



**Basketball  
Ireland**

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## Social Media Use Policy for Coaches of Minors

### Purpose:

This policy is designed to establish clear guidelines for the use of social media by coaches who work with minors within Basketball Ireland. The primary objective is to protect the welfare and privacy of minors while maintaining a professional and safe environment for online interactions.

### Scope:

This policy applies to all coaches, assistant coaches, and other personnel working directly with minors within Basketball Ireland. It covers all forms of social media, including but not limited to WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and any other platforms used for communication and content sharing.

## 1. General Principles

### 1.1 Professionalism and Boundaries:

- Coaches must maintain the highest standards of professionalism in all social media interactions with minors.
- Personal and professional boundaries should be strictly upheld. Coaches are prohibited from accepting or initiating “friend” or “follow” requests from minors on personal social media accounts.
- coaches should not tag minors personal profiles in any photos or videos.
- coaches should not add music to any professional post on social media that includes a minor as the lyrics could be inappropriate or contain offensive lyrics or intentions.

### 1.2 Privacy and Confidentiality:

- Coaches must respect the privacy of minors and their families. Any sharing of personal information, images, or videos of minors on social media is strictly prohibited unless explicit, written consent has been obtained from the minor’s parent or legal guardian.
- Coaches must ensure that no personal or sensitive information regarding minors is disclosed on social media, even in private groups.

### 1.3 Transparency and Accountability:

- All social media interactions between coaches and minors should be transparent. Where possible, communications should occur in a public or group setting, such as within team pages or groups that include other adults (e.g., parents or administrators).



- Coaches are required to use official channels or platforms designated by Basketball Ireland for all communications related to coaching and mentoring.

## 2. Social Media Content Guidelines

### 2.1 Appropriate Content:

- Coaches must ensure that all content shared or commented on is age-appropriate, respectful, and aligned with the values of Basketball Ireland.
- Offensive, derogatory, or discriminatory content, as well as any material that could be considered inappropriate for minors, is strictly prohibited.

### 2.2 Prohibition of Direct Messaging:

- Direct messaging between coaches and minors is prohibited on all social media platforms unless another responsible adult (e.g., parent or guardian) is included in the conversation.
- Any necessary communication with minors outside of official platforms should be conducted through email, with a parent or guardian copied.

### 2.3 Promoting Positive Behaviour:

- Coaches should use social media to promote positive behaviour, sportsmanship, and a safe environment for minors. Any content shared should be educational, motivational, or informative, reinforcing positive values.

## 3. Monitoring and Reporting

### 3.1 Regular Monitoring:

- Basketball Ireland will conduct regular audits of social media activity involving coaches to ensure compliance with this policy.
- Coaches are responsible for reporting any breaches of this policy to the Child Protection Officer or relevant authorities immediately.

### 3.2 Incident Reporting:

- Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour, harassment, or other breaches involving minors on social media should be reported immediately to the Child Protection Officer.
- Coaches are obliged to cooperate fully with any investigations into reported incidents.



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## 4. Education and Training

### 4.1 Mandatory Training:

- All coaches are required to complete training on child protection on a three year cycle, in line with our Garda Vetting and coach licencing, and the responsible use of social media. This training will cover the legal, ethical, and practical aspects of safeguarding minors online.
- The Basketball Ireland will provide resources and support to ensure coaches understand the implications of their online behaviour and the importance of maintaining a safe environment for minors.

## 5. Enforcement and Consequences

### 5.1 Disciplinary Actions:

- Violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, which may include suspension, termination of employment, or referral to legal authorities, depending on the severity of the breach.
- The Basketball Ireland reserves the right to take immediate action to protect the welfare of minors, including removing a coach from their position if necessary.

### 5.2 Appeals Process:

- Coaches have the right to appeal disciplinary actions in accordance with the procedures outlined by Basketball Ireland. However, the welfare of the minors will always remain the paramount consideration in any decisions made.

## 6. Policy Review

### 6.1 Regular Review:

- This policy will be reviewed annually, or more frequently, if necessary, to ensure it remains up to date with evolving best practices, legal requirements, and the digital landscape.
- Feedback from coaches, parents, and other stakeholders will be considered during the review process to ensure the policy continues to meet the needs of all parties involved.

## Conclusion:

Basketball Ireland is committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all minors. Adherence to this Social Media Use Policy is crucial in upholding the highest standards of child protection and ensuring that social media is used responsibly by coaches. ENDS