



COMMUNICATION & BRANDING POLICY

1. Objective of this policy

To set out the requirements and guidelines for use of templates, brand logos and symbols for all communications in carrying out duties on behalf of the Middlesex County RFU ('County').

2. Scope

Relates to all communications including social media that is delivered on behalf of the County.

3. Audience

All duly appointed members of the Middlesex Management Board all related committees and the wider rugby community.

4. Context

Communications across different channels is key to promotion and support of the game and so important to ensure that:

- The County has a strong and recognisable brand
- There is consistency of use
- The relevant guidelines are followed in all forms of communication
- It is appropriately managed.

5. Strategic Approach

The Communication and Branding strategy is underpinned by:

- Having a reputation for 'Bringing People Together to Enjoy Rugby' from diverse backgrounds
- Building Relationships by reaching to a wider audience through different channels
- Retention, engagement and inclusion through better communication.

6. Communication

Communication comes in many forms and is driven by actions, behaviour and attitudes, whether it be in person, by email, through promotion or via social media, and so important that



strong standards are maintained across all these channels. The communication strategy is designed so that all channels compliment each other.

6.1. In person

All members of the County should conduct themselves to uphold the values of the RFU, Middlesex County RFU and the game of rugby. The following is expected:

- Honour the spirit of rugby union and actively promote the core values of the game, namely fair play and good sportsmanship
- Play within the laws of the game
- Recognise good play by both team-mates and opposition players
- Play to win but not at all costs, so win with dignity and lose with grace
- Play with discipline and control your emotions e.g. do not lose your temper
- Recognise that many officials and referees are volunteers, so treat them with respect
- Display consistently high standards of behaviour and appearance, both on and off the playing field
- Acts of physical abuse or violence by any player representing the County against any other player (and depending on the circumstances) may result in disciplinary action may result in disciplinary action
- Act as a role model for youth and mini players
- Be mindful when posting comments on such forums as Face Book/Twitter etc. that they can be misconstrued
- Reject cheating, racism, violence and drugs
- Be punctual for meetings, training and matches
- All those representing Middlesex County in meetings or social setting must act with integrity and have respect for all in attendance.

6.2. By email

All members when sending emails on behalf of the County are required to uphold following guidelines:

- Always use an official Middlesex Rugby.com email address in the format firstname.lastname@middlesexrugby.com
- A County email address should only be used for the County business
- When sending group emails use blind copy (BCC) so private email addresses are not shared
- Never send an email that may cause upset or insult
- Any reference to a particular individual within a message is discouraged, but if required only for County business, and never in a way which could insult or defame
- If a negative email is received, do not respond via email. Respond by discussing the matter face to face with the sender
- Never put anything in an email (whether on behalf of the County or not) that you would not be happy to have it published
- Never use words typed in capital letters

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- Receipt of an untoward, abusive, or hostile email should be reported to the Middlesex County Safeguarding Officer and the county secretary. Do not engage in any further email correspondence on the matter.

6.3. Social Media

Social media is a strong medium for all our communications, but it must be used appropriately by adopting the following guidelines:

- These are public forums, so treat them as such
- Individuals are responsible for what they post
- Re-posting or re-tweeting inappropriate content represents an endorsement of that content and can be actionable
- Do not use abusive, derogatory, vulgar or sexual language
- Do not criticise or imply bias against match officials
- Exercise discretion and respect for clubs, players, fans and the game's partners at all times
- Deleting or apologising publicly for an improper posting does not prevent disciplinary action being taken
- Consider "protecting" tweets and changing security and visibility of Facebook accounts.

All social media channels must adopt the Middlesex branding as follows:

- Profile pictures and header images must use Middlesex Rugby branding
- All designed content must use approved fonts, Middlesex colour scheme and official logos
- All match or other announcements must use the prescribed templates
- If posting on behalf of the County, social media must adopt the prescribed branding.

6.4. Social Media Channels

There are a number of social media channels which the County use, so important these are used appropriately. There are two overriding strategies for the use of these channels, namely:

- Use to communicate non-repetitive unique information such as photos, quick updates, questions
- To amplify fixed messages that are delivered to the website such as RFU updates, change in policy etc.

Although not an exhaustive list, general guidance is as follows:

6.4.1. Facebook

Middlesex Rugby has its own Facebook page.

Best-practices to follow:

- Make posts for Middlesex Rugby Facebook story-driven and focus on your target audience

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- Schedule and promote events
- Add an image to the post because images get more engagement
- Use a link or Hootsuite to track Facebook traffic
- Where possible, incorporate a video or broadcast a Facebook Live video, as these live videos produce six times more interactions than traditional videos.

6.4.2. Twitter

Middlesex Rugby run an official County twitter handle and a number of sub handles for different playing sections.

Best-practices to follow:

- Try to share content often
- It doesn't all have to be your own
- Find trending articles related to your rugby (ideally within Middlesex or rugby in general), and retweet them whenever possible - the more active you are, the more your posts will be seen
- Use a variety of posts - don't just copy and paste the same post 20 times a day- important to keep it fresh
- When writing posts for Twitter, use questions or facts to get people's attention
- Include hashtags - typically 1-2 hashtags is the sweet spot
- Include a clear call to action
- Images are great! Try to use GIFs where appropriate as the movement captures people's attention and can ignite feelings of nostalgia.

6.4.3. Instagram

Middlesex Rugby have an official Instagram account and a number of other accounts for different playing sections.

Best-practices to follow:

- Use Instagram for photos and videos, not a 1,000-word tirade or sales promotion - save that for Facebook
- Use Instagram to showcase a consistent, professional brand image, but use stories to give a personal experience
- Post relevant, well-edited pictures
- Only post once or twice a day
- Use a caption that is creative, and catchy
- Tag the location of the photo.

6.4.4. WhatsApp groups

Middlesex Rugby does not have an official WhatsApp Middlesex rugby group but is associated with a series of smaller WhatsApp groups that have been set up, including MCRFU, Minis Chairs, Youth Chairs, Middlesex safeguarding, Middlesex U16's etc.

Best-practices to follow:

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- Use WhatsApp for video calls and quick messaging to groups or individuals
- Always keep to the purpose of the group - do not share irrelevant messages about other topics
- Post your message in one single chunk of text, don't post every word or sentence in a new message
- Do not have one-on-one conversations in the group - switch to private messages
- The WhatsApp group is not a political platform - no arguing, no heated opinions, no fear mongering, no hyped-up drama, no fake news. Always check your sources before you share
- Never EVER use a WhatsApp group to berate someone else or air grievances. If you have an issue, approach it one-on-one with the relevant person.

6.4.5. Use of Social Media

While the County positively encourages social networking among stakeholders, it is mindful of the need to ensure that all content is suitable for publication and does not breach any laws or common decency. It is not acceptable to post, amongst others, items that may include reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, political views, gender, sexual orientation or disability, and any member found to have posted such items will be subject to disciplinary action. Comments of this nature may attract civil or criminal action against the author(s).

In addition, any abuse of match officials, opposition etc may be deemed by the RFU to bring the game into disrepute and lead to disciplinary sanctions against both the author and/or the Club. Participants should be aware that comments which bring the game into disrepute, or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting, may lead to disciplinary action.

During communication all participants should be aware of the **data privacy laws** and **GDPR**. These regulations prohibit the sharing of personal or private information with other parties without explicit written consent. Personal information includes but is not limited to, email addresses, private addresses, phone or mobile numbers, age, and information an individual may consider private. These should not be shared on any Middlesex related social media platform. Doing so may lead to disciplinary action and a data breach reportable to the Information Commissioner's Office.

7. Branding

Significant investment has been put into developing logos, templates and designing the branding to build our reputation, build relationships and retain our membership in this COVID19 era.

7.1. Templates:

These have been designed for the following:

- Festivals
- Newsletters
- Powerpoint presentations
- Social Media

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- Word.

These templates are stored on the Middlesex County Google Drive, and access should be sought from the County Office or from a member of the Middlesex Management Board.

7.2. County Logo

This should only be used as outlined in Appendix A.

7.3. Fonts:

All communication must use the specific font adopted by the County on all marketing material and also internal documentation.

- Title font: Montserrat -Extra Bold
- Body Font: Montserrat -Light & Regular
- Additional Sub header font: ZillaSlab

7.4. Announcements – in-season

Match and squad announcements, match highlights (video or photo) and special achievements (new caps, new signings, club/International honours) posts must use the designated templates, to ensure the same formats are adopted.

Each Middlesex squad has their own folder of templates so please speak to the Middlesex County Office for access to these templates.

Please refer to Appendix B below for examples.

7.5. Announcements – off-season

All engagement campaigns to build awareness or for charities must adopt the brand guidelines and use the relevant templates provided.

7.6. Contact

If In doubt on any communication or branding matter please speak to the Director of Communications & Innovation - Waheed Aslam at waheed.aslam@middlesexrugby.com

7.7. Owner of this Policy

This policy is owned by the Director of Communications and Innovation. The style “Middlesex Rugby” is only for playing associated use. Governance, Discipline, Regulation and all the other responsibilities should be delivered as "Middlesex County RFU".

7.8. Document Approval History

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Date	Version	Document Approver	Comment
Version 1	Final	Middlesex Management Board	To be updated in September to November 2021

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Appendix A



Use of logos and branding		
<p>Full Logo with Tagline, for use on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front page headers • Title page of presentations • Inclusion in official documents, etc. <p>Light & dark versions available.</p>		
<p>Main logo, No other text, for use on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Business cards, • In headers/footers of document pages <p>Light & Dark versions available.</p>		
<p>Shield only, where space is limited or complementary to other Middlesex branding already in use. For example, used in the top righthand corner/header for additional pages in a document.</p>		
<p>Middlesex Rugby vs Middlesex County RFU Logos</p>		



<p>Note the distinction between the different logos, and use appropriately in the different circumstances as follows:</p>	<p>To be used on all PLAYING marketing & associated use</p>	<p>To be used on all C Regulation and all responsibilities off</p>
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Appendix B

IN SEASON Social Media Examples:	
<p>Match Announcement</p>	 <p>A social media post for a match announcement. It features the Middlesex Rugby logo at the top left, followed by the text 'MATCH ANNOUNCEMENT' and 'MIDDLESEX RUGBY'. Below this is a large 'VS' in yellow. The background is a collage of three photos: a player in a white and blue striped jersey, a player in a white and blue striped jersey, and a player in a white and blue striped jersey. At the bottom, there are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, all with the handle @MiddlesexRugby.</p>
<p>Special Announcement</p>	 <p>A social media post for a special announcement. It features the Middlesex Rugby logo at the top right. The background is a light grey color with the words 'MIDDLESEX RUGBY' repeated in a large, light grey font. At the bottom, there are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, all with the handle @MiddlesexRugby.</p>
<p>Squad Announcement</p>	 <p>A social media post for a squad announcement. It features the Middlesex Rugby logo at the top right. The background is a dark blue color with the words 'MIDDLESEX RUGBY' repeated in a light blue font. In the center, there are 15 white jerseys with numbers 1 through 15. To the right of the jerseys, there is a 'VS' in yellow. Below the 'VS' is a 'REPLACEMENTS:' section with a list of numbers: 20, 21, 22, 16, 17, 18, 19. At the bottom, there are social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, all with the handle @MiddlesexRugby.</p>