



Facebook and Social Networking Policy

1. BACKGROUND

There has been a growing awareness in sport of the increasing communication by adults and young people on the rapidly developing social networking sites and how this media has become a feature of social communication.

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, which stem from the improper or inappropriate use of such sites by its members.

Swim England recognise that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, for example is a rapidly growing phenomenon and is increasingly being used as a communication tool of choice by young people and more recently by adults.

Whilst these technologies provide exciting opportunities, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

The purpose of this policy is to provide best practice to all ES and LSS members and parents on the use of social networking sites as they relate to that individual's role in the club. This policy will set down acceptable use, not only for our own Facebook pages, but all on-line social networking communications as they relate to ES and LSS.

2. TECHNOLOGIES

This policy includes (but is not limited to) the undernoted technologies:-

Facebook

Twitter

Instagram

My Space

Bebo

You Tube

Personal Web Sites and Blogs

3. ACCEPTABLE USE

The following rules must be adhered to by all users:-

1. At all times the rights of other people must be respected.

2. No derogatory or offensive comments in relation to ES and LSS or any other swimming club will be posted on any social media site.

3. No comments criticising or verbally abusing swimmers, coaches, officials or Club Members within ES and LSS or any other club will be tolerated.

4. The posting of photographs directly onto the ES and LSS Facebook page is not allowed, as they may be in breach of the Swim England Photography Policy. Any photographs should be forwarded to one the nominated named Facebook Administrators. Photographs will then be posted after having regard to the Swim England and ES and LSS policies on the publishing of photographs.

5. No content will be posted or action taken on ES and LSS Facebook that



infringes or violates someone else's rights or otherwise violates the law.

6. No false information will be posted on the ES and LSS Facebook sites.

7. No content that is hateful, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence is acceptable.

8. No information that contains alcohol-related or other mature content (including advertisements) is allowed to be posted.

9. The Competitive and Development Section of the Club have a "closed" facebook site. All posts/photographs have to be approved before posting.

4. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure that the site is used in good spirit and to the benefit of the Club, ES and LSS Facebook page will be monitored by the nominated Facebook Administrators. The right to remove and/or delete comments and postings that are deemed inappropriate remains with the nominated Facebook Administrators and ES and LSS Committee; as does consideration for disciplinary action to be taken.

5. SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND SPORT: GUIDELINES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Child Protection in Sport Unit Briefing Document "Social networking

services, social media and sport: Guidelines for safeguarding children and young people" gives more in depth guidance on social networking sites. It can be accessed via the British Swimming or Child Protection in Sport Unit website at www.cpsu.org.uk.

A user guide for parents and swimmers for Twitter is available to view at www.swimming.org.

6. 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. The nature of these concerns may vary but should these concerns be connected to ES and LSS then please discuss with: Welfare Officer, ES and LSS.

Alternatively, depending on the nature of your concerns, a list of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you or your child can raise such concerns has been provided below:-

The Child Exploitation Online Protection Unit (CEOP) at www.ceop.gov.uk or by pressing the CEOP button on Facebook.

If your child is under 18 they can use the "Your Chance to Talk" form on the "Child Power" section of the www.swimming.org.

www.childnet.org.uk which is a NSPCC



support service specifically for young people. www.childline.org.uk is another NSPCC support service. Using this website, children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors online about any issues or problems they may be experiencing, using an application similar to Instant Messenger (IM).
Stop It Now: freephone 0808 1000 900.
The Local Police or Children's Services – their number appears in the phone book.

The NSPCC helpline 0800 800 5000 or www.nspcc.org.uk for adults concerned about the welfare or safety of a child.

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) www.iwf.org.uk The IWF was established by the internet industry to provide a UK internet hotline which can be anonymous for the public and IT professionals to report criminal online content in a secure and confidential way.

GUIDANCE TO PARENTS OF ES and LSS MEMBERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18

There have been occasions where parents of Swim England members have used social networking sites to criticise or verbally abuse swimming clubs, its officers, officials, coaches, teachers, and swimmers in an inappropriate and unacceptable manner. This has in some cases led the person who is subject of the verbal abuse to take action through statutory agencies or statutory

legislation to address the comments made.

Swim England have produced a parent's code of conduct, which can be found in Wavepower. Section 6 of Wavepower states that parents are expected to:

“Behave responsibly as a spectator at training and treat swimmers, coaches, committee members and parents of yours and other clubs with due respect meeting Swim England's commitment to equality”.

Parents should be aware that posting messages, comments or any other media on a social networking site that breaches the above requirement of a parent in a Swim England club may breach the Parents Code of Conduct.

GUIDANCE TO COACHES AND OFFICERS IN A POSITION OF TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. COACHES/POOLSIDE VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER OFFICERS IN A POSITION OF TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY

ES and LSS members in a position of trust and/or responsibility should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they hold a position in respect of that individual young person.

Should a young person in your club request to become a named friend on your social networking page or requests that you become a named friend on the young person's social networking, you



should decline if any of the below apply:-

- You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child;
- You hold a position of trust and responsibility in the club;
- Your contact with the child is through the ES and LSS club

The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise swimmers, coaches, officials, ES and LSS members or other clubs and to do so would be a breach of this policy.

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the Swim England and ES and LSS Photographic Policy.

2. COACHES/ POOLSIDE VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS IN A POSITION OF TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY WHO HAVE CHILDREN THAT SWIM IN THE CLUB WHERE THEY ARE INVOLVED

The issue has been raised that parents are becoming members of social networking sites that their children sign up to for security reasons in order to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's site.

This will give the parents access via their child's site to all children listed as friends of the child. It would not be appropriate for ES AND LSS to prevent a parent who is also a coach, poolside volunteer, Committee Member etc. in his/her child's club from using this form

of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore in such cases the individual can:

- have swimmers in the club on the site he/she is accessing providing the ES and LSS club member on the site are listed as friends of his/her child;
- the Coach concerned does not have direct contact with those swimmers through the social networking site;
- the Coach does not accept such swimmers on his/her home site, and the coach should inform the Welfare Officer of this arrangement.

3. COACHES/TEACHERS/OFFICIALS WHO ARE UNDER 18

It is recognised that social networking sites can be a useful tool for teachers, coaches and officials within clubs to share information with other coaches or officials. If, however, the Coach or official is under the age of 18 while they may be a colleague, the requirements of 1 and 2 above must be adhered to.

However, for young people aged 16 or 17 it is the view of the ES and LSS that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, or officials may be detrimental in their professional development in their role at ES and LSS.

Therefore in such cases if the parent of a young person in a position of responsibility aged 16/17 and the young



person themselves requests to have contact with an adult club officer, or coach, for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role, the club should:

1. Gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned;
2. The named adult must sign an agreement to keep the contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club;
3. All such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian or welfare officer); and
4. If the young person or the adult is found to breach the above agreement action must be taken by the club to address the concern.

4. ACCEPTABLE USE – SWIMMERS

Guidance to Swim England members under the age of 18

1. Do not ask your club coach or teacher to be your social networking site friend – they will refuse as that would breach good practice.
2. Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at www.ceop.gov.uk for some useful tips.
3. Consider who you are inviting to be your friend and follow the good advice

of the social networking sites to ensure you are talking to the person you believe you are talking to.

4. Always consider that any communication, comments, photos and video clips posted on a social networking site may be shared with persons other than those for whom it was intended.

5. Never share pictures of yourself or your friends that might reach other people that you do not wish to see them. Also never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be:

- hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on;
- used by other people in a way you did not intend or want.

6. Do not put pictures of other club members on the site within the club setting as you may breach the Swim England Photography Guidance? If you do wish to upload a picture you must get advice and consent of your parent, the other young person and their parent and a club officer before even considering uploading a photo onto the ES and LSS Facebook page.

This will not prevent you having pictures of your swimming friends on your site taken outside of the sporting arena but it is good advice to always ensure they and their parents are happy with any picture you have of them on your site.



7. 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. Such technology is instant and this allows you as the user to react in the 'heat of the moment', where in the past you would have been required to write 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 to the individual concerned face to face as to do so may not only breach Swim England Policy but also the law.

Reviewed: November 2021

Next Review: November 2022