



Founded 1949

# Ballyclare Rugby Football Club

The Cloughan, Doagh Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9JD Tel: +44 (0) 28 9332 3294  
Email: [info@ballyclarerfc.co.uk](mailto:info@ballyclarerfc.co.uk) Web: [www.ballyclarerfc.co.uk](http://www.ballyclarerfc.co.uk)

## Ballyclare Rugby Club Social Media Policy

This policy aims to support the Rugby Club management and its members in safely and effectively using social media to communicate with club members and the wider community. This social media club policy aims to protect the reputation of the club, committee and members it serves. As a club, we encourage the responsible use of social media.

### Background

Social networking, such as Twitter, Facebook, internet blogs and other online sites, offers tremendous opportunities for Ballyclare RFC to communicate and engage with a growing audience as well as its existing members, supporters and players.

This document covers many basic principles of using social media but is not exhaustive. If you are uncertain about anything contact the Hon Secretary before proceeding.

### Scope

This policy applies to all social media forums and accounts both existing at the time of its publication and that may emerge over time.

This policy applies to all club members, parents of juniors and anybody wishing to establish an account bearing any identification of, or alluding to association with Ballyclare RFC.

### Definitions and Abbreviations

| Term              | Definition for policy  |
|-------------------|--|
| The club          | Ballyclare RFC   |
| Social Media      | Any computer based platform or app where members can create and share content including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked In |
| General Committee | The general management committee of the club   |

### Regulations

1. Designated social media accounts
  - 1.1. It is not permitted for a social media account to carry the official name or badge of the club or imply an association in any way with the club without the official approval of the General committee.
  - 1.2. Social media accounts registered and approved by the General committee will become subject to these social media guidelines and uphold this policy at all times.
  - 1.3. Any representative of the club wishing to establish a social media presence on behalf of the club must apply in writing to the General committee, outlining the purpose of the social media channel, demonstrating the benefits to the club and how the practical aspects of



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capturing and sharing content over the channel will be managed, in addition to outlining how this policy will be upheld in relation to security and reputational risk

- 1.4. The club reserves the right to decline any requests received on reasonable grounds including lack of resource to effectively manage and engage across the channel, the reputation risks or if the purpose outlined is contra to the general interests/ focus of the club as a whole.
  - 1.5. The club can remove permission for a social media account to exist as an official account where the committee feel that the rationale for the benefit to the club has dissolved, management of the account has become problematic or there has been a repeated breach of the social media policy.
2. Ownership of official social media accounts
    - 2.1. All social media accounts established on behalf of the club remain under the ownership of the club at all times. Administration access to the accounts must be given up when requested by the club committee.
    - 2.2. Social media accounts established on behalf of the club will present a professional image/ shop window at all times with a description of the club and link to the official club web site where appropriate.
3. Administrators of accounts
    - 3.1. Accounts will have a minimum of three representatives acting as administrators (one of which will be a General Committee member) to ensure that accounts can be accessed easily during times of holiday and absence.
    - 3.2. Administrators of the club's official social media accounts must agree to sign up to this social media policy and conduct themselves in a way that is appropriate in upholding and building a positive image of the club at all times.
    - 3.3. Administrators of the club's official social media accounts agree to use password protocols, and agree that responsibility for protecting this password and access to the account (e.g. logging out effectively of browsers) remains their responsibility at all times. Any breach of this protocol must be immediately communicated to the club committee and steps taken to limit the impact.
    - 3.4. Administrators of the club's official social media accounts will agree not to act on any conflicts of interest, and must not promote their own products or services across the official social media accounts of the club unless expressly agreed in advance by the club committee.
    - 3.5. Where an administrator is associated with more than one club, E.g. Rugby Coach, the committee reserve the right to restrict the promotion of activities through the official club channels to those relevant specifically to the club.
    - 3.6. Administrators looking to endorse, promote or engage in a national campaign on behalf of official partners such as IRFU or sponsors or unofficial partners such as community groups, must first seek approval from the General committee to mobilise the social media channel to this effect.
    - 3.7. For the purpose of effective management and measurement, administrators will agree when requested to do so, to use relevant social media management tools/ protocols as requested by the club committee. The committee reserve the right to evolve these tools/ approaches in keeping with new trends and approaches to managing and being effective in social media delivery.
    - 3.8. Administrators are encouraged to attend relevant training and workshops relevant to the delivery of social media on behalf of the club as deemed appropriate.



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## 4. Responsibility to Club Members

- 4.1. Any representative of the official social media accounts for the club must not by their actions jeopardise the privacy of any member associated with the club. Data gathered through social media channels should not be published without the consent of the membership. This includes allowing members the option of opting out of any social media directory produced.
- 4.2. Administrators agree not to spam or communicate with members of social media groups/forums in a way that could be determined as being of detriment to the reputation of the club.
- 4.3. Administrators agree not to pursue public debates that could bring the club and/or the game of Rugby into disrepute more widely or proactively provoke members of the club to do the same.
- 4.4. Confidentiality must be upheld across the club social media channels at all times, no direct messages should be made public without the consent of the person responsible for the original post and content discussed within committee meetings may not be disclosed on social media unless agreed by those present.

## 5. Social Media Content

- 5.1. The content posted across official social media accounts must be relevant, age appropriate and uphold the club's reputation at all times.
- 5.2. Administrators distributing content on behalf of the club will ensure that the appropriate agreements have been sought on any photographs or film footage uploaded and shared within social media environments across the official accounts.
- 5.3. Administrators of club official accounts must be aware that any content (photos and film) posted on social media passes on ownership of the material to the social media provider e.g. Facebook Therefore, caution must be extended in passing on rights over club material (of value) to a third party.
- 5.4. Administrators must make all best efforts to ensure privacy of players etc. especially when injuries etc. occur. Videos/photos of injuries should not appear on official sites without express consent of the individual.
- 5.5. Any content shared from online environments will link and/or credit the original source of the content.

## 6. Safeguarding Children on Social Media

- 6.1. Children under the age of 13 are not permitted to establish a Facebook account. The nature of social media and cookie tracking in digital environments puts children under this age at considerable risk.
- 6.2. No official club social media channel or Administrator of the clubs official accounts will use social media to communicate or engage with children aged under 13. Please note that parental permission does not constitute permission to breach this element of the policy.

## 7. The club committee reserves the right to update this policy.



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## Guidance: Social media

### General guidance

#### All Members including Coaches, Parents, Players

- Individuals need to understand that they are personally responsible and liable for their comments and postings.
- At all times, you should exercise discretion and be respectful of other coaches, players, teams, organisations and brands.
- What you regard as “banter” could be regarded as embarrassing or hurtful by a wider audience and bring the club/mini rugby into disrepute.
- Ballyclare RFC recognises that we all live in a society that promotes free speech and freedom of expression, but we would caution that anything that you write has the potential to enter the public domain.
- Consequently, we would request that all social media commentary relating to Ballyclare RFC is of a positive nature - please think carefully before making comments that may lead to unintended consequences.
- 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 General Committee.
- We would request that you refrain from any negative comments about, players, parents, coaches, managers, referees, clubs, etc.
- We would request that you avoid gossip, slanderous comments, disruptive comments, threatening comments, and anything that could be construed as abusive, harassing, obscene, libellous, or an invasion of another’s privacy (this includes text, audio, photographs and video).
- Whilst the club realises that a certain amount of ‘banter’ may take place on some forums, we would request that any language used is moderated, please remember that these forums can be viewed by a range of age groups from both genders; if you wouldn’t use that language in your own home then it should not be appearing in the public domain.
- If a negative comment is made, we would ask you not to comment on it either way, or to escalate an issue.
- Ballyclare RFC requests that you use social media outlets positively, be responsible, share your achievements, celebrate success, be gracious in defeat, be honest, and enjoy communicating and interacting.

**Serious instances of irresponsible use of social media platforms associated with Ballyclare RFC may be referred to the General Committee, although any action taken by the committee will be judged on a case by case basis.**



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In short, follow the general guidelines above and:

- These are public forums, so treat them as such
  - Individuals and organisations are strictly responsible for any posting on his/their account/s
  - 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
- 
- Don't comment if you have any concerns about the consequences
  - Don't link to unsuitable content
  - Don't get into disputes with audience
  - Don't share or elicit personal detail

But

- Do show your personality and be approachable
- Do share your achievements
- Mini Rugby is all about participation and fun – not the winning! Do share your achievements but take this factor into account
- Do let people know what it is like to be a parent/player/coach
- Do post regular comments to grow and engage with an audience