

## **Tolland Football Club Social Media / General Media Policy**

Tolland Football Club (TFC) acknowledges the emergence of modern technology and the popularity of new communication mediums (Social Media) and wish to encourage their use in a way that benefits football and its participants. Social Media offers people the opportunity to communicate in online communities of shared interest and create, share or consume content.

This policy provides guidance to TFC members when using Social Media and the Club's expectations when members communicate in these forums while representing/discussing our Club.

TFC can use these Social Media platforms to provide useful information to our members and to applaud their achievements. However, participants need to be mindful of the potential inappropriate use of Social Media, which can occur unintentionally, and participants may not realise that their comments once published into a public forum are difficult to retract.

It is important that TFC's reputation is not damaged by any of its members using Social Media inappropriately, particularly in relation to content that references our Club. When members clearly identify and/or discuss their involvement in our Club, TFC expects them to behave appropriately and express themselves in ways that are consistent with the Club's stated values and policies.

In a similar way, it is of the highest importance that our members feel safe and valued as members of our TFC community. When communicating in these forums, members must always be respectful of other members' rights and the TFC Committee will deal with incidents where members fail to do so.

Social Media platforms include:

- Social networking sites, including Facebook, SnapChat, WhatsApp, Tik Tok, MySpace, LinkedIn.
- Video and photo sharing websites, including Flickr and YouTube.
- Micro-blogging sites, such as Twitter.
- Weblogs, including personal blogs or blogs hosted by traditional media publications.
- Forums and discussion boards, including those operated by Fox Sports, Four Four Two, or The World Game.
- Online Encyclopaedias, such as Wikipedia.
- Any other web site that allows individual users or companies to simple publishing tools.

When communicating/using Social Media platforms, TFC recommends that members:

- a) Do not post anything that contains/links to any libellous, defamatory or harassing content; this also applies to illustrations and nicknames.
- b) Do not comment on or publish information that is confidential.
- c) Do not bring TFC, Football Wagga Wagga or the game of football into disrepute.
- d) Do not otherwise breach the FFA Code of Conduct.
- e) Do not post anything that contains/links to any illegal material, pornographic/indecent content.
- f) Do not include information that breaches any laws, court orders, undertakings or contracts.
- g) Do not include personal/private/sensitive information of yourself or of others without their express consent.

- h) Do not use any language/image that is offensive, aggressive, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory, obscene, profane, harassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, sexist, racist, hateful or otherwise provocative.
- i) Do not publish something that would make yourself or any member uncomfortable (reasonably judged) and avoid writing/publishing/posting information when you are feeling emotional/upset/intoxicated.
- j) Do not film/photograph or post any video/image of any other club member, without their express consent.
- k) Never comment on rumours, do not deny or affirm them or speculate about them.
- l) Always use these forums to add value and promote football/TFC in a positive way.

Remember that the Web is not anonymous. TFC members, officials, volunteers and supporters should assume that everything they write/post can be traced back to them.

TFC will not tolerate its members privately contacting (via mobile phone or direct messaging on Facebook/WhatsApp/Snapchat etc) other TFC members in any way that makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable, or where that contact is not welcome. When communicating with other TFC members, if you use any language/image that is offensive, aggressive, defamatory, threatening, discriminatory, obscene, profane, harassing, intimidating, sexually explicit, bullying, sexist, racist, hateful or otherwise provocative and where this is not welcome, action will be taken. Use your discretion and manners.

### **Disparaging Media Statements**

The following is adopted by TFC from the Football Federation Australia Code of Conduct:

A member, player or official must not make any statement in public, including any contribution to television, radio or print media that:

- a) Is disparaging or derogatory of a match official, opposition team, or any player or official; or
- b) Is disparaging or critical of FFA, or any FFA statute or FFA policy decision, without reasonable basis or justification; or
- c) Comments on any matter the subject of a current hearing before the Disciplinary Tribunal or the Appeals Committee.

Where a statement made by an official or player which, in the absolute opinion of the Football Administrator constitutes a breach of making disparaging media statements, the Club is subject to sanction under this Code, independent of any sanction a Football Administrator has chosen to impose against the official or player who made the statement.

### **Consequences of a Breach of this Policy**

Any member, player, official, volunteer or supporter that acts contrary to the recommendations outlined in this policy, is taken to have breached the policy. Where a breach has occurred, the TFC Executive will determine whether a breach is minor or major and then the disciplinary sanctions outlined below may be imposed.

Minor offences begin at step 1, major offences begin at step 2.

**Step One:** For minor breaches, the member receives a warning, where the inappropriate behaviour is outlined by the Club Executive and it is made clear that a further breach of the policy will incur a sanction determined by the Executive. The breach and warning are recorded, and a written notification issued to the member.

**Step Two:** Following a member's second breach of this policy, the TFC Executive will impose one of the following sanctions:

- a) Imposition of a fine (maximum \$200); or
- b) Suspension up to a maximum of 12 matches; or
- c) Expulsion from the Tolland Football Club (deregistered as a player and/or official); or
- d) A ban from attending club matches, training sessions, club events, fundraisers or trips, up to a maximum 12 weeks/matches.

### **Notice and Disciplinary Sanctions**

The Club can only enforce this policy and impose sanctions for a breach, where it has given the member who has allegedly breached the policy:

- a) Reasonable details of the alleged breach of the policy and written notice of any warning for a minor breach; and
- b) Notice of the possible sanctions upon further breach or in the case of a major breach; and
- c) The opportunity to be heard in relation to the issues of the incident that constitutes an alleged breach.

The imposition of a sanction is to take effect immediately, or as notified to the member by the TFC Executive. If a member disputes the sanction imposed, they may appeal in accordance with the Grievance Resolution Regulations (outlined in the Tolland Football Club Constitution), provided they do so within seven (7) business days of receiving written notice of the sanction.

Any member who receives a sanction under this policy should either accept the sanction or seek advice from TFC officials, the Club MPIO or other sources, and lodge an appeal as outlined.

**Compiled by M Hogan 2017**

**Reviewed B Blake 2020**