



## **ACU Social Media Policy and Guidance**

**Advice, guidance and recommendations for all Participants in motorcycle sport whether or not licenced members of ACU.**

*For the purpose of this document: the term 'Coach' is used to apply to all adults working with young people (U18) in motor sport.*

*For the purpose of this document: the term 'Participants' is used to apply to all adults in motor sport.*

### **Introduction**

As technology develops, the internet and its range of services can be accessed through various devices very easily. Social networking and internet blogs can offer great opportunities for motorcycle sport to communicate and engage with its audience and members.

ACU has a responsibility to promote the safe and responsible use of social networking and to raise awareness for everyone involved in motorcycle sport of the potential risks and to promote best practice.

Participants should be aware that comments which bring motorcycle sport into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting, may lead to disciplinary action before the ACU and which may result in substantial fines or bans from participation in the sport.

Comments that include a reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability may attract a severe disciplinary sanction.

Comments can also attract civil and criminal action.

### **General guidance**

- These are public forums, so treat them as such
- Participants and organisations are strictly responsible for any posting on his/their account/s
- Re-posting or re-tweeting inappropriate content represents an endorsement of that content and can be actionable and punishable under the General Regulations
- Do not use abusive, derogatory, vulgar or sexual language and do not post anything that you would not say face to face
- Do not criticise or imply bias in ACU Officials on social media platforms
- Deleting or apologising publicly for an improper posting does not prevent disciplinary action being taken
- Consider "protecting" Tweets and changing security/visibility of Facebook accounts

## **Clubs/Organisers**

Clubs should be aware that they can be vicariously liable for material published by members whether paid or unpaid in the course of their duties for example on an official website, Facebook site or Twitter feed, or published by members outside motor sport via a work email address or a work Twitter handle.

Clubs can also be liable for third party comments and postings made in their website forums or on their Facebook pages.

We recommend that clubs:

- Clearly identify who is responsible for posting and maintaining social networking and internet sites
- Set standards for content generated in line with the guidelines above
- Establish protocols for monitoring output, moderating content in online forums and removing offensive postings
- Report any breaches of these guidelines to ACU and the relevant statutory organisations if appropriate

## **Safeguarding**

In sport, there are additional risks. Inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches and parents on children or inappropriate criticism of a child's performance. A position, such as a coach, can carry with it a level of authority, and engender a level of trust, that facilitates the control of a child.

- When communicating by phone, where possible participants and coaches should speak to the parent of a child
- Participants and coaches should avoid communicating with children by text or on-line at any time, on any matter, unless there is an immediate risk to the welfare of that child which can be lessened by such contact
- If a club or team needs to communicate motorcycle sport related information to children by email, it should use email groups comprising email addresses given by parents. It is inadvisable for a coach to communicate by email on a one-to-one basis with a child; if replying to an email from a child the parent should be copied into the response
- Participants and Coaches should not communicate with children through social networking sites such as Facebook. Coaches should not be "friends" with the children that they work with
- Under 18's motorcycle sport Facebook pages or other sites for example 'Joe Bloggs Racing' should be set up and monitored closely by the parent/guardian responsible for the young person.

It is impossible to address every issue or cover every scenario you might encounter when communicating with children and it is appreciated that different ages will need to be treated differently. However, in all cases the above guidelines should be considered when determining the most appropriate method of communication in any given circumstances.

Further advice and information may be found on the Child Exploitation and Online Protection, part of the National Crime Agency website.

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>

## **Reporting concerns**

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, as is creating and maintaining high standards of behaviour expected of people in motor sport. For these reasons everyone is encouraged to report concerns of misuse or inappropriate usage of social media to the appropriate person within motor sport, or outside it.

The first point of contact will usually be the Club Safeguarding Officer or a Club Committee member you feel comfortable confiding in. For incidents of a more serious nature including a potential safeguarding issue, the matter must be reported to the Compliance Officer at ACU as soon as practicable and in any event within 7 days.

Threats of immediate harm or danger must always be reported to the police and/or Children's Services or the Local Authority Designated Officer AND the Compliance Officer at ACU.

Whilst the law does not move as fast as technology, there is legislation and government guidance which applies to social media usage, including: -

- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Protection from Harassment Act 2003
- Defamation Act 1996