

 <b>FOOTBALL SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>FOOTBALL SOUTH AUSTRALIA</b>  <b>Procedures and Policies</b>		
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Electronic and Online Communication Policy</b>	<b>Date Implemented</b>	Nov 2014
<b>Review:</b>	<b>Biennially</b>	<b>Date Reviewed / Amended</b>	November 2025

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. Football South Australia recognises the value of social media as an effective tool to engage with participants and supporters of football. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), TikTok, LinkedIn, YouTube, as well as forums and blogs, serve as powerful communication channels to promote the sport and share information, particularly major events, with a wide audience, including players, match officials club, spectators, the general public and the media.
- 1.2. Football South Australia supports the responsible use of social media and encourages clubs and affiliated associations to utilise electronic communication. It is essential, however, that the reputation of Football South Australia, its clubs, affiliated associations, and the sport as a whole is not compromised through the misuse of social media, particularly content that may be discriminatory, defamatory, harassing, bullying or otherwise damaging.

This Policy, alongside the Football Australia Member Protection Policy, sets out standards of appropriate behaviour in electronic communication and aims to ensure a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for all participants and stakeholders.

- 1.3. This Policy must be read in conjunction with Football Australia's National Code of Conduct and Ethics, National Disciplinary Regulations, and Member Protection Framework, which include the National Complaints Procedure and Safeguarding Policy.

## 2. SCOPE

- 2.1. This Policy applies to all Football South Australia Staff, Board Directors, registered participants, volunteers, parents and contractors engaged in Football SA sanctioned activities.
- 2.2. This policy covers all forms of social media. This includes, but is limited to, the following activities:
  - 2.2.1. Maintaining a profile on social or professional networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter (X), TikTok, LinkedIn).
  - 2.2.2. Sharing content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat (photo/video sharing) and YouTube (Video Sharing):
  - 2.2.3. Commenting on public and/or private web forums (message boards).

- 2.2.4. Creating, maintaining, or commenting on blogs for personal or professional purposes; or
- 2.2.5. Participating in online polls or votes, even if anonymously.

**2.3.** The intent of this policy is to apply to any online activity where information is shared that could impact on Football South Australia, its affiliated clubs and associations, participants, individuals or the reputation of the sport.

### **3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 3.1.** The internet is not anonymous. Any content posted online can potentially be traced back to the individual who posted it. As such, social media should always be regarded as a public forum. Individuals bound by this Policy must adhere to the following principles:
  - 3.1.1.** Content shared on social media is considered public comment.
  - 3.1.2.** Comments or content must never be derogatory, discriminatory, abusive, bullying, threatening or defamatory.
  - 3.1.3.** Comments or content must not falsely represent or impersonate another individual.
  - 3.1.4.** Comments or content must not breach another person's privacy.
  - 3.1.5.** Comments or content must not infringe upon intellectual property rights.
  - 3.1.6.** When using social media individuals should always consider all football stakeholders and the potential impact of the content being posted.
  - 3.1.7.** All registered participants, including players, team officials, volunteers and match officials, as well as clubs and affiliated associations are bound by the Football Australia and Football South Australia Rules and Regulations, Codes of Conducts, and other relevant policies. These documents also address the making of public statements or comments.
  - 3.1.8.** Individuals must not engage in harassment, vilification, intimidation, incitement, or victimisation in any online environment.
  - 3.1.9.** Constituents must not make public comments, including via social media, that are disparaging or critical of Football Australia, Football South Australia, Match Officials, opposition teams, or players, or comment on ongoing disciplinary or tribunal matters.
  - 3.1.10.** All electronic or social media communication with a child must include a parent/guardian or be in a monitored group context. Private or direct one-on-one contact between adults and children is prohibited.

### **REPORTING AND COMPLAINTS**

Concerns or breaches of this policy may be reported in accordance with the Football Australia Member Protection Framework – National Complaints Procedure. Complaints should be directed to the club in the first instance or escalated to Football South Australia or Football Australia via the national reporting portal: [www.footballaustralia.com.au/report](http://www.footballaustralia.com.au/report)

#### **4. WRITTEN SOCIAL MEDIA**

Football South Australia considers all written social media posts as public comments. Accordingly, all individuals bound by this Policy must not post or respond to any content that could be perceived as derogatory, discriminatory, abusive, bullying, threatening or defamatory towards others.

Furthermore, posts must not damage the reputation of any individual participant, Football South Australia, its clubs, sponsors, stakeholders or bring the game into disrepute.

#### **5. PHOTOGRAPHS, VIDEO AND AUDIO**

Football South Australia considers all photographs, video and audio material posted onto social media as public comment and accessible to the public.

Any material that could be considered derogatory, discriminatory, abusive, bullying, threatening, defamatory or otherwise inappropriate towards any person bound by this policy must not be posted.

Images or videos of children may only be used where parental consent has been provided and must not include identifying information such as names, school, or contact details

#### **6. BRANDING AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Trademarks or other intellectual property belonging to Football South Australia, any club or affiliated association must not be used in personal social media posts or applications, except where the use is clearly incidental, that is, occurring as a minor or secondary aspect in connection with other content.

#### **7. BREACH OF POLICY**

**7.1.** Football South Australia does not actively monitor social media content of individuals bound by this Policy. However, it does monitor online content that may impact on Football South Australia, its clubs, affiliated associations, sponsors, and the sport more broadly. Social media content may also be brought to the attention of Football South Australia by third parties.

**7.2.** If a breach of this policy is identified, Football South Australia may take action in accordance with the Football Australia and Football South Australia Competition Rules and Regulations, Codes of Conducts, and other relevant policies.

Breaches of this Policy may be investigated and managed under the Football SA Disciplinary and Judicial Body Regulations or referred to Football Australia under the National Disciplinary Regulations or National Code of Conduct and Ethics. Sanctions may include reprimand, fine, suspension, deregistration, or other disciplinary measures as deemed appropriate.

**7.3.** Sanctions may include, but are not limited to:

**7.3.1.** Reprimand.

**7.3.2.** A fine.

- 7.3.3. Placement of the individual on a bond.
- 7.3.4. Suspension from participating in a match or matches.
- 7.3.5. Termination of registration.
- 7.3.6. A Ban on participating in any football-related activity including as a spectator:
- 7.3.7. Termination of employment or volunteer position.
- 7.3.8. Any other disciplinary action deemed appropriate, including those outlined in the Football Australia Statutes.
- 7.3.9. In extreme cases, where the conduct poses risk to a person or property, the matter may be reported to police.

Football South Australia encourages all members to complete Sport Integrity Australia's "[Cyber Safety and Security for Sports](#)", **'Safeguarding Children and Young People'** and '**Electronic and Online Communication**' eLearning module and follow best practice to promote safe and responsible online engagement. Additional resources and training are available [Sports hub | eSafety Commissioner](#)

This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if required due to legislative or governance changes.

---

**Signatures:**

Signed: 

Football South Australia President

Signed: 

Football South Australia CEO

*Next policy review date is:  
July 2027*