

# SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

## Introduction

West Ham United FC is proud to promote an inclusive environment where we want to ensure all our supporters feel valued, safe and welcomed.

We want as many people as possible around the world to hear about the Club, our history, successes and supporters. One of the many ways our supporters share their love for the Club is through social media. We do everything possible to ensure our online communities are safe spaces for all our supporters. We recognise that football cultivates a range of opinions from across the fanbase, so we ask that supporters engage with our platforms respectfully and in a responsible way at all times and understand that views may differ even within our own fanbase. To help ensure our platforms continue to be safe and fun places for fans to enjoy, we encourage you to report any concerns to us directly by email at:

[supporterservices@westhamunited.co.uk](mailto:supporterservices@westhamunited.co.uk)

and/or by contacting the platform host (for contact details, please see section titled 'Blocking users and reporting incidents to social media platforms' below).

## West Ham United FC official social media platforms

The Club actively uses the following social media platforms and channels to engage with fans:

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/westhamunited](https://www.facebook.com/westhamunited)

X:

- Main Account – [@WestHam](#)
- West Ham Women – [@WestHamWomen](#)
- Supporter Services – [@WestHamHelp](#)
- Foundation – [@WHUFoundation](#)
- West Ham United Fan Information | [WhatsApp Channel](#)

## International Accounts

- North America – [@WestHam\\_US](#)
- Portuguese – [@WestHam\\_PT](#)
- Espanol – [@WestHamEspanol](#)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/westham](https://www.instagram.com/westham)

Snapchat: [www.snapchat.com/add/westham](https://www.snapchat.com/add/westham)

YouTube: [West Ham United Football Club](#)

## Our expectation of behaviour

We recognise that, unfortunately, social media can be a place where interactions are not always respectful. We are fully aware that social media platforms can be, and have been, used to post and amplify hate, abuse and discrimination. However, we would like to remind supporters to behave on social media as they would do in person on a matchday.

When engaging with social media relating directly to the Club, whether on the Club's official social media channels or elsewhere, we expect our supporters to behave in a manner which is in line with the Club's [Supporter Conduct Charter](#) (as may be updated from time to time). Please note that we may take action against individuals or groups when we are made aware of any of their social media activity that the Club considers to be in contravention of our Supporter Conduct Charter.

The Club will not tolerate any form of racism, antisemitism, homophobia, sexism or any other form of discrimination on its social media platforms and will take action against any offensive posts.

### **Action we may take**

The Club routinely monitors its social media channels to identify and deal with any discriminatory posts, content and activities online.

All enquiries and concerns are treated in the strictest confidence; however, please be aware that we require as much information as possible about the situation and any concerns you may have to conduct a proper investigation. We will aim to thoroughly investigate all complaints.

There are a number of ways that we may choose to take action if we deem necessary following our investigations (and depending on the severity of the conduct), including (among others) we may:

- block the relevant individuals from our official social media accounts;
- ban the relevant individuals from attending fixtures;
- require the relevant individuals to sign an Acceptable Behaviour Agreement (as detailed further in Section 7 (Expiry of a Ban or Suspension) of our [Supporter Conduct Charter](#);
- asking the individuals to take part in educational sessions with partners such as Kick It Out.
- suspend, ban or remove the relevant individual's "Official Supporters' Club" membership status, including removing all official communications sent by the Club;
- report the relevant individuals to the social media platform provider and to the Metropolitan Police if we feel a crime has been committed; and/or
- issue the relevant individuals with a warning letter, which advises them of the potential actions the Club may take.

All situations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and outcomes will be designed to support the safety and welfare of all supporters and Club staff.

### **Advice for fans**

#### **Blocking users and reporting incidents to social media platforms**

Our advice to fans who receive hurtful or abusive comments is not to engage directly with those accounts but to instead report the post to the relevant social media platform first by following the relevant link below and then to block the user from any further contact:

- [Facebook](#)
- [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [Snapchat](#)
- [TikTok](#)

## Reporting incidents to the Club

We would also strongly encourage supporters to report any incidents witnessed or seen on social media platforms that directly affect the Club, its staff, its players or supporters via email to [supporterservices@westhamunited.co.uk](mailto:supporterservices@westhamunited.co.uk)

When doing so, we ask that:

- you share with us the full details of the incident; and
- screenshots of any offensive social media posts, where possible.

The Club will always try its best to acknowledge receipt of your complaint and confirm if it intends to investigate this further, although we cannot guarantee our responses to each and every complaint.

We will do what we believe has the best impact in protecting the Club and its supporters. However, we do also recognise that it is not always possible or realistic for the Club to intervene in every single situation reported. The decision on whether to act and what action we will take will always be at the Club's sole discretion. Any decision by the Club not to act does not constitute an endorsement of the content, activity or post under complaint by the Club and simply means that there is insufficient information for the Club to take the matter forward or act further.

Please note that we do not investigate posts that are 12 months old or more, although we will record these for reference in case the same individual or group(s) of individuals carry out or make the same or similar activities or posts.

## Reporting incidents to the Police

If you have been a victim of a crime or feel a crime has been committed on our social media channels, we would encourage you to report this

directly to the police immediately.

If you want to report an incident to the police via x (formerly Twitter), you can send a direct message to the [@MetCC](https://twitter.com/MetCC) account.

## Football Banning Orders and online communications

A Football Banning Order is a civil order that is used as a deterrent to prevent football-related disorder. They can last between three and 10 years. Supporters who engage in online abuse which meets the definition of a hate crime may now receive a Football Banning Order or commit an offence under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 or the Communications Act 2003. The Club will report any posts which could meet these thresholds to the Metropolitan Police.

More information on reporting hate crimes or harassment is provided below:

- Reporting hate crime - [https://www.report-it.org.uk/your\\_police\\_force](https://www.report-it.org.uk/your_police_force) or <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/hco/hate-crime/how-to-report-hate-crime/>
- Reporting harassment on social media - <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/har/harassment-on-social-media/>



### Reporting incidents to Kick it Out

There is also a reporting mechanism via an online form with English football's primary equality and inclusion organisation, Kick it Out, : <https://www.kickitout.org/forms/online-reporting-form>.

### Advice for parents

Parents should be aware of, and appropriately supervise, the use of social media by children who may be particularly susceptible to unpleasant content online. More details about keeping children safe online can be found through the NSPCC and/or other charities' websites: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

