Social Media Policy

Introduction

Members of Crowthorne Rugby Union Football Club enjoy the opportunities and rewards of a community-based sports club combined with affiliation to county and national rugby union associations. It is subsequently expected that members will uphold the ethos of the Club in all social media interactions. Members will not act in such a way that the image of Crowthorne Rugby Union Football Club is brought into disrepute nor in a way that harms the immediate and wider rugby community.

Purpose

With social media a prominent method of communication for the Club, where we can express opinions, and is a key way we engage with the members of our club, along with the wider community, it is important for us to have a policy to demonstrate how we ensure we are represented in a suitable way and can take action should the need arise. We are taking this opportunity to remind our members of the importance of ensuring that all our social networking streams should be used thoughtfully and responsibly.

Defining Social Media

We have a number of social media sources which we take advantage of, these are examples of what we currently use and does not constitute an exhaustive list:

- Facebook groups (different sections or teams in the Club).

- Facebook pages (different sections or teams in the Club).

- Twitter (club accounts).

- Instagram.

- LinkedIn.

- WhatsApp groups (different sections or teams in the Club).

There are many others which are not named here, but these should be considered to be electronic communication where individuals can interact online, be it within applications or on web pages, where the banner includes the Club's name or branding, in part or in full.

Content

While the Club positively encourages social networking among members, we are mindful of the need to ensure that all content is suitable for publication and does not breach any laws or common decency. It is not acceptable to post, amongst others, items that may include reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability, and any member found to have posted such items will be subject to disciplinary action. Comments of this nature may attract civil or criminal action against the author(s). In addition, any abuse of match officials, opposition etc. may be deemed by the RFU to bring the game into disrepute and lead to disciplinary sanctions against both the author and/or the Club. Participants should be aware that comments which bring the game into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent, or insulting, may lead to disciplinary action. Comments can also attract civil and criminal action.

Cyber Bullying

All reports of cyber-bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in notification to the police where Crowthorne Rugby Club is obliged to do so. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, suspension, or banning from membership of Crowthorne Rugby Club. Members must be aware that in certain circumstances where a crime has been committed, they may be subject to a criminal investigation by the police over which Crowthorne Rugby Club will have no control.

General Guidance

These are public forums, so treat them as such.

- Members are expected to show respect to others, including other members of Crowthorne Rugby Club and the wider rugby community, and to always act within the core values of the game.

- Individuals and organisations are strictly responsible for any posting on their account(s).

- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.

- Re-posting or re-tweeting inappropriate content represents an endorsement of that content and can be actionable.

- Do not use abusive, derogatory, vulgar, or sexual language.

- Do not criticise or imply bias in match officials.

- 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.

- Consider "protecting" Tweets and changing security/visibility of Facebook accounts.

Do's and Don'ts

Follow the general guidelines above and:

- Do show your personality and be approachable.

- Do share your achievements.

- Do let people know what it is like to be a player/official.

- Do post regular comments to grow and engage with an audience.

- Do report any content that you encounter that is in breach of this policy.

- Do not comment if you have any concerns about the consequences.

- Do not link to unsuitable content.

- Do not get into disputes with audience.

- Do not share or elicit personal detail.

Take down policy

Clubs are aware that they can be vicariously liable for material published by players, members and employees in the course of their interaction with the Club, for example on an official website, Facebook site or Twitter feed.

Clubs can also be liable for third party comments and postings made on any of their social media platforms.

We insist that:

- Participants clearly identify themselves.

- Participants follow standards mentioned above and align to the RFU's Core Values and the guidelines.

- Should an administrator deem an article, post or comment contradicts the guidelines above it will be taken down at the earliest possible opportunity.

- The club will hold members to account for any breaches.

Reporting

Any grievance, criticism or resentment should be directed in person to the individual or respective managers or coaches. Matters of a more serious or contentious nature should be discussed with the Club's Executive Committee, via the Club secretary, by emailing secretary@crowthornerfc.co.uk

Use of the Club Badge

The Club would like to remind members that the Club badge should not be used by anyone without prior written request being made to CRFU Executive Committee and approval given, via the Club secretary, by emailing secretary@crowthornerfc.co.uk

Sanctions

Any club member falling foul of this policy could face disciplinary action from the Club, which could lead to expulsion from the Club.

References:

RFU Club Management Reference Guide here