

# Geelong Soccer & Sports Club Social Media Policy



1 March 2018

## 1. Purpose

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The purpose of this document is to provide information to Geelong Soccer & Sports Club (“Club”):

- 1) Members;
- 2) Players including Junior Players and their parents and guardians;
- 3) Coaches;
- 4) Team Managers;
- 5) Club Officials;
- 6) Volunteers;
- 7) other related groups (such as Sponsors) (together, Stakeholders)

On the standards and expectations of the use of social media in relation to the Club and what may occur if those standards and expectations are not met.

The Club recognises that social media is an important part of the way Stakeholders communicate. The Club actively encourages use of social media to share their experiences with respect to their participation and involvement in the Club and soccer generally.

The Club recognises the importance of the internet to improve and increase the flow of information. However, the Club’s public reputation is valuable and so are the reputations of Stakeholders. For that reason, any communication on social media that is defamatory, obscene, threatening, discriminatory, racist, or which is otherwise misrepresentative of the Club or Stakeholders is prohibited.

The aim of this policy is to encourage all Stakeholders to be able to express their views on social media in a constructive way and free from harassment.

This policy applies whenever any use of social media, including personal use, can be linked to the Club, or a Stakeholder’s involvement in Club activities.

## 2. What is Social Media?

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“Social Media” refers to websites and other applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Examples include: professional networking sites; blog sites; forums; discussion boards; discussion groups; and personal websites. Well known examples include Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram and so on.

Social media provides our Stakeholders with opportunities to express their ideas. However, all Stakeholders need to use judgment about what type of material appears online and in

what context. The Club has a zero tolerance approach to bullying and harassment. This applies to conduct on-field, off-field, and on social media.

### **3. Online Misconduct**

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- 1) The following actions or behaviours are prohibited online when linked to the Club, or a Stakeholder's involvement in the Club's activities:
  - a) bullying, harassing or threatening social media posts;
  - b) discriminatory, racist, homophobic or sexist language in social media posts;
  - c) impersonating or falsely representing any other person, including the Club or another Stakeholder;
  - d) the disclosure or use of information that is confidential to the Club or its Stakeholders;
  - e) slanderous, defamatory, or libel comments about a Stakeholder, or the Club;
  - f) spreading false or malicious information about a Stakeholder or the Club;
  - g) improperly using the Club's trademarks or branding without authorisation; or
  - h) posting information that brings, or in the Club's reasonable opinion may be likely to bring, the Club, or the Club's Board or staff into disrepute, or otherwise adversely affect or in the Club's reasonable opinion may be likely to adversely affect the image or reputation of the Club, its Board or staff  
(Together, Misconduct).
- 2) Online correspondence directed toward a particular person or the Club, that in isolation may not amount to Misconduct, may be considered harassment where it is consistent, constant, or continues after the person or the Club requests the correspondence to cease.
- 3) Where the Club becomes aware of Misconduct, the Club may investigate and may:
  - a) request the offending posts or materials be removed;
  - b) direct the maker of the comments to apologise, or make a necessary public comment such as a correction, clarification or contradiction;
  - c) report any breach of any law to any local authority or wronged party;
  - d) process Misconduct as per the provisions of the Club's Constitution; and/or
  - e) exercise any of its available rights at law.

#### **Misconduct vs another point of view**

- 4) It is important to remember that:
  - a) Social media misconduct is just that: misconduct. Sometimes, a person may post an unwelcome comment, but a comment does not automatically amount to social media misconduct just because you may not agree with it.
  - b) Posting a different point of view, or airing displeasure at a decision, etc., may be unhelpful and unwanted to the Club or another person, but the Club will not get involved unless it amounts to Misconduct (as set out under clause 3.1 above).

- c) In soccer, as in society generally, it is important that people get a chance to have their say. The Club in no way seeks to stop people from engaging in social media debate to share their opinions.
- d) The Club will only step in where in its view the engagement in social media amounts to Misconduct.

#### **4. What to do if you suspect online misconduct?**

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- 1) Any person who suspects online Misconduct has occurred should advise the Club via telephone or e-mail to any member of the Board.
- 2) Don't get involved in an online debate with the other person for the entire world to see. That often just inflames the situation. Rather, report the matter to the Club.
- 3) Take a photo or screenshot of the misconduct and provide it to the Club to help with the investigation. This is important because people have the ability to delete postings and without such images sometimes it can be difficult for the Club to proceed.
- 4) All suspected or actual breaches will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Club's Constitution.
- 5) Additionally, the Club may remove, or request Stakeholders to remove, any material where there is found to be a breach of this Policy.
- 6) If a matter is reported to the Club, and it turns out that the Club does not consider the matter amounts to Misconduct, the Club can still request the material to be removed if it is offensive or embarrassing.
- 7) Provided that a report to the Club is made in good faith and not out of malice, there is no penalty from the Club for reporting suspected social media misconduct to the Club, even if the matter doesn't end up being considered Misconduct.

#### **5. Steps to consider**

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- 1) To avoid committing any actions or behaviours on social media that constitute misconduct, remember the following points when posting any information online:
  - a) protect the privacy of others by not posting their private or personal information (for example, photographs, private addresses and phone numbers) in any social media channel without permission;
  - b) represent your own views only, and do not impersonate or falsely represent any other person;
  - c) do not be abusive and do not harass or threaten others;
  - d) do not make defamatory or libelous comments, or use obscene or offensive language;
  - e) do not post material that infringes the intellectual property rights of others. Make sure you are entitled to use images, photos or trademarks before you use them;
  - f) if posting images of minors, obtain permission to do so; and
  - g) do not make excessive postings on a particular issue, as posts which in isolation may not amount to Misconduct, may be considered harassment where they are consistent, constant, or continue after the person requests they cease.
- 2) In addition, Club staff, Board members and Members must at all times remember to:

- a) not convey information that would allow a reasonable person to assume you are a spokesperson for the Club when you are not authorised to disclose the information;
- b) not disparage, criticise or show disrespect for any Stakeholder, and do not discriminate, harass, bully or victimise any stakeholder or any other person.