

Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy

When an adult communicates with children they must do so in an appropriate and safe manner whether that is in person, by phone or text, online or via a social networking/messaging site.

Wavepower provides guidance on how to react to a child if they disclose concerns or abuse to you in person. However, you may find a member uses other forms of communication to do so, even if you have followed the Swim England guidance and not shared your phone, e-mail address or social networking details with that person. Should that happen, we do not want you to stop that communication but you should advise the Welfare Officer of the contact immediately and follow the guidance in Wavepower as to how to deal with any disclosure or concern raised.

Generally speaking, if you do not share your contact information with members, they will not find your phone number, e-mail or social network site details. However, if this should happen and they are not disclosing concerns as outlined above, it is important you make them aware that you will not be communicating with them on this medium and inform the Welfare Officer immediately. The Welfare Officer will take action as required, ensuring contact by the member is not repeated.

Electronic Messaging

Mobile phones, text messaging, e-mail and other forms of electronic communication, have become a regular feature of the sporting landscape and there is a need to define what is and what is not permissible when communication is required between adults and children or young people.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Swim England best practice that the City of Leicester Swimming Club follows for its coaches and those in a position of trust regarding:

- The use of mobile phones whilst having responsibility for the supervision and safety of young people.
- Direct communication between coaches and children of the organisation via mobile phone, email and social media messaging.

The guidance on the use of social networking below applies to phones as well as tablets, laptops, desktop computers or other applicable devices.

Phoning, texting, emailing or messaging a child

- Coaches will not personally hold the mobile phone numbers or e-mail addresses belonging to children, subject to point 3. This includes apps such as WhatsApp where a child's number is displayed and visible to a group. This is particularly important where a coach holds a position of trust over a child.

- Coaches can hold the phone numbers and email addresses of members' parents / guardians with their consent, in order to get messages to members. It is then the responsibility of the parent / guardian to inform the child.
- In limited circumstances, it may be necessary for coaches, team managers or chaperones to have mobile phone contact details of the members, eg. at an away camp for safeguarding reasons. In such circumstances, the individual holding the contact details will be DBS checked, have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training and have the consent of each member's parent / guardian to temporarily hold that information for the purpose of the event. The members' phone numbers will then be deleted after the event.
- The City of Leicester Swimming Club coaches may wish to have the ability to contact members on a group basis. This may be required in order to inform members of changes to training or lesson times, for example. The use of a central platform should be via the website for all members to see, and not an App where a child's contact details may be displayed.
- Coaches of elite swimmers under 18 but over 16 may, with the consent of the swimmer's parent or guardian, use text messaging or e-mail to communicate with them for training and competition purposes only. The City of Leicester Swimming Club recommend that such communications are also copied to a parent or guardian to safeguard the member and the coach. Apps that are not capable of storing messages such as Snapchat will not be used, nor will those apps such as WhatsApp and Instagram that show telephone numbers.

Use of mobile phones by coaches and teachers

- Coaches should not take or make calls whilst supervising young members in a teaching or training session. It is permissible for a coach to make or take a call during an event, providing they are not the sole supervisor of the members and are not actively engaged at the time of the call.
- Coaches who have mobile phones with camera facilities must fulfil the obligations set out in Swim England Photography Guidance.
- Coaches will not enter changing facilities with any mobile phone turned on.
- The publishing of a photograph of a member under 18 years should only be done with the parent's / guardian's consent and it should be noted that parents / guardians have the right to refuse to have their child photographed.
- If a photograph is taken for publication, it should adhere to the guidance provided in the Swim England Photography Guidance. Details which identify the individual in the photograph, such as full name, place of residence or school attended, will not be given alongside the photograph.
- In the event of a member showing a coach or teacher a text message or image that is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, the coach / teacher must advise the nominated person at the organisation, most likely the Welfare Officer.

Coaches aged 18 to 21

The City of Leicester Swimming Club recognises that many young coaches aged 18 to 21 will have been members themselves before becoming a coach, and will be friends with their fellow members, some of whom will still be between the ages of 16 and 17. It is therefore plausible that they will have the personal contact details for those members. The City of Leicester Swimming Club accepts it would be inappropriate to require young coaches to remove the details of those members from their contact lists.

Therefore, in such cases:

- If a coach aged 18 to 21 had phone and/or e-mail details who were/are swimmers aged between 16 and 17 prior to undertaking the role of coach, the City of Leicester Swimming Club does not expect them to remove those members from their contact list.
- However, the young coach is advised to inform the Welfare Officer and the Head Coach.
- The Head Coach should make every effort to ensure the young coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

Guidance on the use of social networking

There is a growing awareness of the increasing communication between adults and young people and indeed their peers on social networking sites. There are risks associated with these developments, and Swim England has identified a number of issues that have led to both disciplinary and safeguarding concerns stemming from the improper or inappropriate use of such sites by its members.

Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club recognise that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and instant messaging tools such as Whatsapp, TikTok and Snapchat, continue to grow rapidly and are increasingly being used as the communication tools of choice by young people.

Increasingly, many sites provide a platform for uploading and viewing video clips, which with the latest cameras and mobile phones, becomes ever easier and can be instantaneous. More recent apps allow mobile phone users to stream content directly from their phones, bypassing some of the steps required in uploading videos to YouTube or to social networks such as Facebook.

Whilst the ever-developing technologies provide exciting opportunities for our members, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

It is important to note that the misuse / abuse conducted on social media may result in a criminal investigation and members are encouraged to directly refer criminal activity to the police. This also includes action between members engaged in a Swim England and/or the City of Leicester Swimming Club activity and in those circumstances such action may also breach the Codes of Conduct or Codes of Ethics and result in disciplinary action.

If 'out of sport' inappropriate social media activity emerges, members are encouraged to report this directly to the social media platform provider.

Guidance for coaches and other staff

- As a coach, teacher or other employee or volunteer of the City of Leicester Swimming Club, you should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they are a member of the organisation you work for.
- Should a child in the City of Leicester Swimming Club request to become 'friends' via your personal social networking site, you should decline if:
 - You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child.
 - You hold a position of trust and/or responsibility at the club.
 - Your contact with the child is through a Swim England club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.

Social networks should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise members or Swim England organisations and to do so may be in breach of Swim England Regulations.

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on any social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in the Swim England Photography Guidance.

Coaches and other staff who are under 18

Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club recognise that social networking sites can be a useful tool for coaches and other staff within the organisation to share information with other coaches or staff. If, however, the coach or staff member is under the age of 16, while they may be a colleague, the requirements of this policy must be adhered to.

If the young coach or staff member is aged 16 or 17, it is the view of Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches or staff may be detrimental in their professional development of their role in Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club.

Therefore, in such cases, if the parent / guardian of a child in a position of responsibility and they themselves requests to have contact with an adult member of staff for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role, the City of Leicester Swimming Club will:

- Gain written consent from the parent / guardian and child to have such contact, naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned.
- Ensure the named adult signs an agreement to keep contact with the child to the discussion of matters relevant to the child's role in the club.
- Ensure all communications are shared with an identified third person (eg the child's parent / guardian or Welfare Officer).

- Ensure that if the child or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action will be taken by the club to address the concern and/or ensure that the breach is referred to the Swim England or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

Coaches aged between 18 and 21

Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club recognise that many young coaches aged between 18 and 21 will have been members themselves before becoming a coach and have been friends with their fellow members, some of whom will be between the ages of 16 and 17. It is therefore plausible they will have contact details for those members and be friends with them on social networking sites and be able to communicate via other methods of electronic communication.

In this circumstance, Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club accept it would be inappropriate to require such friends to be removed from their social networking sites.

Therefore, in such cases:

- If a coach aged between 18 and 21 had friends on their social networking site that were/are members aged 16 or 17 prior to undertaking the role of coach, Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club do not expect them to remove those members from their listed friends.
- In such circumstances the coach is advised to inform the Welfare Officer and Head Coach.
- The Head Coach should make every effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

Guidance to members of the organisation under the age of 18

- Do not ask your coach to be your friend on any social networking site – they will refuse as that would breach good practice.
- Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at www.thinkuknow.co.uk for some useful tips.
- Consider who you are inviting to be your friend and follow the good advice of the social networking sites to ensure make sure you are talking to the person you believe you are talking to.
- Always remember that any communication, comments, photos and video clips posted on a social networking site may be shared with more people than you originally intended.
- Never share pictures of yourself or your friends that you wouldn't be happy for your family to see. Also never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that:
 - May be hurtful, untrue or upsetting or that you may regret sharing later on.
 - May be used by other people in a way you did not intend or want.

- Other people may find inappropriate.
- Do not upload images of other members taking part in your organisation's training, activities or events as you may breach Swim England Photography Guidance. If you do wish to upload such content, you must first seek the advice and consent of your parents / guardians, the consent of the other child(ren) and their parents / guardians, and an officer of the City of Leicester Swimming Club before taking any action. This will not prevent you having images of your friends from Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club on your personal social networking site, as long as they were taken outside of the sporting arena. Even so, it is
 - still a good idea to check that any person in the image, and their parents /guardians, are happy for you to upload the image.
- Always be aware that social networking sites are a method of communication like letter writing and the spoken word. They are bound by the same laws and rules. The delivery of social networking content is instantaneous, and this can sometimes result in users reacting in the 'heat of the moment', and your content/ comments may spread far from that of your own social network of friends. This is a major difference between the present and the past in which you would have written a letter which would have taken time and allowed for you to think again before sending. So never place a comment on the internet that you would not put in writing or say out loud to someone. To do so may breach Swim England and the City of Leicester policies, the Code of Conduct and also the law.

Guidance to parents / guardian of members under the age of 18

There have been occasions where parents of members have used social networking sites to criticise or verbally abuse an organisation, its officers, officials, coaches and/or members in an inappropriate and unacceptable manner. This has, in some cases, led to the person who is the subject of the abuse to take action through statutory agencies or statutory legislation to address the comments made.

It is recommended that parents / guardians actively monitor their children's online activity in line with Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) advice, which is proven to help prevent the risks of harm children may face online from peers and others they may know from the club environment.

The City of Leicester Swimming Club has a Parent / Guardian Code of Conduct which can be found on the City of Leicester Swimming Club's website. This includes expectations of behaviour in club activity online, and as a spectator at all training sessions, events and activities, in treating members, coaches, teachers, committee members and parents / guardians of any of our sport's organisations, be that the City of Leicester Swimming Club or not, with due respect.

Parents / guardians should be aware that posting any content on a social networking site that breaches the above requirements may breach the parents / guardians Code of Conduct.

Parents / guardians who work at the City of Leicester Swimming Club whilst their children are members of and attend the club

Many parents are becoming 'friends' with their children on social networking profile for security reasons, to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's profile. This may then give the parent access to the profiles of other children listed as 'friends' of their child. It would not be appropriate for Swim England and the City of Leicester Swimming Club to prevent a parent who is also an employee where their child is a member from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore, in such cases:

- The parent concerned should not have direct contact with members through the social networking site.
- Where the parent / guardian has access to their child's social networking site (ie knows the user name and password) they must not contact any other children under the pretence of being their child.
- The parent / guardian should not accept their child's friends as friends on their own social networking site.
- The parent / guardian should inform the Welfare Officer of this arrangement.

What to do if you have concerns

As a user of a social networking site, whether you are a child or an adult, you may at some time have a concern about what you are seeing or being told about by another user. Swim England has drawn up a list of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you can raise such concerns:

- O2 and NSPCC Online Safety Website
 - o2.co.uk/help/nspcc
- NSPCC Share Aware Resources
 - nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety
- Childline
 - childline.org.uk/get-involved/childline-social-media
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command ceop.police.uk/safety-centre
- Think You Know thinkyouknow.co.uk
- Our Safety Centre oursafetycentre.co.uk
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety
- Internet Matters internetmatters.org
- Childnet International childnet.com
- HM Government Advice on Keeping Children Safe Online
www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media