



AFC Oakley - Social Media and Digital Communications Policy

1. Purpose

AFC Oakley Football Club is committed to providing a safe, respectful and positive football environment for all players, parents, carers, spectators, coaches, managers, volunteers, committee members and adult members.

This policy explains the standards expected when using social media, photography, video, livestreaming, messaging apps, team communication platforms, email, text messages and any other form of digital communication connected to AFC Oakley.

This policy is intended to protect children, young people, adults at risk, volunteers, families, match officials, opposition teams, leagues, County FA, The FA and the reputation of AFC Oakley.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all AFC Oakley activity, including:

1. training
2. matches
3. cup fixtures
4. tournaments
5. festivals
6. team meetings
7. presentations
8. club events
9. WhatsApp groups
10. Spod, FA Matchday or similar team management apps
11. email and text messages
12. social media posts, comments, replies and direct messages
13. photographs, video, livestreaming and match footage
14. any other club-related communication or activity

This policy applies to players, parents, carers, spectators, coaches, managers, team officials, committee members, volunteers, adult players and anyone representing or associated with AFC Oakley.

3. Official AFC Oakley channels

The official AFC Oakley communication channels include:

Website: afcoakley.co.uk

X: [afcoakleyfc](#)

instagram: [afcoakleyfc](#)

facebook: [afcoakleyfc](#)

AFC Oakley may also use email, WhatsApp, Spond, FA Matchday or similar tools for football-related communication.

Only authorised users may post on official AFC Oakley channels.

Team accounts, team groups or unofficial pages must follow this policy where they relate to AFC Oakley activity.

4. General behaviour standards

All social media and digital communication connected to AFC Oakley must be respectful, appropriate and relevant.

Players, parents, carers, spectators, coaches, managers, volunteers, committee members and adult members must not post, send, share or encourage content that is:

1. abusive
2. offensive
3. discriminatory
4. threatening
5. intimidating
6. bullying
7. harassing
8. sexualised
9. defamatory

10. misleading

11. likely to bring AFC Oakley, a league, County FA or The FA into disrepute

This applies to public posts, private messages, comments, replies, group chats, images, videos, memes, emojis, screenshots and shared content.

5. Public criticism and complaints

AFC Oakley understands that concerns may arise during the season.

Concerns should be raised calmly, privately and through the correct club route. Social media, WhatsApp groups and public forums must not be used to escalate disputes, criticise individuals or put pressure on volunteers.

Players, parents, carers, spectators, coaches, managers, volunteers, committee members and adult members must not use social media or digital communication to publicly target, abuse, harass, threaten, intimidate or defame:

1. players
2. parents or carers
3. coaches or managers
4. match officials
5. opposition teams
6. spectators
7. club volunteers
8. committee members
9. leagues
10. County FA
11. The FA
12. AFC Oakley

Football or team-related concerns should normally be raised first with the team manager. If the matter cannot be resolved at team level, it may be escalated to the relevant age group lead, committee contact or club official.

Safeguarding or welfare concerns must be raised directly with the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

6. Youth team communication

For youth teams, official communication should normally be through parents or carers.

Youth players must not be added to AFC Oakley team WhatsApp groups, Spond groups, FA Matchday groups or similar team communication groups.

Coaches, managers, volunteers and club officials must not communicate privately with youth players through personal social media, direct messages, private chat, gaming platforms or personal messaging apps.

Where direct communication with an older youth player is necessary for a football-related reason, it must be transparent, appropriate and copied to a parent, carer or another appropriate adult wherever possible.

Adult players may be added to relevant adult team communication groups.

7. Team groups and messaging apps

AFC Oakley teams may use WhatsApp, Spond, FA Matchday or similar tools for team administration and football-related communication.

Team groups must be used only for appropriate club matters such as:

1. fixtures
2. training
3. availability
4. arrival times
5. venue information
6. kit information
7. volunteering
8. team administration
9. urgent updates

Team groups must not be used for:

10. personal arguments
11. abusive comments
12. public criticism
13. inappropriate jokes or banter
14. political or divisive discussion
15. sponsor or third-party promotions where someone has opted out
16. detailed medical information
17. safeguarding concerns
18. discipline matters
19. complaints about individuals

Safeguarding, welfare, discipline or complaint matters must be escalated through the appropriate club process.

8. Photography, video and livestreaming

AFC Oakley recognises that photographs and video can be a positive way to celebrate football, promote the club and record memories.

However, photographs, video, livestreaming and match footage must be handled carefully to protect children, young people, adults at risk and personal privacy.

Photos, video or livestreaming connected to AFC Oakley must not:

1. place a child or young person at risk
2. identify a child where consent has been refused or withdrawn
3. use full names of under-18 players unless specifically authorised and appropriate
4. tag or link to a child's personal social media account
5. show children in changing rooms, toilets or private areas
6. show medical treatment, distress, injury or vulnerable situations
7. embarrass, ridicule or shame a player
8. focus unnecessarily on one child
9. be used for any purpose unrelated to AFC Oakley or football activity

10. breach safeguarding expectations, data protection requirements or club policy

Anyone taking photographs or video at AFC Oakley activity must do so responsibly and must stop if asked by a club official, match official, venue representative, Welfare Officer or relevant authority.

9. Consent and opt-outs

AFC Oakley may use photographs and videos for reasonable club purposes where appropriate consent has been provided through registration or another club-approved process.

Reasonable club purposes may include:

1. team administration
2. club communications
3. match reports
4. presentations
5. awards
6. the AFC Oakley website
7. social media
8. promotion of the club

Where consent has been refused or withdrawn, AFC Oakley will take reasonable steps not to identify or deliberately feature that player in published photographs or videos.

AFC Oakley cannot guarantee that a player will never appear incidentally in crowd, team, match-day or background images or footage.

Parents, carers or adult players who wish to refuse or withdraw photography or video consent should contact the club.

10. Naming children online

For under-18 players, full names must not normally be used in public social media posts, online content or match reports.

Where a player is named, first name and initial may be used where appropriate, for example “Joe B”.

A child's full name, photograph, school, address, contact details or other identifying information must not be combined in a way that could create a safeguarding or privacy risk.

11. U7 to U11 results, scorers and league tables

AFC Oakley must not publish scores, results, scorers or league tables for U7 to U11 football.

This applies to:

1. club websites
2. team pages
3. Facebook
4. Instagram
5. X / Twitter
6. TikTok
7. WhatsApp groups
8. Spond
9. FA Matchday
10. match reports
11. newsletters
12. any other public or private digital platform

Positive posts celebrating effort, teamwork, development, enjoyment or participation are permitted, provided no score, result, scorer or league table information is included.

For U12 and above, results may be shared where this is permitted by the relevant league, competition and FA requirements. Posts must remain respectful and must not place unnecessary pressure on children.

12. Coaches, managers, volunteers and committee members

Coaches, managers, volunteers and committee members must set a positive example online.

They must not:

1. use club communication channels for personal jokes, inappropriate banter or non-football matters
2. send personal messages of a non-football nature to youth players
3. accept or request social media friendships with youth players connected to their AFC Oakley role
4. contact children outside the football context without parent or carer involvement
5. criticise players, parents, carers, match officials, opposition teams, volunteers, leagues, County FA, The FA or AFC Oakley online
6. share private club information without permission
7. share images or videos where consent has been refused or withdrawn
8. discuss safeguarding, medical, welfare, discipline or complaint matters in group chats
9. delete messages, posts or images that may be needed as evidence

Coaches, managers and volunteers must follow all AFC Oakley safeguarding, data protection, communication and conduct requirements.

13. Parents, carers and spectators

Parents, carers and spectators are expected to support a safe, respectful and positive football environment.

Parents, carers and spectators must not:

1. post abusive, offensive, discriminatory, threatening or intimidating content
2. publicly criticise players, coaches, managers, volunteers, match officials, opposition teams, leagues, County FA, The FA or AFC Oakley
3. share private information about a player, family, volunteer or club matter
4. share images or video in a way that breaches safeguarding expectations, consent or club policy
5. use team groups for personal arguments, complaints or inappropriate comments
6. post U7 to U11 scores, results, scorers or league tables

7. tag children's personal social media accounts
8. contact youth players through social media or direct messaging without appropriate reason and parent or carer knowledge

Parents and carers should help children understand safe and respectful online behaviour.

14. Youth players

Youth players must use social media and digital communication responsibly.

Youth players must not:

1. post or send abusive, offensive, discriminatory, threatening or bullying content
2. target team-mates, opposition players, coaches, volunteers, match officials or spectators
3. share private club information
4. share images or videos that embarrass, ridicule or upset another person
5. reveal personal details online, including phone numbers, addresses, email addresses or passwords
6. invite adult coaches, managers or volunteers to become friends on personal social media accounts
7. accept social media friend requests from adult coaches, managers or volunteers connected to the club
8. delete inappropriate messages that may need to be reported
9. use social media to escalate disputes or complaints
10. post U7 to U11 scores, results, scorers or league tables

Youth players should tell a parent, carer, coach, manager, trusted adult or the Club Welfare Officer if they receive a message, image, video or online contact that makes them feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried.

15. Adult and Vets players

Adult and Vets players are personally responsible for their online behaviour.

Adult and Vets players must not use social media or digital communication to abuse, harass, threaten, intimidate, discriminate against or defame players, team-mates, opponents, match officials, volunteers, spectators, leagues, County FA, The FA or AFC Oakley.

Adult and Vets players must follow AFC Oakley policies, FA rules, County FA rules, league rules and competition requirements.

Where adult teams include players aged under 18, safeguarding expectations still apply.

16. Safeguarding and welfare concerns

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Any concern involving a child's safety, welfare, inappropriate communication, online bullying, grooming concern, image sharing, video, livestreaming, social media contact or adult behaviour must be reported to the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

Club Welfare Officer: Abi Fowkes

Email: welfare@afcoakley.co.uk

Phone: 07974 817297

If there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be contacted.

Where appropriate, AFC Oakley may refer concerns to Bedfordshire FA, The FA, police, children's services, statutory agencies, leagues or another relevant authority.

17. Preserving evidence

Inappropriate messages, posts, images, videos, comments or online contact must not be deleted where they may be needed as evidence.

Where possible, the following should be saved:

1. screenshots
2. links
3. dates and times

4. usernames or account names
5. names of those involved
6. details of the platform used
7. any relevant message history

Evidence should be passed to the Club Welfare Officer or relevant club official.

18. Data protection and privacy

Personal data must only be used for proper AFC Oakley purposes.

Personal data must not be posted, shared or forwarded unless there is a valid club reason and it is appropriate to do so.

This includes:

1. names
2. dates of birth
3. addresses
4. phone numbers
5. email addresses
6. medical information
7. emergency contact details
8. photographs
9. videos
10. safeguarding, welfare, discipline or complaint information

Detailed medical information, safeguarding information, discipline matters or complaints must not be shared in WhatsApp groups, Spond groups, social media messages or general email chains.

AFC Oakley's Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice explain how the club collects, uses, stores and shares personal data.

19. Breaches of this policy

AFC Oakley may take action where this policy is breached.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, action may include:

1. a reminder of expected standards
2. a verbal warning
3. a written warning
4. a request for an apology
5. removal of a post, image, video or comment
6. removal from a team group or communication channel
7. temporary restriction from training, matches or club events
8. restriction from attending matches, training or club events
9. removal from a volunteer, coaching, management or official role
10. suspension of registration or membership
11. termination of registration or membership
12. referral to the league, Bedfordshire FA, The FA, police, children's services or another appropriate body

AFC Oakley may act immediately where it considers this necessary to protect safety, welfare, volunteers, players, the club or the wider football environment.

Where practical and appropriate, AFC Oakley will act reasonably and consider individual circumstances before making a final decision.

20. Internal procedure

AFC Oakley also maintains an internal social media and digital communications procedure for authorised club officers, managers, coaches, volunteers and account administrators.

The internal procedure explains how club accounts, access, approvals, safeguarding concerns, evidence preservation and internal controls must be managed.

21. Related documents

This policy should be read alongside the latest communicated versions of the following AFC Oakley documents:

[AFC Oakley Registration Terms and Conditions](#)

[AFC Oakley Codes of Conduct](#)

[AFC Oakley Safeguarding Children Policy](#)

[AFC Oakley Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice](#)

Where any related policy is updated, the latest communicated version will apply once made available to members.

22. Acceptance

By registering with AFC Oakley or taking part in AFC Oakley activity, players, parents, carers, spectators, coaches, managers, team officials, committee members, volunteers and adult members agree to follow this policy.

For youth players, the parent or guardian accepting AFC Oakley Registration Terms and Conditions also accepts this policy on behalf of the player and must help the player understand the standards expected.

For Adult and Vets players, the player accepts this policy personally.

23. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least once per season or sooner if AFC Oakley changes how it uses social media, communication platforms, photography, video or digital systems.

The committee will approve any policy changes and record approval in the committee minutes.