

Social Media Guidelines

The Northern Ireland Association of Cricket Umpires and Scorers (NIACUS) recognises the unique opportunities that social media offers and also the freedom of any individual to communicate in whatever way he or she considers appropriate. NIACUS does not wish to curb or deny such freedom, but it has a duty under its constitution to represent the interests of its members as appropriate, and it must also protect the good name and reputation of the Association.

Accordingly, NIACUS has formulated these guidelines to help its members make informed decisions about how they use social media, including, for example, personal and Association websites; blogs; chat rooms; bulletin boards; social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and MySpace; video-sharing sites such as YouTube; etc.

These guidelines are simply that — guidelines. They are not a precise set of rules about what may or may not be communicated, and neither are they exhaustive. Rather, individuals must use common sense when communicating, and of course they should absolutely not contravene the law of the land.

In addition, the guidelines apply not only to Association-related business, but to any social media communication that might ultimately cause an individual's and/or the Association's good name and reputation to be called into question.

It is very easy to communicate information and/or comments that, on the face of it, seem harmless. However, it may be that such information and/or comments could be interpreted in a way that was not intended, which in turn could cause difficulties for the Association and potentially the individual responsible for the communication.

All of us are personally responsible for what we communicate through social media and we should remember that what is published may be read by a considerable number of people over a long period of time. We should also be aware that, once something is published, there is very limited control over where the material might end up, and it is nearly impossible to delete the material once it has been published.

A good way of determining whether something is appropriate to communicate on social media is to ask yourself whether you could communicate your message to the person face to face. If the answer is no, then it should almost certainly not be communicated online.

All members of the Association should understand their responsibility to safeguard the good name and reputation of the Association, both on and off the field of play. They need to act responsibly at all times, including when using social media, and to ensure and uphold the professionalism, integrity and impartiality of themselves as individuals and the Association as a whole.

In upholding these guidelines, the Association expects its members to:

- Refrain from publishing potentially inflammatory, partial etc comments about other clubs, players or umpires and any controversial subjects;
- Avoid hostile or harassing communications, harassment being considered to include unwanted reference to a person`s race, sex, gender identity, national origin, colour, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or any other status liable to cause offence;
- Identify all copyrighted or borrowed material with citations and links. When publishing direct paraphrased quotes, thoughts, ideas, photos or videos, give credit to the original publisher or author;
- Ensure that communications relating to activities such as drinking, gambling, politics, relationships, religion etc are appropriate;

- draw to the attention of an office holder and/or member of the Executive Committee any social media communications made by a member that they believe may contravene the spirit and content of these guidelines; and
- [Not use social media while acting in their official capacity unless specifically requested by an office holder of the Association.]

In any circumstance(s) where the Executive Committee considers that a communication is inappropriate and does not uphold the reputation of NIACUS or its members for professionalism, integrity and impartiality, the Committee will take appropriate action. That action may include disciplinary proceedings as provided for in the Association's constitution and that in turn could lead to a range of outcomes including, for example, exonerating, warning, suspending or even expelling the member(s) concerned.

Any member who is in any doubt as to the meaning of these guidelines or the appropriateness of his/her actions in using social media, is encouraged to contact an office holder or member of the Executive Committee.