



## **SFC Fans Social Media Guidance**

**August 2022**

### **Introduction**

At Stevenage Football Club, we believe social media is an important means of connecting with our fans. We use various social media platforms to inform and entertain, to share our stories and make you as fans feel welcome, valued and included as a part of this Club.

Social media also provides us with an opportunity to engage with each other, and we greatly welcome discussion, debate and opinion that is responsible and respectful. Nonetheless, we recognise that social media can be a place where interaction is not respectful. We are all too aware that social media platforms can, and have, been used to post and amplify hate, abuse and discrimination.

Stevenage FC is clear that there can be no place in our game, nor society, for racism, antisemitism, homophobia, sexism or any form of discrimination. In sport, as in wider society, we must create a social media environment where hateful and discriminatory actions are as unacceptable online as they would be on the street.

This therefore provides guidance on engaging with the Club, its players, staff and other fans on social media, and sets out the action we will take, and the action we ask you as fans to take, to ensure that our collective experience on social media is as positive, inclusive, safe and as healthy as can be.

As a Club, we are committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion into everything we do. We are also committed to fighting racism, and all forms of discrimination wherever we find it.

We would therefore ask our fans to reflect the Club's values and beliefs when engaging online, whether that is with the Club, with each other, or with anyone else online.

We will, in turn, promote tolerance, respect and fairness, and we ask our fans to join us in saying no to hate, abuse and discrimination in any form.

### **What we will do**

We believe social media companies must do more to tackle hateful, abusive and discriminatory behaviour on their platforms. Nonetheless, as a Club, we are committed to taking action and playing our part.

We will consider acting against individuals or groups who produce or disseminate social media posts that contravene the Club's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies and our actions to fight

discrimination. We will not tolerate discriminatory online abuse of our players, coaches, staff and family members. We will examine complaints on a case-by-case basis and will investigate if we believe necessary.

We will do everything reasonably practical to protect the Club, its players, staff and its fans from discriminatory online abuse. The sheer volume of posts and content on social media channels means that it is not possible or realistic for the Club to intervene in every situation. The decision on whether to act will remain at the Club's sole discretion. Any decision not to act does not constitute an endorsement of the content under complaint by the Club.

We will support the English Football League and all relevant authorities when they report incidents of discriminatory online abuse to the relevant social media platforms and where they decide investigation and legal action are appropriate.

### **What you can do**

You can block users and report incidents to social media platforms.

We strongly advise that should you receive or witness hateful, discriminatory and/or abusive comments or content online, you report this to the relevant social media platform.

If you witness discriminatory online abuse related to Stevenage FC staff, players or supporters, we ask that you also report these to the Club.

When contacting us, please share details of the content and screenshots of any offensive social media posts where possible. The Club will acknowledge receipt of your complaint and respond directly if we require further information in order to investigate.

We will look at every complaint and if we do not respond this does not necessarily mean that we have not taken action, or that the Club endorses the incident or content under complaint.

You should report crimes to the Police

You should report incidents directly to the police if you have been a victim of a crime or you feel a crime has been committed through social media. There are a variety of ways to make such a report – see <https://herts.police.uk>

You can report incidents to Kick it Out

Incidents can also be reported to Kick it Out, English football's equality and inclusion organisation, via this online form: <https://www.kickitout.org/forms/online-reporting-form>

### **Advice for parents**

Parents should be aware of the use of social media by children who may be particularly susceptible to harmful content online and we recommend that parents appropriately supervise this usage.

The NSPCC provides useful resources on keeping children safe online:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>