**Social Media Policy**

The purpose of Northumberland FA’s Social Media Policy is to ensure that staff and volunteers do not participate in improper on-line behaviour or are subjected to improper allegations. Of most importance though, is this policy is designed to protect children. Northumberland FA staff and volunteers are in a position of trust and required to act responsibly in their use of electronic communication.

**Social Media Definition**

Social media is an interactive online media that allows users to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. It includes social and business networking websites such as Facebook, Myspace, Reddit, Twitter and LinkedIn. Social media also covers video and image sharing and blogging websites such as YouTube, Google+, Tumblr and Flickr, as well as personal blogs, any posts on other people’s blogs and all online forums and noticeboards. This is a constantly changing area with new websites and apps being launched on a regular basis and therefore the list is not exhaustive.

**Northumberland FA’s Social Media Policy applies in relation to any social media that staff members and volunteers may use, regardless of whether it is specifically detailed in the definition above or not.**

**Principles of Northumberland FA’s social media policy**

* Northumberland FA does not approve the use of social networking as the primary communication method between Northumberland FA staff, volunteers, children and their parents/carers
* Northumberland FA does not permit staff members or volunteers to set up social media accounts in the name of the organisation
* Where it is considered the most effective way of communicating with children is via a social media site, then Northumberland FA will set up the account in the name of the organisation and it will only be used by named Northumberland FA staff members and volunteers, as well as parents and carers. The use of the account will be solely for the purpose it was set up for.
* All children will be informed and advised to speak to a parent, carer, another trusted adult – or Northumberland FA Designated Safeguarding Officer-if they have received any communication via social media which makes them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.
* Northumberland FA will ensure that privacy settings are switched on in the social media site; and are locked so that the page(s) can only be used explicitly for Northumberland FA authorised reasons and can in no way be used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations.
* Northumberland FA will nominate a staff member (currently our MarComms Officer Dan Simmonite) to be the authorised person responsible for regularly monitoring the social media page(s) – and removing access for anyone behaving inappropriately.
* Northumberland FA will publish and make clear who the responsible person is for monitoring the content of the social networking areas – and their contact details will be available to anyone accessing the page(s)
* No child will be permitted to access the Northumberland FA social networking pages without written permission being provided by a parent or carer.

**Social Media Good Safeguarding Practice**

Northumberland FA staff members and volunteers must adhere to the following:

* Never contact or communicate with a child through social media sites; or via any other form of social media app or interface.
* Never permit a child to be added to your social media feed/s or social media apps.

Where a child requests to be added to any personal social media feed or social media app, staff and volunteers must immediately refuse the request and communicate the attempt to connect with them through social media to the Northumberland FA Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Northumberland FA’s Designated Safeguarding Officer will explain to the child that staff members and volunteers are not permitted to have child participants on their social media feeds; and they should not send such requests again. Northumberland FA’s Designated Safeguarding Officer will also explain to the child’s parent or carers the reason for making the decision.