

SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The social media and communications policy is in place to support and protect member's personal interaction with the club and other members. It covers Social Responsibility, use of media channels, video, age certification and advertising to name a few subjects. It also has guidance for under 18s. Please contact the Stratford Hockey Club (SHC) committee if you have any questions or there are any omissions.

Stratford Hockey Club, Social Media Policy

Stratford Hockey Club (SHC) recognises that social media provides an effective platform for discussion and information sharing amongst adult and junior club members. We use social media to engage and connect with our members, recruits, parents, the Stratford community, and the wider hockey community. Social media provides powerful communication opportunities. Relationships grow with personal, regular, and honest communication; therefore, social media provide us with powerful tools to build relationships.

Nevertheless, SHC also recognises that the use of social media can pose risks to its club members, reputation, and compliance with legal obligations. One inappropriate comment can cause distress to one person and impact hundreds of club members. The purpose of this policy is to protect club members, minimise risk and ensure SHC's social media is used appropriately.

This policy covers all members of Stratford Hockey Club.

The Key Message is:

Think twice before you post!

Posts on SHC's social media or media linked to SHC's social media, be it photos, comments or links should not be inappropriate. Users must not engage in activities or transmit content that is harassing, discriminatory, menacing, threatening, obscene, defamatory, or in any way objectionable or offensive. Users are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and should remember that what they publish may be available to a wide audience over a lengthy period of time. Users should not post comments which could be construed as sensitive, objectionable or inflammatory. When using social media, users should respect their audience.

Do not identify young people in images (i.e. captions to pictures, tagging on Facebook). Communication with young or vulnerable people is covered by England Hockey's Safeguarding & Protection Policy and specific guidance for Clubs. The key do's and don'ts are shown below.

Remember, the term 'young person' means those under 18 years old.

Anyone who finds a post inappropriate should email details to the Club Chairperson and Club Secretary (or Club Welfare Officer if related to an U18).

Key points

- **Think twice before posting.** If you would not want your boss, parents, or future employer to see your post, do not post it.
- **Be accurate.** If you make a mistake, own up and correct it quickly.
- **Be respectful.** Be positive. Treat others the way you would like to be treated. It's the Golden Rule!
- **Be honest.** Be transparent. Always tell the truth.
- **Be professional and polite.**
- **Remember that the internet is permanent.** Even if you delete something, it's still out there somewhere. Google has a long memory!
- **Avoid topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory, like politics and religion.**
- **Don't post anything that you wouldn't say openly in a workplace** such as comments about drug use, profanity, off-color or sexual humour, ethnic slurs, or personal insults.

- **Consider the use of humour** and whether all members of that particular social media platform would find the joke funny, the audience may consist of a wide range of people of a variety of ages and backgrounds including juniors and parents/guardians of juniors. One persons “banter” or jest may offend others.
- **Be in the right state of mind when you make a post.** Do not post when you're angry, upset, or your judgment is impaired in any way. Remember, the internet is permanent!
- **Remember many different audiences may see your posts** including the other members, the Stratford public, kids, parents, past players, other teams etc.

Sanctions

Any breaches of the policy, including the posting of inappropriate content, may be subject to SHC’s disciplinary process in accordance with the disciplinary policy from time to time

SHC will not tolerate bad language in any form, nor racism, discrimination of any kind or other abusive messages about or to any parties on any social media platforms relating to SHC.

The Club Committee should be informed of any matters relating to young or vulnerable people and the matter will be dealt with as appropriate

Issues relating to adults and the reputation of the Club should be referred to a member of the Club Committee.

The hockey leagues have made it very clear that any published inappropriate comments about opponents, umpires, officials or other clubs on social media, websites or match reports in the press, will be dealt with by them, through sanctions such as bans and point deductions.

Controls over Club Specific Social Media

Facebook

To manage the risk on Facebook, SHC has a ‘closed group’ presence on Facebook with strict controls over membership of that Group. The Group has Administrators in place to manage requests for access to the group. The administrators are designated members within the Club Committee, and they will ensure that those wishing to become part of the group are, or have been, SHC Hockey Club Members or are affiliated to the club in another way (for example regular umpires) or are bona fide supporters of the club known to the Club.

Only over 13s will be allowed to join the group, to comply with the global age restrictions for Facebook.

If unsure, administrators will liaise with relevant club members to ascertain the identity of the person requesting to join.

Twitter and Website

SHC uses a **Twitter account @StratfordHockey** and the **Website www.stratfordhockeyclub.co.uk** to represent the Club to the outside world, catering for prospective and current members as well as providing information for other clubs and general browsers seeking knowledge about SHC. For this reason, material published on these mediums is controlled by appointed administrators.

Communication with young people

As mentioned above, communication with young or vulnerable people is covered by England Hockey's Safeguarding & Protection Policy and specific guidance for Clubs. The full guidance can be found at the link below and on our website:

<https://www.englishockey.co.uk/governance/duty-of-care-in-hockey/safeguarding/good-practice>

The key do's and don'ts when communicating with young people are:

- contact players only when necessary
- if players need to be contacted urgently, e.g. for a change in training arrangement, set up a grapevine system
- copy parents into written communication (i.e. letters or emails) unless you have been given specific parental consent to communicate direct with the young player
- speak with a player and their parents if there is a need to communicate information in relation to playing, training or competition
- clearly state the club's policy on communication with players and parents.
- Contacting young people by phone, text, email or social networking site should never be undertaken without parental consent.

Avoid:

- contacting a young person unnecessarily
- e-mailing young people directly as individuals (but this can be done as part of a disclosed list, once permission has been gained to do so)
- using text or a social networking site as a medium of contact with a young person
- making or receiving calls on a mobile phone during training or at competition (coach). It is inappropriate to compromise the safety of a session
- e-mailing one young person without copying in parents, other players or club members.

Advice for Under 18's:

- Do not ask your club coach or teacher to be your social networking site friend – they will refuse as that would breach good practice.
- Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at www.ceop.gov.uk for some useful tips.
- Consider who you are inviting to be your friend and follow the good advice of the social networking sites to ensure you are talking to the person you believe you are talking to.
- Always remember that anything you say including photos, pictures and video clips posted on your site may be shared with people other than those for whom it was intended.
- Never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be: hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on; may be used by other people in a way you did not intend or want.
- Always be aware that social networking sites are a method of communication like letter writing and the spoken word. They are bound by the same laws and rules. Such technology is instant and this allows you as the user to react in the 'heat of the moment', where in the past you would have been required to write a letter which would have taken time and allowed for you to think again before sending. So never place a comment on the internet that you would not put in writing or say to the individual concerned as to do so may not only breach Stratford Hockey Club's policy, but also the law.

Advertising via any Social Media Channels

Any form of advertising of a commercial nature has to be approved by the SHC Committee, prior to being distributed through any channel that is viewed by SHC Members. These include but are not exclusive to, Facebook, LinkedIn, StratfordHockeyClub.co.uk, Twitter account @StratfordHockey and WhatsApp Groups of the type described below, as set up by Captains or other volunteers specifically for team, match or event administration.

WhatsApp - Groups for SHC

All Club members that are members of such a group created for such a purpose (team, match or Club event based) should bear in mind at all times that groups may contain a wide range of people of a variety of ages and backgrounds including juniors and parents/guardians of juniors.

Therefore, particular care should be taken with content. Do not include 'adult' material, profanities or other bad language in such groups.

The social rules of courtesy and respect that we would follow in conversation person-to-person apply as much to written content on WhatsApp. So please do not post content that is offensive, disrespectful or critical of Club members or volunteers. This is not to say humour doesn't have a place but be sensible and respectful to others and others' feelings. The wider the audience the more care is needed.

Please remember it is easy to post items in one environment or context perhaps in jest, that is not taken in the same spirit by other people out of that context. Other people may take offence when none is meant but members should please bear in mind that some members, junior members and/or parents / guardians are added to WhatsApp group as a means of assisting with the participation in the sport not to be party to others' 'locker room banter'.

Under 18s should only be added with a parent / guardian added as well unless the parent has specifically agreed in writing that the junior member should be a member without the parent / guardian. If the parent / guardian is added and then chooses to leave the group that is the parent's/guardian's choice.

Content should be kept relevant to the event / team in question. The Club is unable to monitor content. Administrators are responsible for the management of the WhatsApp groups. If a member persistently breaches these guidelines then they should be warned and/or removed.

Periodically check that the original purpose of the group is still valid and clear to the members. The responsibility rests with all Club members where necessary to 'call out' inappropriate content and/or use of WhatsApp.

Key Points in addition to those on Page 1

- Do not post anything that is confidential, sensitive, or private.
- Follow all applicable laws including those relating to libel, defamation and privacy.
- Follow all Social Media site rules.
- Respect copyright and fair use.

Video use for training and coaching

Stratford Hockey Club has invested in video equipment to enable coaches and captains to video matches as part of our coaching and development strategy.

It is the responsibility of the coach or captain (if the coach is not available) to advise the opposition and the Stratford team that the video will be in use.

Coaches (and captains) will use the video for the express purpose of reviewing play, developing training plans and coaching members. Coaches may also set up indoor training sessions to review the video(s) with the relevant team to support the training. Video footage has proven to be very useful for hockey players to review and improve their own skills and techniques.

On occasion the match video may be shared with the opposition for them to analyse their own play and provide development advice to their team. Before sharing the video, the Stratford coach or captain must confirm in writing with the opposition coach or captain that the video is to be used for training and should not be shared with any other members other than those involved in the game. This is particularly important when there are U18s in the team.

If any members or parents of U18 players have any concerns about them being captured on video, they should raise this with their captain in advance of the match.