



## **Sheffield Football Club Social Media Policy**

### **Overview**

Social media offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest and create, share or consume content. As a public-facing organisation, Sheffield Football Club recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool of engagement, to communicate with and market promotions to our customers and supporters.

It is important that the reputation of Sheffield Football Club, as well as affiliated sponsors and partners, is not tarnished in any way by anyone using social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that directly references Sheffield Football Club.

When someone clearly identifies their association with Sheffield Football Club, or can easily be associated with Sheffield Football Club in this type of open forum, they are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately and in a manner that is consistent with Sheffield Football Club's media and communications policy.

The purpose of this social media policy is to provide some guiding principles for players, coaches, and volunteers of Sheffield Football Club to follow when using social media. This policy does not apply to the personal use of social media platforms by Sheffield Football Club where no reference or inference is made to Sheffield Football Club or any associated partners, sponsors or projects.

### **Scope**

This policy applies to all players, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers of Sheffield Football Club. This policy covers all forms of social media. Social media includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, etc)
- Content sharing including using sites such as Flickr (photo sharing) and YouTube (video sharing)
- Commenting on blogs for personal or business reasons
- Leaving product or service reviews on retailer sites or customer review sites
- Taking part in online votes and polls
- Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums (message boards)
- Editing a Wikipedia page

The intent of this policy is to include anything posted online where information is shared that might affect directors, office bearers, sponsors, partners, customers, or supporters of Sheffield Football Club as an organisation and the reputation of both the club, and the competitions which Sheffield Football Club may participate in.

### **Guiding Principles**

The web is not anonymous. Sheffield Football Club, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers should assume that everything they write online, especially in open forums, can be traced back to them. Individuals should be aware that they may be personally liable to prosecution, and open to claims for damages, should

your actions be found to be in breach of the law. In cases of harassment, a claim that you had not intended to harass or cause offence will not in itself constitute an acceptable defence.

Due to the nature of Sheffield Football Club the boundaries between personal and professional profiles and any associated opinions and comments can often be blurred. As such, it is essential that Sheffield Football Club players, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers clearly acknowledge this ambiguity when posting anything online and consider at all times their connection to Sheffield Football Club and, as such, their role as a representative of the club.

When using the internet for professional or personal pursuits, all Sheffield Football Club staff must respect the brands of Sheffield Football Club our partners, sponsors, the associations to which we are members, as well as other staff, following the guidelines in place to ensure that the intellectual property of Sheffield Football Club and our affiliated associations is not compromised and the organisation is not brought into disrepute.

### **Usage**

All Sheffield Football Club coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers using social media must operate within the Sheffield Football Club Code of Conduct when engaging with electronic communications and social media. Such use:

- Must not contain, or link to, libellous, defamatory or harassing content – this also applies to the use of illustrations or nicknames
- Must not comment on, or publish information that is confidential in any way
- Must not bring (or be perceived to bring) Sheffield Football Club or the sport and any affiliated governing bodies into disrepute
- Must refrain from posts supporting discrimination whether by reason of sex, sexual orientation, race, nationality, ethnic origin, colour, religion or disability
- Must refrain from posts of an overtly political nature – political impartiality should be maintained no matter what personal political beliefs are held
- Must not be directly linked with any players aged 18 or below from a personal social networking account
- Must not post named photographs of under 18s without parental/guardian agreement
- Must not otherwise be in breach of the Sheffield Football Club Media & Communications Policy or Code of Conduct.

### **Branding & Intellectual Property**

It is important that any trademarks belonging to Sheffield Football Club or any affiliated competition or governing body, are not used in personal social media applications, except where such use can be considered incidental – (where incidents is taken to mean “happening in subordinate conjunction with something else”)

### **Official Sheffield Football Club Blogs, Social Pages & Online Forums**

When creating a new website, social networking page or forum that is in any way or can in any way be judged to be associated with Sheffield Football Club care should be taken to ensure the appropriate person is given permission to create the page or forum.

Similarly, appropriate permissions must be obtained for the use of logos or images. Images of children may not be replicated on any site without the permission of the child’s parents and/or guardian.

For official Sheffield Football Club blogs, social pages and online forums:

- Posts must not contain, nor link to, pornographic or indecent content
- Some hosted sites may sell the right to advertise on their sites through “pop up” content, which may be of a questionable nature. This type of hosted site should not be used for online forum or social pages as the nature of “pop up” content cannot be controlled
- Sheffield Football Club members must not use official Sheffield Football Club pages to promote personal projects
- All materials published or used must respect the copyright of third parties.

### Consideration Towards Others When Using Social Networking Sites

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. Sheffield Football Club coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers must recognise that it may not be appropriate to share photographs, videos and comments in this way.

For example, there may be an expectation that photographs taken at private Sheffield Football Club functions will not appear publicly or on the internet. In certain situations, Sheffield Football Club players, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers could potentially breach the Privacy Act or inadvertently make Sheffield Football Club liable for breach of copyright.

Sheffield Football Club players, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers should be considerate to others in such circumstances and should not post information when they have been asked not to or consent has not been sought and given. They must also remove information about another person should they be asked to do so.

Under no circumstances should offensive comments be made about Sheffield Football Club, club staff or any affiliated partners or sponsors online.

### **Breach of Policy**

Sheffield Football Club will continually monitor online activity in relation to the club and the sport. Detected breaches of this policy should be reported to Sheffield Football Club.

If detected, a breach of this policy may, following investigation, result in formal disciplinary action from Sheffield Football Club under the Sheffield Football Club disciplinary procedures detailed in the Club's Code Of Conduct. A breach of this policy may also amount to breaches of other Sheffield Football Club documents and policies. Disciplinary action may involve a verbal or written warning or, in serious cases, termination of engagement with Sheffield Football Club.

### **Consultation Or Advice**

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for Sheffield Football Club players, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers in a new area of social interaction. Sheffield Football Club players, coaches, directors, office bearers and volunteers who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online and seek clarification should contact a member of the relevant board/committee within Sheffield Football Club via: [richard.sheldon@sheffieldfc.com](mailto:richard.sheldon@sheffieldfc.com)