BILLINGHAM TOWN AFC LTD

 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Billingham Town Football Club understand everyone involved in football must recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play. Coaches, club officials, volunteers 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.

Clubs and leagues that set up websites have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. Coaches, officials and those in a position of responsibility in clubs and must ensure they communicate responsibly. Clubs are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abide by the Rules and Regulations of The English Football League (EFL) and The Football Association (FA)

It is important that the reputation of Billingham Town Football Club, as well as its sponsors and partners, is not tarnished or damaged in any way by anyone using social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that directly references Billingham Town.

When someone clearly identifies their association with Billingham Town, or can easily be associated with Billingham Town, in this type of open forum, we expect them to behave and express themselves responsibly and in a manner that complies with this policy. The purpose of this policy is to provide some guiding principles for associates of Billingham Town to follow when using social media.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all Associates and covers all forms of social media.

For the purpose of this policy, social media includes, but is not limited to, activities such as:

* Maintaining a profile page on social networking sites (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linked-In etc.);
* Content sharing including using sites such as Flickr (photo sharing) and YouTube (video sharing);
* Commenting on blogs/forums for personal or business reasons;
* Leaving product or service reviews on retailer sites or customer review sites
* Taking part in online votes and polls;
* Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums (message boards);

The intent of this policy is to cover anything posted online where information is shared that might refer to or otherwise affect members, sponsors, partners, customers, or supporters of Billingham Town as an organisation and/or affect the respective reputations of Billingham Town, the National League or the Football Association and all competitions associated with or run by them.

**Guiding Principles**

The web is not anonymous. Associates should assume that everything they write online, especially in open forums, could be traced back to them. It is essential therefore that Associates at all times consider their connection with Billingham Town carefully, in particular their role as a representative of the Club, when using social media.  The board in line with their communications strategy must approve all relevant communications via Social media relating to the Football Club.

The club and associated staff should:

1. Refrain from publishing derogatory comments about other clubs, players or referees and any controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects.
2. Avoid hostile or harassing communications in any posts or other online communications. Harassment is any offensive conduct based on a person`s race, sex, gender identity, national origin, colour, disability, age sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, religion or any other status identified by The Equality Act 2010.
3. If it maintains a website, blog, chat room, video-sharing site, bulletin board or other social media that promotes their club, should remember they are responsible for reviewing responses to online posts and resolving any concerns about the propriety of the responses before they are posted.
4. If a blogger or any other online participant posts an inaccurate, accessory or negative comment about the club or anyone associated with the club, do not respond to the post and contact The Club Secretary for guidance/advice.
5. Not publish anything that contains libellous, defamatory, abusive or otherwise offensive content.
6. Not bring Billingham Town or the sport and any associated governing bodies into disrepute.

Coaching Staff and Player’s Guidance Players must not:

1. Post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, or racist as this would go against football club’s rules and could also be against the law. Or post personal comments in relation to the management or operation of the club, club officials, match officials, players, opposition team member(s), or any family members of those above.
2. Engage in any personal communications, ‘banter’ or comments with staff / volunteer(s), players’ opposition teams.
3. Give out personal details online including mobile numbers, email addresses or social networking account access to people you don’t know well offline
4. Invite any adult involved with the club to become your friends online, or accept them as a friend on any social network site. They have been told they must not to accept such invitations
5. Use internet, web-based, phone or any other form of communication to send personal messages of a non-football nature to any member of staff/volunteer at the club
6. Delete inappropriate text or email messages sent to you as they may form part of any subsequent investigation
7. Use inappropriate language.
8. Reveal information about training, fixtures and contractual agreements etc using social media posts.

**Breach of Policy**

Billingham Town Football Club will continually monitor online activity relating to it and / or the sport in general. Detected breaches of this policy should be reported to the Company Secretary If detected, a breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken by the board including without limitation a verbal or written warning or, in serious cases, termination of the perpetrator's association with Billingham Town.

John Tough