

Westmeath Minotaurs AFC Digital Communication & Social Media Policy

Adopted by the Committee of Westmeath Minotaurs AFC

1. Purpose of This Policy

Westmeath Minotaurs AFC recognises that digital communication is now central to club operations. This policy ensures that all communication involving children, parents, volunteers, coaches, and members is:

- Safe
- Appropriate
- Transparent
- GDPR-compliant
- Consistent with Sport Ireland safeguarding standards

This policy applies to **all digital communication**, including:

- WhatsApp
- Email
- Text messaging
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube)
- Club website
- Online coaching platforms
- Photography and video recording

2. Principles of Safe Digital Communication

Westmeath Minotaurs AFC follows these core principles:

- Child welfare is paramount
- Communication must be open, transparent, and accessible to parents
- No private one-to-one messaging between adults and children
- All communication must be respectful and appropriate
- Personal data must be protected under GDPR
- Digital communication must support—not replace—safe coaching practice

3. WhatsApp & Messaging Groups

WhatsApp is widely used for team communication. To ensure safety:

Group Structure

- Youth team groups **must include parents/guardians**.
- Coaches **must not privately message children**.

- Groups must be administered by **two adults** (coach + committee member).
- Only approved club personnel may create official groups.

Content Rules

- Messages must relate only to club activities.
- No inappropriate language, images, or jokes.
- No sharing of personal data beyond what is necessary.
- No posting of photos/videos without consent.

Seasonal Deletion

- All youth WhatsApp groups must be **deleted at the end of each season**.

4. Email Communication

General Rules

- Emails to youth players must include parents/guardians.
- BCC must be used for group emails to protect privacy.
- Club email accounts should be used where possible.
- Sensitive information must be encrypted or password-protected.

Prohibited

- Coaches emailing children directly
- Sharing medical or safeguarding information via unsecured email

5. Social Media Policy

Westmeath Minotaurs AFC uses social media to promote club activities. To protect children:

Posting Rules

- No posting images of children without **written parental consent**.
- No tagging children in posts.
- No identifying information (school, address, age).
- No live-streaming youth matches without safeguards.
- No posting disciplinary matters or injuries.

Behaviour Expectations

- Members must not use social media to:
 - Bully
 - Harass
 - Abuse

- Criticise referees, coaches, or players
- Share confidential club information

6. Photography & Video Recording

Photography and video are permitted only under strict conditions:

Consent

- Written parental consent is required for all minors.
- Consent may be withdrawn at any time.

Prohibited

- Photos in changing rooms
- Photos of injured players without permission
- Photos that identify children by name without consent
- Sharing images in private messaging groups without consent

Storage

- Images must be stored securely and deleted when no longer needed.

7. Online Coaching & Virtual Sessions

If online coaching is used:

- A parent/guardian must be present.
- Sessions must be supervised or recorded.
- Coaches must use club-approved platforms.
- No one-to-one private online sessions.
- No recording without consent.

8. Website Content

The club website may include:

- Fixtures
- Results
- News
- Photos (with consent)
- Policies
- Contact details for safeguarding officers

It must **not** include:

- Personal data of children

- Identifying information
- Disciplinary matters

9. GDPR Compliance

Digital communication must comply with the club's Data Protection Policy:

- Personal data must be stored securely
- Only authorised volunteers may access data
- Data must not be shared outside the club except with AFI or statutory authorities
- Data breaches must be reported immediately to the Club Secretary

10. Reporting Digital Concerns

Members must report:

- Inappropriate messages
- Bullying or harassment
- Misuse of images
- Privacy breaches
- Suspicious accounts
- Any communication that makes a child uncomfortable

Reports go to:

- **Children's Officer**
- **Designated Liaison Person (DLP)**
- **Club Secretary**

11. Breaches of This Policy

Breaches may result in:

- Removal from WhatsApp groups
- Suspension from coaching or volunteering
- Removal from social media roles
- Disciplinary action under club procedures
- Reporting to AFI, Tusla, or Gardaí if necessary

12. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Committee of Westmeath Minotaurs AFC.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson) **Date:** _____