



BRITISHROWING

WG 5.4 Online Safety and Social Media Policy

Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding, Welfare & Protection

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT



Introduction

This policy provides guidance on how clubs and coaches in the rowing community should use the internet and social media and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect staff, coaches and volunteers, and the children or young people who are members of British Rowing, to behave online.

Aims

The aims of this online safety policy are:

- To protect all children involved in British Rowing and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, game consoles and the internet) in connection with rowing
- To provide staff and volunteers information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- To ensure everyone in British Rowing is operating in keeping with our values and within the law regarding online behaviour.

Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and social media everyone in British Rowing must:

- Understand the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and children – when using websites, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication
- Be aware that it does not matter what device is being used for digital interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone, tablet or game console
- When using social media platforms (including WhatsApp, Skype, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram), ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines¹
- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
 - Making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into reporting procedures
 - Incorporating online bullying ('cyberbullying') in anti-bullying policies
- Ensure anyone who is responsible for your club's day-to-day online presence undertakes relevant training²

¹ CPSU's online safety guidance – <http://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety/>

² You may wish to consider the NSPCC e-learning, 'Keeping Children Safe Online' for the person who handles the day-to-day content of your club's website or associated apps – <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/get-expert-training/child-protection-sport-online-course/>

Safe use of social media

The internet is a great tool to help young people to communicate and learn, but it also exposes them to the risk of harm.

Some of the key risks include:

- Giving out confidential information, such as full name, address, school, details about their personal lives and/or passwords. Once on the internet, this is no longer confidential and can be widely shared
- Posting inappropriate images of themselves or others, such as sexually suggestive images; being partially clothed; and/or sleeping
- Being coerced into posting inappropriate images or information about themselves online
- Making 'friends' with people they do not know – and who may or may not be who they say they are. Sometimes adults can pretend to be children online so that they build a relationship with a child
- Online bullying, including name calling, threats, teasing and/or discriminatory remarks
- Responding to images or texts in an inappropriate manner, such as with threats. This can trigger online and face-to-face violence
- (Involuntary) access to age inappropriate content, such as pornography or violent videos.

Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging), the following precautions should be taken to ensure the safety of children:

- Avoid having a child's personal mobile number and instead seek contact through a parent/carer
- Obtain parental permission on each occasion if the need to contact a child directly arises, ensure the purpose of any contact is clearly identified and agreed upon
- Ensure a method of accountability is arranged, for example, copies of any texts or recordings of web calls should be sent to the club's welfare officer or to the parents
- If using text, it should be only for communicating information such as reminders about upcoming events, which kit to bring or training timings – do not engage in conversation
- If a child misinterprets such communication and tries to engage conversation, take the following steps:
 - End the conversation or stop replying
 - Suggest discussing the subject further at the next training session or event
 - If concerned about the child, provide them with contact details for their club's welfare officer or British Rowing or the NSPCC

Use of other digital devices and programmes

The principles in this policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used – including computers, laptops, tablet, web-enabled games consoles and smart TVs – and whether an app, programme or website is used.

If any digital devices are used as part of any activity associated with rowing:

- Children must adhere to British Rowing's Codes of Conduct
- Coaches, officials and volunteers must adhere to British Rowing's Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy; the same principles must apply through the use of digital devices as it would face-to-face.

Top tips for helping young people stay safe online:

1. Let young people know where they can access information and support to stay safe online. CEOP and Childline are great starting places³
2. Make sure you are up to date on online safety, including the websites and apps that young people are using
3. Set clear boundaries for your online communication with young people – do not privately message young people who are involved in the club (or privately text message). Instead consider a means of team communication which ensures messages are copied in to parents/carers or are openly visible and does not allow for direct messaging.
4. In limited circumstances, it may be necessary for coaches, team managers or chaperones to have mobile phone contact details of the members, e.g. at an away camp for safeguarding reasons. In such circumstances, the individual holding the contact details must be Disclosure and Barring Service (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 should then be deleted after the event.
5. Do not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media
6. Emails or information intended for a child should be sent to the parent or carer
7. Smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy
8. Celebrate Internet Awareness Day in your club
9. Learn from young people – consult them about what makes them feel safe and unsafe online
10. Any disclosures of abuse or concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as it would be for a face-to-face disclosure.

³ CEOP: www.thinkyouknow.co.uk ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk

Top tips for staying safe online for young people:⁴

1. Do not post any personal information online – like your address, email address or mobile number.
2. Think carefully before posting pictures or videos of yourself. Once you have put a picture of yourself online most people can see it and may be able to download it, it is not just yours anymore.
3. Keep your privacy settings as high as possible
4. Never give out your passwords
5. Do not befriend people you do not know
6. Do not send or receive private messages from an adult in a position of trust (such as your coach or teacher) and report any private messages they send you to a trusted adult
7. Do not meet up with people you have met online. Speak to your parent or carer about people suggesting you do
8. Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are
9. Think carefully about what you say before you post something online
10. Respect other people's views, even if you do not agree with someone else's views does not mean you need to be rude
11. If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: leave the website, turn off your computer if you want to and tell a trusted adult immediately.

Useful child-friendly information can be found at:

ChildNet International: www.childnet.com/young-people

CEOP: www.thinkyounow.co.uk

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk

CPSU: <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety/>

March 2020

⁴ <http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk/personal-safety/staying-safe-online/>