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SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
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Review History

Date of Review	Comments
May 2014	Version 1 approved for use
May 2015	Version 2 approved for use

Revision History

Version	Change Log	Date
1	Initial release of policy	May 2014
2	Updated	May 2015

Introduction

Bowls England recognises that the use of social media is now an everyday part of life and is deeply aware of the benefits that its correct use may have, particularly in keeping stakeholders informed and raising the profile of the sport amongst a wider audience. This Policy outlines Bowls England's commitment to the use of social media whilst protecting the interests of its Members and the sport of bowls.

Social media is broadly defined as any website or application that enables users to create and share content or participate in social networking. For the purpose of this Policy, all references to social media include the following:

- Blogs
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Instant Messaging Services
- LinkedIn
- MySpace
- Social Bookmarks
- Skype
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- YouTube

The definition of social media covered by this Policy also includes any similar services available now or in the future.

Application

This Policy applies to all use of social media by any Director, Employee or Member of Bowls England (including Individual Members/Players), or any Third Party working for or on behalf of Bowls England. It will be reviewed annually by the Board of Bowls England.

Social Media - Benefits

Social media offers a number of potential benefits to Bowls England and its Members, including:

- Ease of communication
- Additional revenue streams
- Increased exposure

Social Media – Risks

Each individual must be aware that any information posted onto the internet (which includes social media) where others have access is available for public viewing. It is often forgotten that anything said to one person might be seen by a great many others. Once posted, it is not then possible to say it was not meant, or that it was a private comment, and not intended for onward distribution or publication.

Other potential risks may include:

- Cyber bullying
- Sexual grooming
- Exposure to inappropriate and/or illegal content
- Theft of personal information
- Defamation
- Criminal activities

Duty of Members (including Individual Players)

When using social media Bowls England expects all those covered by this Policy to adhere to the following:

- You must not post information or make comments that could bring Bowls England into disrepute or which are derogatory or disrespectful in any way to Bowls England or anyone associated with it;
- Comments should not be speculative or have an actual or likely negative impact on Bowls England's reputation or cause embarrassment to Bowls England, its partners, employees or clients or be intended to do the same or be posted without proper regard to the potential for harm;
- You shall not post any pictures or statements that may embarrass another member of Bowls England or the National Governing Body itself;

Examples of unacceptable comments or postings are creating, accessing or circulating any material that:

- Could potentially result in an operational or reputational risk to Bowls England or anyone associated with Bowls England;
- Contains profanity, obscenities, derogatory or abusive remarks;
- Could be viewed as containing discriminatory material whether on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, nationality, religion or belief, pregnancy or gender re-assignment;
- Contains nudity or images of a sexual nature that could cause offence;
- Could be construed as libellous by the person about whom the comment is made;
- May have the effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment for others;
- Could lead to allegations of bullying or harassment even if this is not on the grounds of someone's protected characteristic i.e. sex, race, disability etc. even if the person about whom the comment is made has not seen the comment;
- Discloses confidential information or information that is not readily available to those outside of Bowls England (this would include any information given in confidence that is reasonable for Bowls England to consider as confidential).

Where any offending material has been posted and this is brought to the attention of Bowls England you will be asked to remove the offending content and may face further disciplinary action.

Disciplinary Action

Should anyone bring Bowls England, its Members or the sport of bowls into disrepute, then this may be classed as bringing the sport into disrepute and appropriate action may be taken as per Bowls England Regulation 9.

Communication

Bowls England will endeavour to respond to all communication received via social media platforms within three working days in line with the timescales in place for all other communications. However, it is recognised that social media should not be used for the notification of competition results for which formal systems of notice are in place.

APPENDIX A - EMPLOYEES

All employees have a duty not to make online comments that could bring the Company into disrepute or may create a negative image of Bowls England.

All employees also have a duty to ensure that their electronic communications do not cause any actual or likely harm to colleagues.

Social media may only be used during working hours for business purposes.

It is important to stress to employees that, whilst they are permitted to use their private accounts in their private time (subject to the remainder of this Policy), their use of social media may have the potential to damage the Company and its reputation.

The following guidelines apply to all employees:

- Tools such as Skype and Instant Messaging may be used as appropriate and subject to this policy for business communications with clients and suppliers;
- The use of social media for private/personal use is not allowed during working hours;
- You may access social media during your lunch break;
- The use of LinkedIn may be permitted but only with the prior written permission of the Chief Executive;
- Private social media accounts should not be used for business purposes (with the exception of LinkedIn where permitted);
- Personal accounts including those on Facebook must not be linked to business profiles;
- For the avoidance of doubt, the use of any other social media sites not mentioned above are not permitted during working hours, nor are to be linked to business profiles.

In addition to Bowls England's Social Media Policy, when using social media (in their own time) we expect employees to make it clear that any post is their personal comment and does not represent the views of Bowls England.

Disciplinary Action

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken by the Company. This may be the case regardless of whether the breach occurred during work time or using work equipment or in the employee's private time. Should any employee be found to have contravened this Policy, Bowls England reserves the right to take appropriate action.