy outlines the standards The Club requires when using Social Media. The Policy is applicable to all individuals working/volunteering within The Club. The Policy has been established to ensure the interests of children, young persons and vulnerable persons participating in The Club remains of paramount importance. It ensures that all members are aware of the negative impact social media can have on our all members, and gives guidance on how to avoid them. Breach of the Policy may be dealt with using the disciplinary procedures of The Club and, in serious cases, may be treated as gross misconduct leading to a Stand Down Order, ban, or dismissal from The Club.

This Policy has been approved by the Committee of The Club. Any proposals for additions and/or amendments to the Policy will be considered by the CCO and DLP on an ongoing basis.

The Club has overall responsibility for the effective operation of the Policy. However, every individual is responsible for their own compliance with the Policy and for ensuring that it is consistently applied.

Personal Use of Social media Sites:

Rathnew AFC 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 should be borne in mind when using any online communications:

1. You are responsible for your own conduct when using any form of social media.
2. Your personal views should not conflict with your existing role in The Club, nor should it disparage or denigrate The Club in any way. 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 Club and its members, the league, and the FAI.
4. As a basic rule, if you are not happy with others seeing particular comments, media or information, then simply do not post these materials on a public forum or site.
5. When making use of any social media platform, you must read and comply with its terms of use. 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. 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.
7. Do not engage with irate players, parents, or coaches on a public forum. Organise a meeting to allow all parties to discuss possible outcomes.
8. If you are a team manager or Club official you should not:
 - accept any player or referee who is under 18 as a friend on your personal social media page.
 - communicate with any person under 18 through social media, text message, phone or email.
9. 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.
10. Ensure personal blogs have clear disclaimers that the views expressed are personal and not representative of The Club.
11. Ensure that information published on social media sites complies with The Club's Code of Conduct.
12. Beware of how your actions could be captured via images, posts or comments online as these will also reflect on The Club.

Setting up and running a social media page on behalf of The Club:

1. Do not use personal details to set up the social media page, you should use The Club's email address. All account log in details should be kept safe and secure to avoid possible hacking.
2. When setting up an email address, website and/or social media page for The Club it should be accessed by at least two administrators. These administrators will be responsible for uploading 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.
3. It is important to ensure everyone within The Club is aware of who is administering our social media page(s).
4. Each administrator should be familiar with the privacy and safety settings on the social media page to ensure it is for use by The Club only.



5. The Club will not accept anyone under the age of 13 on our social media pages, and we will report underage users to the child's parents or the social media outlet.
6. Any user under the age of 18 looking to join our social media page should have provided written parental/guardian consent in advance, and a sound reasoning.
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.
8. To avoid any inappropriate material appearing on our social media page we need to enable the appropriate privacy settings. This will ensure that we can manage the content on our social media page to avoid any distress or reputational damage. The content on our page should be accurate and up to date and any material that is no longer required should be removed.
9. Any inappropriate use, such as bullying, is strictly prohibited, and should be noted in the Incident Book and reported to the Children's Officer immediately.
10. 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.
11. If you are unsure about something you are about to post, then don't do it. Always consider who will be able to view it and if in doubt, always discuss it with the Club Children's Officer first.

Setting up and running an app on behalf of The Club:

Any social media application used for team communication purposes is provided as a service and convenience to the Club Officials, Team Managers, Parents and Players. Comments including, but not limited to, the following may result in disciplinary action if deemed inappropriate or irrelevant, by the administrators:

- Abusive or hurtful comments about The Club Officials, Team Managers, Parents and Players or opposing players, managers, parents or match officials.
- Off-topic and redundant comments (this includes promotion or solicitation of events, groups, pages, websites, organisations and products not related to or affiliated with Rathnew AFC)
- Comments that use foul language or "hate speech" (for example, including but not limited to racial, ethnic or gender-bashing language)
- Personal attacks or defamatory statements or comments (i.e., making negative personal, speculative, or untrue comments about a participant)
- Comments that violate the privacy of any individual



- Comments that are derogatory characterizations of any ethnic, racial, gender, professional, age or religious group
- Content that defames, misrepresents, or contains disparaging remarks about other people, officials, or clubs
- Comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity
- Comments or links to sites that contain viruses or malicious software
- Comments containing explicit or pornographic words or images.

Photography and Filming:

There are inherent risks in posting personal information about children or vulnerable persons as it can lead to being able to identify 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 uploading 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 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/or bedrooms if away).
6. Camera phones **should never** be allowed into children's changing rooms, showers, toilets (and/or bedrooms if away).
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. 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.
9. Specific details concerning the policy in relation to photography and filming should, wherever possible, be published prominently.
10. The Club **must never** allow unsupervised access to children, one to one photo sessions or photo sessions outside the event, or at a child's home.



Tag or add official online profiles of Rathnew AFC to your posts:

- Twitter: @RathnewAFC
- Facebook: @RathnewAFC
- Instagram: @RathnewAFC

Suggested Hashtags

- #RathnewAFC
- #UpTheVillage
- #OneVillageOneClub
- #WDFL
- #WDSL

Finally, remember, if you are representing The Club in an official capacity, it is important that your posts convey the same positive spirit as The Club ethos would instil in all its communications. Be respectful of all individuals, races, religions and cultures. How you conduct yourself online not only reflects on you; it also reflects directly on The Club.

The Rathnew AFC Committee