COUNTY AGE GROUP
SQUADS

Social Media and Communication Policy

Kent Cricket is committed to safeguarding and protecting all young people under the age of 18. This policy provides guidance on how Kent Cricket staff and players use the internet and social media and the procedures for doing so. It also gives guidance on our expectations for staff and volunteers who work with us and how we expect young cricketers who are part of our talent pathway and Academy to behave online.

Problems, misunderstanding and grooming have all occurred within sport where coaches and others working with children start to become overfamiliar with them when using social media and messaging. All advice is primarily to safeguard children, but this advice if heeded, will also safeguard staff. Kent Cricket staff must recognise they are in a position of trust and any breaches of this Policy may be referred to Police, Statutory Services, or the ECB.

Aims

The aims of our social media policy are:

- To protect all children and young people involved within Kent Cricket and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles, i pads, computers and the internet) while in our care
- To provide staff, volunteers, county age group and Academy players with our policy and procedures for online safety and inform them of how to respond to incidents
- To ensure Kent Cricket is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

Guidance on age appropriate communications

16 to 18-year-old Talent Pathway and Academy players – the coach or team manager may communicate by message (eg text, WhatsApp) with individual talent pathway or Academy players, or squads about their cricket programme, provided parental permission has been granted **and the parent is always copied in**.

Under 16 Talent Pathway and Academy players
Staff must not communicate with any county age group players under the age of 16 by message (eg text, WhatsApp). **Communication must always be with the parent/guardian**.

Parental waivers to this Policy must not be accepted

What do we mean by "Social Media"

Any form of electronic communication allowing people to interact and share information. This includes social networking (including Facebook, twitter, LinkedIn) and media/photo/ video sharing sites (including Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Pinterest) and interacting via messaging on our phones (texts, instant messages, WhatsApp etc) and blogging. Mobile phones, computers, i pads, games consoles etc can all be used for social media. Social media platforms are continuously evolving – it is impossible to list every site here and if you are unclear about the meaning of any part of this Policy, you must ask the County Welfare Officer.

What we expect of our Staff and Volunteers

When using Social Media, Staff should always:

- Be aware of this Policy and abide by it
- Ensure they always copy the parents in, if it is a message to an individual county age group player over the age of 16
- Use this medium to disseminate information about training or matches and do not enter into any other dialogue with them. This is to ensure no misunderstandings occur regarding your conduct or intentions, and to safeguard you too
- Report anything to the County Welfare Officer straight away, if it causes you concern. For example, if you receive any e mail, text or other communication from a child that causes you concern, or appears overfamiliar
- Make it clear to talent pathway players and Academy players that they must copy their parent into any texts, e mails or social media messages they are sending you
- Use professional language and behaviour when using social media

If you are running the Men's or Women's team and you have any players under the age of 18, these rules apply. Care must be taken if players are sending messages to each other; if they are including U18s in these messages the content must be appropriate and you must make your squad members aware of this.

Staff must never:

- Communicate with any county age group player or Academy player under the age of 18 by connecting on any social media network (eg Facebook, Twitter etc) **
- Use social media networks to connect and 'Friend' or 'follow' county age group players or Academy players under the age of 18 **
- Accept any talent pathway player or Academy player under the age of 18 as a 'friend' on a social media network (eg Facebook/other)

- Post anything inappropriate on their own account, or anything that could reasonably be considered offensive or bring the sport or Kent Cricket into disrepute
- Sign off messages with emojis or 'kisses/xxx'
- Take, send or forward images of people that are illegal, offensive or invading someone's privacy
- Communicate with any talent pathway player under the age of 16 via messaging (eg text, WhatsApp) – always communicate with the parents

** except family members

If staff would like to set up any form of closed group for their squad that does not meet the criteria above, they must speak with their Line Manager or County Welfare Officer first.

What we Expect of our County Age Group and Academy Players

- Our county age group and Academy players should be aware of this social media policy and agree to its terms
- We expect our players' behaviour online to be consistent with this guidance and this relates to all digital devices including smart phones, tablets, consoles, i-pads, computers etc
- Players must not engage in bullying on social media, or making offensive or upsetting comments about other players, officials or staff
- Players must not engage in "sexting"(sending someone sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sending sexually explicit messages) or sending pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing.
- Players under the age of 16 must never communicate with staff via messaging
- Players aged 16 or over must only contact the coach/team manager by messaging if they also copy their parents in to all messages
- No player under the age of 18 must ask coaches or team managers to be their 'friend' on social media. If a coach or team manager asks them to be a 'friend' this must be reported immediately to the County Welfare Officer

If you are a player and are concerned that hurtful messages or indecent images of you have been circulated on line, the County Welfare Officer can support you.

The County Welfare Officer is available to support any players or staff who need help regarding the use of social media.

If you need further guidance or advice, please contact the County Welfare Officer – Bridget Owen – Bridget.Owen@Kentcricket.co.uk

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