

# **4.11 Guidance on mobile phones and social networking sites**

## **Online Safety**

Online safety risks for young people can include, but are not limited to:

- making themselves identifiable by posting personal details on social media such as the school they attend or their home address
- communicating with people they don't know, including potentially dangerous individuals
- potential for inappropriate relationships between adults in positions of trust, or influence and the young people they work with
- sexual grooming, luring, exploitation and abuse, or unwanted contact
- exposure to inappropriate content, including pornography, racist or hate material or violent behaviour
- being encouraged to create or share inappropriate or harmful material of themselves or others, including sexting (sexual images or video)
- glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking
- cyberbullying or berating by peers and people they consider 'friends' – in sport this can include negative comments or reactions about their performance or achievement
- access to inaccurate and therefore potentially harmful information
- encouragement to take part in violent behaviour or harmful trends

It is therefore important that clubs adopt the good practice guidance below that acknowledges the potential risks and additional vulnerability of children and young people,

### **Good Practice Guidance on use of mobile phones**

Voluntary helpers and those in a position of trust.

- Should not request or hold the mobile phone numbers or email addresses of the children they instruct and will instead seek contact through a parent.
- Should not make or take calls, access the internet or text on their mobile while instructing children.

- Should not show or allow any child to see any adult or inappropriate material they have on their phone.
- Should not ignore any inappropriate material shown to them by a child on their phone.
- Should not use their phone to take photos except where they fulfil the requirements of the photographic policy.
- Should have the contact numbers and email addresses for parents/carers of young participants, including emergency contact details.

### ***Junior members***

- Should not request the mobile phone contact details of their instructor or other relevant club officers.
- Should not take their phones into training venue unless they are turned off while under instruction and in the changing venue.
- Should not take any photos with their mobile phone unless they comply with the photography policy.
- Should report any concerns they have as to the use of mobile phones by any other member, parent, officer, Club helper or instructor.

### **Social networking sites on mobile phones and computers**

A number of sports have experience of cases where members have misused the medium of electronic communication. There is evidence of the use of electronic communication for grooming or other purposes by instructors and others in positions of trust in relation to children throughout sport. Additionally, there have been examples of children, instructors, helpers and officers posting inappropriate, inflammatory and sometimes illegal messages on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter.

For this reason we recommend all clubs adopt the good practice guidance that acknowledges the potential risks and additional vulnerability of children and young people.

## **Good Practice Guidance – Social networking sites**

### ***Instructors and voluntary helpers and those in a position of trust.***

- Should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- should not communicate with children via personal accounts
- should not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts. All such requests should be reported to the CWO unless the junior member concerned is a relative.
- Should not use social media as a medium by which to abuse or criticise BSAC members or clubs.
- rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, staff should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisational account or website
- emails or messages should maintain the organisations tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals, avoiding kisses (X’s) or using slang or inappropriate language
- Should not publish photos of BSAC members on a social networking site unless they follow the guidance in the club photography guidance.
- any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to BSAC reporting procedures

### ***Junior members***

- Should not “*Friend*” or “*Follow*” their club instructors or others in a position of responsibility in the club and should report all such requests made by instructors to the CWO unless the adult concerned is a relative.

- Should not use the social network site as a medium by which to abuse or criticise BSAC members or clubs.
- Should not publish photos of BSAC members on social networking unless they follow the guidance in the club photography guidance.
- Should know how to report any concerns they have about what they may have witnessed or experienced online.

### **General advice to Students using Social Networking Sites**

- You should use the internet safely and not place yourself at risk. Have a look at the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre website [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) for some useful tips about staying safe online.
- Only invite or accept as Friends people you know directly or have knowledge of through friends and family.
- Always consider any photos of you or your friends before posting them on social networking sites – CEOP give good guidelines to follow.
- Always consider that posting comments on social networking sites is the same as writing it in a letter or saying it directly to the person, but can be accessed by many other interested parties. Such postings are bound by the same laws and rules and you may find the comment you makes breaches those laws or rules. Technology also allows you to act “in the heat of the moment” and say something you later regret. Good advice is never put on the internet something you would not say to that person directly.
- Never meet someone you have met on line without your parents being aware and preferably accompanying you to the meeting and always meet in a neutral public place.

The Child Protection in Sport Unit has produced the linked guidance about social media for sports organisations. <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety/>

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