



GILLINGHAM FOOTBALL CLUB LTD

Approved by	Version	Issue Date	Review Date	Contact Person	Comments
Shannon Galinson	1	March 2023	March 2024	N.Farrell	
Shannon Galinson	2	July 2023	August 2024	A. Rasheed	Update of font and letterhead. Also KCSiE 2023

Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding is EVERYONE'S Responsibility



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Gillingham FC recognises that the use of the internet is an essential tool in supporting The Club in conducting its business.

As well as general internet usage, there is increasing social media, online meetings/workshops and esports usage throughout all sectors of society. This includes Gillingham Football Club who use social media and online usage to engage with stakeholders and the wider community.

There are many benefits to using the internet, but with this comes associated risks. Staff may not be aware of breaching copyrights, downloading inappropriate material and the sharing of this, privacy breaches and posting comments or behaving in such a way as to bring the organisation into retribute.

This guidance has been produced to support staff in upholding clear, robust processes to ensure the safety of all involved and maintain the integrity of the organisation.

Scope

All Gillingham FC staff and volunteers are personally responsible for compliance with the law in relation to their internet and social media usage. This guidance is to ensure all staff, students, volunteers and work placements understand their obligations and responsibilities around internet usage in a professional manner.

All managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are familiar with this guidance.

Policy Statement

It is The Club aim to ensure that the use of social media and the internet across the organisation is undertaken responsibly and safely and that the confidentiality of players, parents, staff and the reputation of the organisation are safeguarded.

Social media, Esports and digital platforms are evolving quickly. We intend to observe the best possible practice in this digital environment, seeking to negotiate it wisely and with integrity for purposes of sharing useful information, communication and PR.

Benefits of Social Media, Esports and Virtual Learning Platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, Zoom, Fifa, Teams)

- Improvement of communication links with Parents/Guardians.
- Allow greater engagement with players, participants and the wider community and promote shared values.
- Promote extended learning through the posting of links to relevant material.

Virtual interaction may be delivered in any of the following formats:

- Group Sessions via TEAMS or Zoom, with a qualified Gillingham FC staff member / coach. With the possibility of live group discussions.
- Pre-recorded videos that can be accessed at any time but will not have the capacity for live interaction with staff.





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- Sharing of useful resources / links.
- 121 support via endorsed social media platforms with a GFC member of staff / coach.
- Although we do not currently have this, but if ever the opportunity arose: Online Gaming Tournaments via Gillingham Football Club endorsed online platforms.

Virtual interaction and online engagement will only take place where explicit parental / guardian consent is obtained for anyone under 18 years old.

No personal details, such as usernames or email accounts will be shared with other users and all personal data will be treated in accordance with Data Protection and GDPR Policies.

Gillingham Football Club Staff will also need to ensure the following is completed prior to a session commencing:

- **Gillingham Football Club Designated Safeguarding Lead is aware that you are delivering this activity and is able to offer appropriate support and guidance. Ensure your online activity / remote session has been approved by Safeguarding and HOD prior to commencement.**

Creating a safe, effective learning environment for online sessions.

This is particularly important for online / remote delivery. As much as you can try to ensure the person you are engaging with feels safe and comfortable. This can be achieved by ensuring the following actions are implemented:

- Complete a Generic Risk Assessment and obtain authorisation from HOD & Safeguarding.
- Parental consent must be obtained for anyone U18.
- Plan your session, ensure there are clear learning objectives and outcomes, and the session has structure. Only deliver on topics you are comfortable with and have specialist knowledge of.
- Consider following up the session, by sending out a factsheet / guidance to parents or carers around topics you have covered. This will enhance the learning outcomes and provide further support at home.
- Always maintain professional boundaries – this provides the young person with a sense of stability, understanding of your role and ensures expectations around appropriate and acceptable behaviour and conduct during the sessions is maintained.
- Communicate with them the frequency of your contact and how long each session will last and where possible the theme for the session.



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- Ensure communication is via GFC approved platforms and that you never share personal numbers / social media accounts.
- Agree an appropriate method for them to contact you should they need to cancel the session or if they have a concern. Work email addresses could be an option.
- Be flexible in your session time and offer a range of different dates and times to try and be as inclusive as possible. Although all sessions should take place during normal working hours.
- Share Ground Rules at the start of each session and stick to these.

Ground Rules

A strong set of shared ground rules sets expectations, establishes boundaries and pre-empts anxieties. It is essential to establish, refresh, or remind young people of ground rules before starting any activity.

The Code of Conduct is as follows:

- 1. I agree not to share or post anything offensive or illegal.**
- 2. I agree not to share other people's personal details, including usernames, emails and telephone numbers.**
- 3. I agree not to use any language that may be offensive.**
- 4. I agree to be respectful of other people's opinions and feelings.**
- 5. I agree not to encourage or participate in any form of cyber bullying / bullying behaviour.**

Other ground rules you could include at the start of each session:

1. Keep an open mind.
2. Listen carefully and allow everyone to speak.
3. Respect other people's views and opinions.
4. Be active and take part.

Answering questions and helping young people find further support.

It is good practice to establish an ethos where young people understand that you do not 'have all the answers', but that they can expect your ongoing support. If you cannot answer a question or resolve an issue during a session, let young people know when you will get back to them, follow it up, and feed back to them on time.





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A resource guide is available that has access to a number of support services and organisations that you can signpost to. You should always seek advice from Safeguarding in the first instance.

Managing inappropriate language and challenging statements.

- Refer back to your ground rules / code of conduct to reinforce the commitment to choosing language carefully to avoid offence.
- If a young person uses inappropriate language, address this directly. Encourage them, and other YP, to suggest more appropriate language. Ask them to elaborate on what they mean and help them to do so by introducing and explaining new vocabulary.
- Explain why the language they used originally is inappropriate.
- Never close down a discussion because a young person has used challenging vocabulary.

Online gaming and Esports

Although this is an initiative Gillingham Football Club does not currently have in place, due to the ever changing demand from society, marketing, fans and all round 'The Club' as a whole. It is paramount that we are proactive rather than reactive and have appropriate measures in place and offer support/ guidance to parents and children under the age of 18.

In multiplayer online games, the presence of such a large online community of anonymous strangers and the unfiltered, unmoderated discussions, can pose a variety of potential risks such as:

- Inadvertently or recklessly giving away personal information, including password, email or home address or age.
- All the dangers associated with online chatrooms, inclusive of online grooming, cyber bullying, malware and viruses.
- Downloading 'cheats' which claim to help you but which, in fact, may contain viruses/spyware.
- Downloading or obtaining in another way, pirated copies of games, which can lead to penalties including account suspension, blocking of consoles from accessing the manufacturer's server or prosecution.
- 'Griefing' – when players single you out specifically to make your gaming experience less enjoyable.
- Playing games for many hours at a time with the danger of becoming addicted.

Safe Online Gaming / Tournaments

Where online tournaments and games are hosted by The Club, the following measures should be implemented to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all involved:

- Consent must be obtained for anyone U18.
- Generic Risk Assessment should be completed and signed off by HOD and Safeguarding.
- Online Gaming Tournaments should be targeted at age-appropriate groups, children are not permitted to play in online tournaments with adults.



- Where possible, online tournaments for U18's should be hosted for invited players only, as this allows more robust monitoring and limits the risk of outside influences, cyber-crime / bullying or grooming.
- Alongside the code of conduct, Gillingham Football Club staff should ensure that rules of play are clearly explained to players and parents prior to any online tournament.

Where possible, Gillingham FC staff should ensure:

- Players have effective and updated antivirus/antispymware software and firewall running.
- Players are only playing with authorised versions of games which have been purchased from the correct sources and for which a licence has been obtained.
- Players have a username that does not reveal any personal information. Similarly, if the game includes the ability to create a personal profile, players should not give away any personal information.
- Players should be reminded to use strong passwords and where multiple gaming accounts are held; different passwords should be used.
- Players should be reminded not reveal any personal information to other players.
- Players should be reminded to adhere to the set Gillingham FC guidelines and ground rules.

Recording Scores

- All players must notify The Club of the score after finishing the game. This should be done via a picture of the result. This photo should contain: the score, the names and a time stamp.
- The match score must be reported by both players.
- Players need to report the scores within ten minutes after the end of the match.
- Players disputing a match score must have a picture to evidence their claims.
- When both players report no score or when needed proof of the score, both players may be disqualified.
- When the score of the players does not match there will be an investigation. Once the investigation has been completed the decision about what score is awarded ultimately rests with Gillingham FC. We take conflict seriously and want to provide the best experience for all our players.
- If someone deliberately passes the wrong score, the player in question may immediately get excluded from all of The Club's online/future tournaments.
- When only one of the two participants reports the score (or when proof of the score is necessary), that player will be designated as the winner of the contest.

Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for reporting information incidences and near misses, including breaches of this guidance. Concerns should be raised via Head of Operations and where appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Related policies, procedures and guidance

Staff Handbook

Safeguarding Children Policy



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Related Legislation

Data Protection Act 2018

Online Harms White Paper

KCSiE (2023)

Computer Misuse Act 1990

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Criminal Justice & Public Order Act 1994

Malicious Communications Act 1998

Communications Act 2003

Defamation Act 2013

Human Rights Act 1998



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