

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

1. PURPOSE

Football NSW Limited (FNSW) recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool of engagement and enrichment for our members.

It is important that the reputation of FNSW, affiliated Associations and Clubs and the sport of football generally is not tarnished by anyone using any existing and emerging social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that might relate to FNSW-related activities.

All FNSW stakeholders are expected to behave and express themselves online appropriately and in the ways that are consistent with FNSW's stated values and policies.

This policy aims to provide some guiding principles to follow when using social media and is to be read in conjunction with the:

- [Football Australia \(FA\) Code of Conduct & Ethics](#);
- [FA Member Protection Framework: Safeguarding Policy](#);
- [FA Bullying & Harassment Policy](#);
- [FA Anti-Discrimination Policy](#); and
- [FNSW Grievance and Disciplinary Regulations](#).

2. SCOPE

This FNSW Social Media Policy ('this Policy') applies to all FNSW affiliated entities and participants, including Associations, Clubs, Coaches, Team Managers, Officials and Referees, Volunteers, Spectators and FNSW Employees ('Stakeholders').

This Policy covers all forms of social media and online engagement including, but not limited to, activities such as:

- Social networking sites (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, X or TikTok);
- Video and photo sharing platforms (e.g. YouTube Flickr, Pinterest);
- Podcasting (e.g. iTunes, Spotify and SoundCloud);
- Online website platforms, blogs, virtual communities, collaborative websites, or message boards (e.g. Wordpress, Reddit, Wikipedia);
- Email and instant messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Messenger, Viber, iMessages, text messaging);
- Videoconferencing and/or webinars (e.g. Teams, Zoom);
- Online gaming networks (e.g. Discord and Twitch);
- Online dating apps (e.g. Tinder and Hinge);
- Online votes and polls;
- Any use of artificial intelligence (AI) programs (e.g. ChatGPT);
- Any other forum available for public comment or opinion (including private web forums, online polls or review sites).

The intent of this Policy is to include anything posted online where information is shared that might affect FNSW, its Stakeholders, or the reputation of the sport of football in general.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FNSW embraces social media as a means of promoting the game and engaging with the broader football community. While FNSW encourages the use of social media, all Stakeholders are reminded that everything they write, publish or share can be traced back to them.

Once something is posted online or shared, control over that content is lost. Archival systems can save or cache information even if deleted while comments and messages can be forwarded, quoted or misquoted.

FNSW has a zero-tolerance policy to any forms of bullying or harassment which applies to conduct on-field, off-field and online.

Due to the unique nature of FNSW, the boundaries between a FNSW Stakeholder's role within football (e.g. as a player, coach, volunteer or official) and their social life can often be blurred. It is therefore essential that all Stakeholders make a clear distinction between their role/s in football and their external football activities. This includes ensuring that all online communication with other Stakeholders is conducted in an appropriate manner that aligns with FNSW and FA policies and values.

Sharing, posting or commenting from a social media account unaffiliated to football (e.g. a personal social media profile) does not exclude those actions from the scope of FNSW and FA policies and any applicable disciplinary measures.

FNSW encourages all members to be diligent about protecting themselves online, including regularly checking and updating social media privacy settings.

4. USAGE

For FNSW Stakeholders using social media, such use:

- Must not contain, or link to, abusive, offensive, harassing or defamatory content – this also applies to the use of illustrations and nicknames;
- Must not comment on, or publish information that is confidential in any way;
- Must not share any content that could be deemed detrimental to FNSW, FNSW affiliates and partners, or any other FNSW Stakeholder;
- Must not share any content, including logos, graphic files, images, videos or audio that they do not hold the required permissions or consent – this includes the use of AI-generated graphics to depict a distinct likeness to a brand, organisation or individual/s;
- Must not otherwise be in breach of the FA Code of Conduct and Ethics or other FNSW policies (see '1. Purpose').

When capturing content (including photos, audio or video) of a participant, Stakeholders must:

- Obtain permission from the participant and ensure they know how the content will be used;
- Ensure the content is appropriate in nature and directly relates to FNSW affiliated activity;
- Ensure the content is stored safely and securely in a manner that prevents unauthorised access and is destroyed when no longer required.

5. ELECTRONIC OR ONLINE COMMUNICATIONS WITH CHILDREN OR YOUNG PERSONS

When communicating electronically and/or online with children or young persons in an official role related to a FNSW activity, it is a requirement that you:

- Include an organisation representative (e.g. Club or Association) and a parent or guardian in all communication;
- Use appropriate language that is not personal in nature;

- Abide by any relevant or applicable Association, Branch, or Club Social Media Policies;
- Do not request, accept or follow the children with your personal social media accounts;
- Only share information or content strictly related to the football competition or activity related to your football-related role; and
- Inform the parent or guardian if a child or young person contacts you outside of your football-related role and remind the child or young person of your communication requirements.

When capturing content (including photos, audio or video) involving a child, Stakeholders must:

- Obtain permission from a child's parent or guardian and, where the child is identified, ensure that parent or guardian is aware how the content will be used;
- Ensure the content is appropriate in nature and directly relates to FNSW affiliated activity;
- Ensure the content is captured in the presence of other adult Stakeholders; and
- Ensure the content is stored safely and securely in a manner that prevents unauthorised access and is destroyed when no longer required.

6. OFFICIAL FNSW SOCIAL PAGES AND ONLINE CHANNELS

When creating a new social media account for a FNSW affiliated Stakeholder;

- Care should be taken to ensure the appropriate person has given permission to create the page or forum;
- Online content and behaviour must always abide by and comply with the Football Australia Code of Conduct and Ethics;
- Appropriate permissions or licences must be obtained for the use of logos, images or other digital assets;
- Images of children may not be replicated on any site without the explicit written consent or permission of the child's parents and/or guardian;
- All materials published or used must respect the copyright of third parties;
- Comments on content must be monitored and where appropriate restricted or removed to minimise the incidences of defamatory, offensive or harmful content being displayed on official pages; and
- Effective cybersecurity measures should be implemented to protect the respective brand, intellectual property and / or sensitive information.
- The use of AI-generated imagery should be limited, if not avoided, to avoid any potential for loss of brand reputation.

For official FNSW accounts;

- Access and permissions must be sought from the FNSW Marketing & Communications department;
- FNSW Employees must not use FNSW online pages to promote personal projects; and
- Any use of affiliate marketing programs or services must be done with a strict regulation of brands and product categories displayed to ensure they do not conflict with any FNSW partners and do not relate to alcohol, gambling, pornography or content of any nature which conflicts with FNSW values.

7. BRANDING AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

When using the internet, for professional or personal pursuits, all Stakeholders must respect the brands of FNSW, Member Associations, Branches, Clubs, participants and anybody else involved in the sport of football. All Stakeholders must follow the guidelines in place to ensure the sport's intellectual property and its relationships with sponsors and Stakeholders is not compromised and that FNSW's reputation in the general community is not brought into disrepute.

It is important that any trademarks belonging to FNSW, a Branch or any Association Member or Football Club are not used in personal social media applications, except where such use can be considered incidental (where incidents is taken to mean "happening in subordinate conjunction with something else").

8. BREACH OF POLICY

- Detected breaches of this Policy should be reported to FNSW.
- If detected or reported, a breach of this Policy may result in disciplinary action from FNSW under either the FNSW Constitution, FNSW By-Laws and FNSW Grievance and Disciplinary Regulations, as the case may be. A breach of this Policy may also amount to breaches of other FNSW governing documents and other FNSW Policies or contractual obligations. This may involve a verbal or written warning or in serious cases, termination of employment or engagement with FNSW including, but not limited to, suspension of membership.

9. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

- The [eSafety Commissioner](#) provides online safety programs and resources, while having established accessible reporting mechanisms for Australians experiencing online bullying or cyber abuse: www.esafety.gov.au.
- '[Play by the Rules](#)' provides information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of referees, coaches, officials, players, parents and spectators to assist them in preventing and dealing with discrimination, bullying, harassment, child safety, inclusion and integrity issues in sport.
- The [Australian Federal Police](#) is dedicated to preventing all Australians from becoming victims of online crime, including (but not limited to) cybercrime and crimes against children. The NSW Police has a NSW State Crime Command that has specialist squads specifically dedicated to dealing with (but not limited to) Cybercrime and Child Abuse and Sex Crimes.
- FNSW Managing Poor Behaviour & Bullying provides general guidance and resources on child safety and stopping cyber-bullying: footballnsw.com.au/member-protection-safety/managing-poor-behaviour/
- The [Allannah and Madelaine Foundation](#) is a national charity working to keeping children safe from violence.

10. CONSULTATION OR ADVICE

FNSW Stakeholders who are unsure of their rights, obligations, liabilities or actions online should contact FNSW to seek clarification.