



Port Vale Football Club

Online Safety and Social Media Policy

Version control

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Document Owner:	Port Vale Football Club – Tim Bailey
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Document review

Last reviewed	Position
Mar 2021	Review and update of Club/Academy and Foundation policy to one umbrella policy.

Version history

Version	Date Released	Originator	Authorised	Comments
1.1	Aug 2019	Chris Taylor	Board	Online Safety and Social Media Policy
1.2	Mar 2021	Tim Bailey	Board	Online Safety and Social Media Policy
1.3	August 2021	Tim Bailey		Revised version

The purpose and Scope of this Policy statement

This Policy is for use across the club and is to be observed by all those who work with children, young persons, and families as part of its football and educational programmes. The Policy exists to ensure that best practice is promoted and adhered to.

Activities undertaken at the following locations/departments are under the remit of this policy which include:

- Port Vale Football Club and the Vale Park Stadium
- Port Vale Foundation Trust
- Port Vale First Team
- Port Vale Academy and youth development
- Port Vale Women
- Port Vale Retail Store

Please note:-

- The terms 'child' or 'children' apply to anyone under the age of 18.
- The term 'parent' applies to anyone with guardianship or caring and parental responsibility for the child.
- The term 'staff' applies to members of staff and volunteers.

1. Our Online Safety statement

This policy provides guidance on how Port Vale Football Club uses the internet and social media and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff who work for us and the children who are members of our organisation, to behave online.

As an organisation, we commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly within these guidelines.

2. Aims

The aims of our online safety policy are:

To protect all children and adults involved with our organisation who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care. We will provide staff with policies and procedures regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents. We aim to ensure our organisation is operating in line with our club values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

3. Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and social media, Port Vale Football Club will assess and manage the safety aspects. This is to include what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and children or other service users when using websites, social media (including Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat) and apps and video conferencing platforms including Zoom or Skype.

Be aware of how staff in our organisation and the children they work with use social media both inside and outside of our setting.

Ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media or video conferencing platforms.

Provide training for staff who are responsible for managing our organisation's online presence.

Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated. These include making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures and incorporate online bullying (cyberbullying) into our anti-bullying policy.

4. Managing our online presence

Port Vale Football Clubs online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:-

All social media accounts will be password-protected and at least 2 members of staff will have access to each account and password.

The accounts will be monitored by at least two designated members of staff to provide transparency who will have been appointed by the organisation's media manager.

The designated staff managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead to advise on safeguarding requirements.

Designated staff will remove inappropriate posts by children or staff, explaining why and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved). We will also act and report serious infringements to relevant agencies.

We will make sure users are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that has happened online.

Our account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only invited members can see their content.

Identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number should not be posted on social media platforms and any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims as an organisation.

Parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication.

Parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media as per the club's photography and video policy.

Video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

5. What we expect of our staff

Staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.

They should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if any concerns arise about the use of the internet or social media.

Staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children to the designated staff responsible for the organisation's online presence.

Staff should not communicate with children via personal accounts.

Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisational accounts.

Staff should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children may 'follow' them on social media.

Rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, staff should choose a more formal means of communication

such as face-to-face, in an e-mail or in writing, or use an organisational account or website.

Staff should avoid communicating with children via e-mail or organisational social media outside of normal office hours.

E-mails or messages should be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals. Avoid kisses (X's), using slang or inappropriate language.

Staff should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from organisational accounts.

Staff should undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platform's children use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online.

Any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our reporting procedures.

At least one parent must be present during the delivery of any activities via video conferencing platforms at home.

Any delivery of activities to children via video conferencing platforms will be supported by an additional member of staff (even if they're not actively delivering) to ensure transparency.

Staff and children must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene.

6. What we expect of children

Children should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms.

We expect children's behaviour online to be consistent with the acceptable use guidelines as set out in our acceptable use statement.

Children should follow this policy on all digital devices, including smart phones, tablets and consoles.

7. What we expect of parents

Parents should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms.

Parents should protect all children's privacy online and think carefully about what content they share online. This includes where they share it and who they are sharing it with.

We expect parents' behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement and in our codes of conduct for parents and spectators.

8. Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, e-mail and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), we will take the following precautions to ensure children's safety.

Staff will avoid having children's personal mobile numbers and will instead seek contact through a parent.

We will seek parental permission on each occasion we need to contact children directly and the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon.

A method of accountability will be arranged, such as copies of texts, messages or e-mails also being sent to another member of staff or to parents' smartphone.

Users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy.

Staff should, if possible, have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with parents or children.

Texts, e-mails or messages will be used for communicating information – such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events, which kit to bring or practice timings – and not to engage in conversation.

If a child misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member in conversation, the member of staff will take the following steps:

end the conversation or stop replying.

*suggest discussing the subject further at the next practice or event.
inform the organisations lead safeguarding officer in the interest of transparency.*

if concerned about the child, provide contact details for the organisations designated safeguarding lead or appropriate agencies and report any concerns using the organisations reporting procedures.

9. Using mobile phones during sports activities

So that all children can enjoy and actively take part in sports activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones during such activities. As part of this policy, we will:

Make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with the organisation.

Inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away at camps or away trips and discourage them from attempting contact outside of these times.

Advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a contact within the club or organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency.

Explain to children how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment and their level of participation and achievement.

Board Authority and Acceptance of this Policy

Signed by:

Name Board member..... Date:.....

SSM..... Date:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis or following learning outcomes as a result of a significant incident or when legislation / statutory guidance changes by the Designated Safeguarding Lead.