



## AFC Darwen Social Networking Policy

### The Football Associations view is:

Coaches, referees mentors, club officials and others in a position of trust in football need to act responsibly both on and off the field and this includes the use of electronic communications. Therefore The FA would suggest that as a general principle Coaches, Managers etc. should avoid using social networking sites as the primary way of communicating with players.

### This is also the view of AFC Darwen

AFC Darwen is committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person under the age of 18, by providing 'Best Practice' guidance whilst entrusted in its care. (See AFC Darwen's Child Protection Policy).

AFC Darwen acknowledges that members may choose to communicate information that provides a messaging service through Social Networking sites. However, the use of 'Facebook', 'Twitter', 'YouTube' or other Social Networking sites, must be managed appropriately. It is against FA and Club rules to post comments that are or may be conceived as:- offensive, insulting, abusive, threatening, racist, harassment, homophobic or any other reference that may cause offence or harm to other members of AFC Darwen or bring the Club into disrepute as a result. Any evidence of this will be brought before the Executive Committee and dealt with accordingly. Coaches, Managers, Assistant Managers, Referees or Officials are not recommended to use Social Networking sites as a source of communicating messages to team players under the age of 18, unless that member is a close relative and Club Officials, Referees, Managers, Coaches should NOT accept these as 'friends'. This not only safeguards the young person, but also the adult. **Please Note: Further details can be found on the F.A.'s website (see 'Using texts and e-mails with U18's – Do's and Don'ts).**

### PLEASE NOTE:

Only those aged 13 or above should be registered on 'Facebook'.

It is AFC Darwen's Policy that no Official, Manager, Assistant Manager Coach use any web based communication to contact children or young people involved in youth football or send personal



messages (which could be misinterpreted) and any correspondence that might be entered into should etc.), and not in a derogatory way and must only be sent to the parent/guardian. Club members and parents are asked not to make reference to any match results on social media which could cause a child to feel uncomfortable or cause them distress. Children and young people should be advised that any inappropriate communication from other club members (whether they be Officials, Manager/Assistant, Coach, Parents/Guardians or another young person), should be reported to their parent/guardian or Club Welfare Officer in the first instance and a record MUST be kept as evidence, should the matter be taken further. Evidence may be a print out, saved web page or similar in order for the inappropriate communication to be verified. Inappropriate behaviour via Social Networking Sites, texts etc. will be dealt with by the Club who may deem it necessary to report the matter to the service provider as routine.

Anyone involved within AFC Darwen, holding a position of trust are also vulnerable and the points raised above MUST be adhered to.

Mobile numbers or e-mail addresses of children, referees etc. under 18 must NOT be hosted onto AFC Darwen's Club web pages where any member of the public can easily access details or profile. These can be held securely and in private areas for the purpose of football related activities, with the written consent of the parent/guardian.

**AFC Darwen would like to acknowledge assistance in accordance with the FA's 'Best Practice' guidelines for Officials, Parents/Carers, Managers/Assistants and Coaches.**

