



BOLTON TOWN FC

Social Media Photography and Digital Communications Policy

Safeguarding standards for youth football

This policy explains how Bolton Town FC uses social media, photographs, video and digital communication while protecting children and young people. It applies to every club team, account and communication channel.

Policy information	Details
Status	Approved club policy
Policy owner	Bolton Town FC Committee and Club Welfare Officers
Applies to	Officials, coaches, volunteers, players, parents, carers and approved media administrators
Review cycle	At least annually and whenever FA guidance changes

Purpose and scope

Bolton Town FC uses digital communication and images to organise football, celebrate players and share club news. We will do this in a way that protects every child's welfare, privacy and dignity. Safeguarding takes priority over publicity, convenience and engagement.

This policy applies to club websites, social-media accounts, messaging apps, email, photography, video, livestreaming and any digital content created in connection with Bolton Town FC. It covers official club channels and team accounts that use the club name, badge, kit or identity.

Core rules

- Obtain and record the required consent before a child's image or personal information is published.
- Respect a child's wishes. A child should never be pressured to appear in a photograph, video or post.
- Use only the minimum personal information needed for the purpose of the post or communication.
- Keep communication with under-18s open, appropriate and visible to parents, carers or other responsible adults.
- Never use digital channels to investigate, debate or disclose a safeguarding concern.
- Report concerns promptly through the club's safeguarding route.

Who is responsible

Role	Responsibility
Committee	Approves this policy, authorises official accounts and acts where the policy is breached.
Club Welfare Officers	Advise on safeguarding, receive concerns and liaise with Manchester FA or statutory services when required.
Coaches and team managers	Use approved communication routes, check consent before publishing and brief parents about matchday photography.
Account administrators	Protect account access, follow the content rules and remove or correct content promptly when required.
Parents and carers	Respect consent decisions, avoid identifying other children and report concerns rather than confronting individuals online.
Players	Use club channels respectfully and tell a trusted adult if online contact or content makes them uncomfortable.

Photography and video

Consent

The club must have recorded parental or carer consent before publishing photographs or video of an under-18 player on a public website, social-media account, promotional item or press release. Consent must explain where and how images may be used. Consent can be withdrawn for future use, although content already shared by others may be difficult to recover.

The child's agreement matters as well as the adult's consent. If a player does not want to be photographed or filmed, their decision must be respected.

Safe use of images

- Use images that show football positively and portray children appropriately dressed.
- Use a player's first name only when consent allows it. Do not publish a full name with an image except where specific written consent and committee approval have been obtained.
- Do not publish addresses, schools, personal contact details, travel routines, live locations or other information that could identify where a child can regularly be found.
- Do not create detailed online player profiles containing a photograph and personal information.
- Do not photograph or film in changing rooms, showers, toilets or treatment areas.
- Do not use an image for a new purpose that falls outside the consent originally given.
- Avoid close-up content that could embarrass, ridicule or expose a child, including images of injury or distress.
- Do not tag children's personal accounts from an official Bolton Town account.

Matches training and events

Parents and visiting teams should be told when club photography, filming or livestreaming is planned. Team officials must know which players cannot appear and agree a discreet way to protect them without drawing attention to their circumstances. A refusal of consent must never affect selection, participation or how a player is treated.

Professional photographers and external media must be approved in advance, given a safeguarding brief and supervised as appropriate. They must not have unsupervised access to children.

Coaching footage

Video used for coaching analysis must be explained to players and parents in advance. Access must be restricted to those who need it, stored securely and deleted when it is no longer required. Coaching footage must not be posted publicly unless separate publication consent has been obtained.

Digital communication with under 18s

Communication must remain about football and use channels that parents or carers can see. Coaches, officials and volunteers must maintain professional boundaries at all times.

Messaging and email

- Use parent or carer contact details as the normal route for youth-team communication.
- Where a group includes older youth players, obtain parental or carer agreement and include parents, carers or more than one responsible adult in the conversation.
- Do not use disappearing messages, secret groups or private one-to-one chats with an under-18 player.
- Do not send sexual, threatening, discriminatory or otherwise inappropriate content, jokes or images.
- Keep messages to reasonable hours unless there is an urgent change affecting safety or immediate travel arrangements.
- Do not use personal messaging to build a relationship with a player outside the legitimate needs of football.

Team WhatsApp groups

Youth-team WhatsApp groups should normally be parent and carer groups. Administrators must state the group's purpose, keep discussion relevant to club activity and remove inappropriate content. Selection decisions, complaints about children, disciplinary matters and safeguarding concerns must be handled privately through the correct club route, not debated in the group.

Social media contact

Adults acting for the club must not use personal accounts to initiate private contact with youth players. Official accounts should communicate through public posts or messages that include a parent, carer or another authorised adult. Any unexpected or concerning contact from a player should be preserved and referred to a Club Welfare Officer rather than deleted or handled alone.

Livestreaming

A team must not livestream a youth match or training session without prior club approval, appropriate consent and a plan for protecting children who cannot be shown. Livestream descriptions must not disclose live travel information or other unnecessary personal details.

Official club and team accounts

Any account using the Bolton Town FC name, badge or team identity must be approved by the committee. The club may require access to the account, request changes to content or withdraw approval.

Account security

- Use a club-controlled email address where one is available.
- Use a strong unique password and enable two-factor authentication.
- Limit administrator access to approved adults and review access when roles change.
- Do not share passwords in open chats or store them in documents available to players or parents.
- Remove access promptly when an administrator leaves the role.
- Keep a record of the account name, platform, lead administrator and backup administrator.

Publishing checklist

Check	Before publishing
☐	Consent is recorded for every identifiable child.
☐	The child is comfortable with the image or video being used.
☐	Names and captions follow this policy and reveal no unnecessary personal details.
☐	No child without consent appears in the background, thumbnail or video clip.
☐	The content is respectful, accurate and suitable for a public audience.
☐	Any sponsor, competition or opposition references are correct and appropriate.
☐	The post does not reveal a live location or routine that creates avoidable risk.

Comments and moderation

Administrators should remove comments that identify or target a child, contain abuse or discrimination, disclose personal information or raise a safeguarding risk. Take a screenshot before removal when the content may be needed as evidence. Block or restrict users where necessary and report serious concerns through the club safeguarding route.

Responding to concerns and breaches

Do not investigate a safeguarding concern through social media or contact the person accused. Preserve the available evidence and pass the concern to a Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible.

1. If a child is in immediate danger, call 999.
2. Take screenshots or retain messages, account names, dates, times and links where it is safe to do so.
3. Do not forward harmful content more widely than necessary. Never save or redistribute suspected illegal sexual images of children.
4. Use the safeguarding contact route on the Bolton Town FC website to contact the appropriate Club Welfare Officer.
5. The Club Welfare Officer will decide whether the concern must be referred to Manchester FA, The FA, the Police, children's social care or another appropriate service.

[Bolton Town FC safeguarding information and contact route](#)

Policy breaches

The club may require content to be removed, suspend access to an account, restrict photography or communication, or take disciplinary action under the club's rules. Serious or repeated breaches may be referred to Manchester FA or The FA. Action will be proportionate and will put children's welfare first.

Data handling

Images, videos, consent records and contact details are personal data. They must be stored securely, accessed only by people who need them and retained no longer than necessary. Personal devices should not be the only place where important club records are kept. A request to withdraw consent or correct personal information must be passed promptly to the relevant team official or committee member.

Related guidance

[The FA Photographing and Filming Children guidance](#)

[The FA Using Texts and Emails with Under 18s guidance](#)

[The FA safeguarding resources](#)

[Manchester FA safeguarding information](#)