



Wear Valley Amateur Swimming Club Good Practice Guidelines On The Use of Social Networking Sites and Smart Phones

Guidance for coaches, teachers and other officers in a position of trust and responsibility in respect of children in WVASC

1. Swim England (SE) members in a position of trust and/or responsibility should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they hold such a position in respect of that individual young person.
2. Should a young person in WVASC request to become a named friend on your social networking site or request that you become a named friend on the young persons social networking site, you should decline if:-
 - You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child;
 - You are in a position of trust and responsibility in the club;
 - Your contact with the child is through a SE club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.
3. The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise SE members SE clubs and to do so may be in breach of SE Rules and Regulations.
4. The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in the SE Photography Policy.

Guidance to coaches who have children that swim in the club where they coach

The issue has been raised that parents are becoming members of social networking sites that their children sign up to for security reasons to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's site. This will give parent access via their child's site to all children listed as friends of their child. It would not be appropriate for SE to prevent a parent who is also a coach in his/her child's club from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore in such cases:-

- The coach can have swimmers in the club on the site they are accessing, providing the SE under 18-year old club members on the site are listed as friends of the coach's child;
- The coach concerned should not have direct contact with those swimmers through the social networking sites;
- The coach should not accept such swimmers as friends on their home site;
- The coach should inform the Club Welfare Officer of this arrangement.



Coaches, teachers and officials who are under 18

SE recognise social networking sites can be useful tool for teachers, coaches and officials within SE clubs to share information with other teachers, coaches or officials. If however, the teacher, coach or official is under the age of 16 while they may be a colleague, the requirements of 1 and 2 above, must be adhered to.

If the young coach/official is aged 16 or 17, it is the view of SE that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, teachers or officials may be detrimental in their professional development in their role in SE.

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:-

- Gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned;
- Ensure the named adult signs an agreement to keep the contact with the young person to matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club;
- Ensure all such communications are shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian or club Welfare Officer);
- Ensure that if the young person or the adult is found to be in breach, the above action must be taken by the club to address the concern and / or the breach referred to SE or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

Young Coaches Ages 18 to 21

SE recognises that many young coaches ages 18 to 21 will have been swimming before coming a coach and have been friends with their fellow swimmers, some of whom will be between the ages of 16/17. It is therefore plausible they will have those swimmers contact details and be friends on social media sites and other methods of electronic communication.

For this purpose, SE accepts it would be inappropriate to require such swimming friends to be removed from their social media sites. Therefore in such cases:-

- If a coach aged 18 to 21 had friends on their social networking site that were / are swimmers aged 16/17 prior to understanding the role of coach, SE do not expect them to remove those swimmers from their listed friends.
- In such circumstances the coach is advised to inform the club 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 Swim England Members Under The Age of 18

1. Do not ask your club coach or teacher to be your social networking site friend, as 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 social networking sites 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 SE guidance 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 Welfare Officer before even considering uploading a photo. 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. 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 SE policy, but also the law.



Guidance to Parents of Swim England Members Under The Age of 18

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

SE have produced a parents' code of conduct, which can be found in Wavepower and ism within the WVASC Welcome Pack. 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 SE commitment to equality."*

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

Parents/Guardians Who Work At The Same Organisation Attended By Their Children

Many parents/guardians are becoming *"friends"* with their children on social networking profiles 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/guardian access to the profiles of other children listed as *"friends"* of their child. It would not be appropriate for Swim England to prevent a parent/guardian who is also an employee at the organisation where their child is a member from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore, in such cases:

- The parent/guardian concerned should not have direct contact with members through the social networking website.
- Where the parent/guardian has access to their child's social networking website (i.e. 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 website.
- 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 website, whether you are a child or an adult, you may have a concern about what you are seeing or being told 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

Thinkuknow

thinkuknow.co.uk

Our Safety Centre

oursafetycentre.co.uk

NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit

the cpsu.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