



## SOCIAL MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT

Heworth ARLFC recognise that social media can be a positive way for players, officials and clubs to engage with supporters and other stakeholders to grow the online presence of the game of Rugby League. However, persons who are subject to the RFL Operational Rules must use social media responsibly and must also remember that social media is public and available for anyone to see or read and retweet or share.

Heworth ARLFC do not wish to unduly restrict your use of social media but you must be aware that you are accountable for your actions and what you communicate via social media. Heworth ARLFC are keen to promote the safe and responsible use of social networking technology but also to make its members aware of the potential risks and to share best practice. Participants should be aware that comments which bring the game into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting, may lead to disciplinary action.

This Social Media Policy Code of Conduct includes, but is not limited to, the use of Twitter, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, blogs, websites and any other public online forum and encompasses the guidance set out below. A Breach of this Code of Conduct may lead to the Heworth/RFL charging you with misconduct under the Operational Rules or the police charging you with a criminal offence or an individual or company taking out a private prosecution against you.

The Social Media Policy Code of Conduct should not be seen as being unduly prescriptive: it exists to help, support and protect both the club and its appointed representatives.

Examples of online communication that should not be used include:

- Don't put offensive photos online – this includes nude photos of you or friends, including body parts
- Don't use offensive language online – this includes anything which could be considered racist, homophobic, ageist or sexist; anything which shows prejudice or disrespect to anyone with a disability; or anything which shows prejudice against someone's religion; and also includes foul language
- Don't insult or criticise RFL or club sponsors or commercial partners
- Remember that 'banter' can be misconstrued in open forums – be careful of using insulting or critical terminology towards fellow players, club members, team mates or other people in Rugby League or other sports. Even if you consider a comment to be 'banter' anything that suggests someone has broken the law, cheated, lied or is dishonest or incompetent could be libellous
- Don't suggest that match officials, club officials, RFL officials or the RFL are biased or corrupt – such suggestions are legally actionable
- At all times, exercise discretion and respect for clubs, players, fans and the game's partners
- Deleting or apologising publicly for an improper posting does not prevent disciplinary action being taken
- Don't give out inside information about your club or team-mates which may be used for the purposes of gambling or betting
- Don't post material that infringes the intellectual property rights of other parties
- Don't share personal details about yourself or others that could expose either party (email addresses, contact numbers)
- Don't make physical threats of violence or say that you are going to commit a criminal offence (such as bombing an airport or rioting) or say anything which might be considered to incite someone else to do any of the above
- Don't engage in any sexualised messages particularly with anyone under the age of 18 – if in doubt assume they are under 18 – and never DM/PM anyone under the age of 18

Cont:

- Don't respond to offensive messages from the public – no matter how tempting. Don't get drawn - use the block button to keep the trolls at bay
- Don't retweet, like or share messages featuring any of the above – you are as much responsible for the contents of retweets, likes or shares as original tweets or postings

Please note that the list of guidelines set out in the Social Media Code of Conduct above is not exhaustive in regards to the nature of content which may be deemed to be inappropriate and in no way supersedes, changes or replaces the existing RFL Operational Rules.

### **Social Media and Messaging**

Clubs and Constituent Bodies (CBs) should be aware that they can be vicariously liable for material published by members in the course of their duties, for example on an official website, Facebook site or Twitter feed and within chat groups.

Clubs can also be liable for third party comments and postings made in their website forums or on their Facebook pages and on message forums.

In order to address this Heworth ARLFC will establish protocols for monitoring output, moderating content in online forums and removing offensive postings. Additionally the club will:

- Clearly identify who is responsible for posting and maintaining social networking and internet sites
- Set standards for content generated in line with the clubs Core Values and the guidelines above
- All Social Media sites operating under or with the Heworth ARLFC club as its purpose will be monitored by CWO or their designated representative (who should be registered in such a capacity within the club)
- All Social Media message forums operating under or with the Heworth ARLFC club as its purpose will be monitored by CWO or their designated representative (who should be registered in such a capacity within the club)
- Message forums should only exist with more than one adult present as part of the group or able to have visibility of the discussions taking place, even if this is retrospective. One of these adults should be the CWO or their designated representative (who should be registered in such a capacity within the club)
- The club will hold members to account for any breaches
- Any persons found to casting negative info regarding the club or officers therein can and may be dealt with under the clubs disciplinary policy
- Persons aged 18 or over will be classed as being an adult. Any person under 18 will be deemed as a minor and as such no one person should be contacting or responding via social media on a one to one basis, without express permission and knowledge from the minors' parent/guardian.

Any breaches will be dealt with in line with club policy as laid out in Anti Bullying policy and Safeguarding policy which ultimately could lead to loss of position.