

SCOTTISH YOUTH FA



Social Media, Online Communication and Media Policy

For all employees and members of the Scottish Youth FA



Safe, supervised and positive online communication.

Purpose

This policy helps everyone connected to the Scottish Youth FA (SYFA) use phones, laptops, social media, group chats, photographs, video, and other media communications safely and respectfully.

Version

2026 revised draft

Applies to

All employees and members of SYFA inc. players, parents/carers, coaches/officials and volunteers

Review

Annually, or sooner if guidance or legislation changes

Owner

Club Board & Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer

One-page quick guide

Before posting, messaging or sharing anything connected to SYFA, ask yourself:

1	2	3
Would I say this in front of the youngest child in SYFA?	Would I be comfortable with this being shown to parents, coaches, or a referee?	Does this protect the safety, privacy and dignity of young people?

If the answer is NO, do not post it.

Use official club channels, keep messages football-related, and report concerns early.

Golden rules

- The safety and well-being of young people always come first.
- No one-to-one private messaging between adults in positions of trust and players under 18.
- Use SYFA-approved channels for football information, including fixtures, training, cancellations, travel and kit.
- Do not criticise children, coaches, parents, volunteers, referees, opponents, leagues, clubs, teams or governing bodies online.
- Do not share photographs, videos or match footage unless consent has been obtained and club guidance has been followed.
- Report bullying, harassment, inappropriate messages, grooming concerns or privacy breaches to the CWPO.
- SYFA accounts should have secure access controls and at least two authorised adult administrators.

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how digital communication, social media, online platforms, images, video, match footage and media contact should be used by everyone connected to SYFA.

The aim is to promote the club positively, celebrate football safely, protect children and young people, and ensure communication is respectful, transparent and appropriate for a youth football environment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- players of all ages, including under-18 players
- parents and carers
- coaches, assistants, team admins and volunteers
- club officials and committee members
- anyone posting, messaging or commenting in a way that links them to SYFA including staff

It applies to all platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, Spond, TeamApp, email, text messages, websites, blogs, forums, and any future communication platforms.

3. Core principles

Safe	Protect children and young people from harm, embarrassment, bullying, grooming, unwanted contact and privacy breaches.
Respectful	Treat players, coaches, referees, opponents, volunteers and parents with courtesy online and offline.
Transparent	Use open, club-approved channels wherever possible and avoid private one-to-one communication with children.
Football-related	Keep team communication focused on football matters such as training, fixtures, travel, kit and club updates.
Positive	Use online platforms to celebrate effort, teamwork, development and success.

4. Communication with players

4.1 Coaches, volunteers and officials

- Do not communicate privately with a player under 18 through a personal account or private direct message.
- If direct communication is unavoidable, another adult must be copied in, such as a parent/carer or another authorised coach.
- Messages must be necessary, professional and football-related.
- Adults should not add, follow, friend or tag under-18 players from personal accounts where there is a position of trust.
- Adults must not use club channels for personal conversations, jokes, banter or non-football matters with children.
- Phone numbers and email addresses for children and young people must be kept secure and only accessed by those who need them for their role.

4.2 Players

- Be respectful in messages, group chats and posts.
- Do not post bullying, insults, gossip, rumours, offensive language or harmful images.
- Do not create unofficial team chats that exclude or target others.
- Tell a parent/carer, coach or trusted adult if a message makes you feel worried, uncomfortable, embarrassed or unsafe.
- If someone asks you to keep a message secret from your parent/carer, tell a trusted adult straight away.



Think before posting; privacy, respect and safety matter.

5. Parents and carers

Parents and carers play an important role in shaping the tone of youth football. Adults' online behaviour can affect children, volunteers, the club, and the wider game.

- Use group chats for football-related information only.
- Do not post negative or inflammatory comments about children, coaches, volunteers, referees, opponents, other clubs or league decisions.
- Do not engage in online arguments about selection, playing time, tactics or match incidents.
- Do not privately message coaches about selection, tactics or playing time in a way that creates pressure or conflict. Use appropriate club channels.
- Do not share photographs or videos of other children without permission and club guidance being followed.
- Support children to report any communication that worries or upsets them.

6. Team group chats and apps

Team communication platforms should support organisation and safety, not gossip or criticism.

- Group chats should be set up through club-approved channels where possible.
- For groups involving children, more than one authorised adult should be included as administrator where possible.
- Parents/carers should be included or have visibility of arrangements for younger players.
- Admins must check that members are the intended individuals before allowing them into a group.
- Group chats must not be used to share sensitive personal information, safeguarding concerns, disciplinary matters or private club business.
- Offensive, abusive or inappropriate content must be reported and managed promptly.



Club group chats should be open, supervised and football related.

7. Photographs, videos and match footage

7.1 Safe use of images

- Images of players may only be shared where appropriate consent has been obtained.
- Children must be appropriately dressed. No photographs or filming are permitted in changing rooms, toilets or private areas.
- Do not tag children or identify them in posts unless parents/carers have explicitly agreed.
- Only publish a player's FULL name if you have explicit consent from a parent/carer
- Do not share sensitive information such as injuries, safeguarding matters, disciplinary issues, home addresses, schools or contact details.
- Images must be positive and must not embarrass, mock or single out a child.

7.2 Filming matches and training

- Filming may be used for coaching, analysis, player development and positive promotion.
- Before filming a match involving another team, the club should make reasonable efforts to inform the opposition and explain whether footage is for internal use or public sharing.
- If matches are going to be streamed live, permission must be sought, in advance, from both teams AND the match officials
- Respect requests from teams, parents/carers or individuals where there are privacy or safeguarding reasons not to film or publish footage.
- Footage must never be used to criticise, embarrass or target a child, referee, coach, volunteer or opponent.
- Third-party requests to film, broadcast or use footage should be referred to the SYFA Head of Operations or Media Lead.

8. Official club social media accounts

Official accounts represent SYFA and must reflect the club values of respect, teamwork, integrity and inclusion.

8.1 Account control

- Only authorised adults may post from official SYFA accounts.
- No official account should be controlled by only one person. At least two authorised adults should have appropriate access.
- Passwords, login details and recovery information must be stored securely and not shared casually.
- Access must be reviewed regularly and removed promptly when a coach, volunteer or official leaves the club or no longer needs access.
- Official club accounts must not be used for personal communication or personal opinions.

8.2 Content standards

- Content should be positive, inclusive, accurate and suitable for a youth audience.
- Do not post criticism of referees, match officials, opponents, other clubs, leagues or governing bodies.
- Do not publish confidential club business, safeguarding matters, disciplinary issues or private correspondence.
- Consider account settings to prohibit comments or replies
- Monitor comments on SYFA posts and remove or report abusive, discriminatory or inappropriate content where safe and appropriate to do so.
- Where a post may provide evidence of criminality or safeguarding concern, do not delete it until the CWPO or appropriate authority has advised what to do.

9. Media and public comment

SYFA recognises the value of positive media coverage and responsible online visibility. However, public comment must be handled carefully.

- Any approach from the press, media outlet, external organisation or broadcaster should be referred to the Media Lead before comment is made.
- Players, parents/carers, coaches and officials should not make public comments on behalf of the club unless authorised to do so.
- Concerns about referees, opponents, league decisions, selection, coaching decisions or club matters must be raised through appropriate club channels, not debated on social media or in the media.
- It is acceptable to say no comment or to decline to answer a media question until club guidance has been sought.
- Private or confidential matters must not be shared with the media without appropriate permission from all relevant parties.

10. Copyright and content ownership

- Only use images, videos, music, graphics or written content that the SYFA has permission to use.
- Where content is provided by a photographer, another club, a governing body or another organisation, give credit where appropriate.
- Do not copy, download or republish material if the club does not have permission or a lawful basis to use it.
- If you are in doubt, ask the Media Lead before posting.

11. Coaches, volunteers or officials leaving the club

- When a role ends, access to SYFA social media accounts, group chats, shared drives, team apps and contact lists must be removed as soon as possible.
- A person leaving the SYFA must not use SYFA communication platforms, details or social media groups to encourage others to leave.
- SYFA property, passwords, account details and communication records must be handed back or transferred securely.

12. Reporting concerns

Report early

Any concern about online behaviour, communication, images, videos, bullying, harassment, privacy or safeguarding should be reported to the Child Wellbeing and Protection Officer (CWPO).

Email: syfaProtection@scottish-football.com

Tel: 07946-051631

Examples of reportable concerns include:

- bullying, harassment or discriminatory comments
- inappropriate or private messages to a child or young person
- grooming or requests for secrecy
- sharing harmful images, screenshots or personal information
- breaches of consent, privacy or safe image guidance
- threatening, offensive or abusive posts or messages
- media or online content that could harm the club, a child or the wider game



A worried player should be supported and helped to report concerns.

12.1 Evidence and response

- Where safe, take screenshots or preserve evidence of concerning messages or posts.
- Do not respond to abusive or inappropriate posts. Block, report and escalate where appropriate.
- The CWPO will review concerns promptly and follow relevant safeguarding procedures.
- Serious concerns may be referred to the Scottish FA, Police Scotland, Social Work or other statutory agencies.

13. Breaches of this policy

Breaches will be considered in line with the seriousness of the issue, the age and role of the person involved, safeguarding considerations and any applicable club, league or governing body procedures.

- request to remove or amend a post
- warning or guidance conversation
- temporary or permanent removal from a chat or platform
- meeting with player, parent/carer, coach or official
- restriction or removal of access to SYFA accounts
- suspension
- removal from official role
- referral to a governing body or statutory agency where appropriate

14. Practical checklists

Before posting	Before filming	Before adding someone to a chat
• Is it positive and respectful? • Does it protect children and young people? • Do we have consent for images or FULL names? • Could it embarrass or target anyone? • Would I be happy for parents, children, referees and club officials to see it?	• Is there a clear purpose? • Have opponents been informed where appropriate? • Is it internal coaching footage or public content? • Have privacy or safeguarding requests been considered? • Will the footage be stored and shared safely?	• Are they the correct person? • Do they need access? • Are parents/carers included or informed where appropriate? • Are there at least two suitable adults as admins, where possible? • Is the chat only for football matters?

15. Policy sources and review notes

This revised document has been prepared for SYFA by combining and tailoring guidance from the following materials:

- Scottish FA Communication and Social Media guidance.
- SYFA Social Media Usage Policy (2014)
- Scottish Women's Football Social Media, Online, and Media Policy 2023/24.

This document will be reviewed annually by the SYFA Communications Officer and CWPO and updated if Scottish FA, SYFA or statutory safeguarding guidance changes.

