WG 5.4 Online Safety and Social Media Policy

Policy & Procedures for Safeguarding, Welfare & Protection

TEAMWORK | OPEN TO ALL | COMMITMENT

Contents

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, rowers, volunteers, and children, young adults, and adults at risk, who are members of British Rowing, to behave online.

Aims

The aims of this online safety policy are:

- to protect all members and especially children and adults at risk 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 with 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 particularly for staff and children – when using websites, social media, apps and other

forms of digital communication. Examples of expected behaviour are outlined in this document and the appended Acceptable Use Statement;
- be aware that it does not matter what device is being used for digital interaction, as the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone, tablet or game console;
- when using any social media platforms or sites used for socialising or communication, everyone should ensure that they follow relevant legislation and good practice guidelines[1];
- regularly consider 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 training[2].

Safe use of social media

The internet is a great tool to help everyone, including children and adults at risk to communicate and learn, but it also exposes them to the risk of harm.

Some of the key risks to children and adults at risk 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, for example 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 or adult at risk;
- 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.

---

[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/

Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate with children

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 and adults at risk:

- avoid contacting a child through their personal mobile number and instead seek contact through a parent/carer, or a group message which includes other coaches and rowers;
- 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 made available to the club's welfare officer or to the parents if required;
- 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;
    - refer to your CWO.

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:

- everyone, including children and adults at risk 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 would apply if the contact were face-to-face.

    Refer to the appendix for British Rowing's Acceptable Use Statement for Digital Events and Social Media.

Webinars or Livestreaming

With increasing use of webinars to deliver education and club activities, the following points are worth applying:

- always ensure delivery, both verbal and in presentation content, is suitable for a wide audience, which means take care to use language that is respectful and appropriate for audiences of any age group;
- consent must be obtained from parents/carers and children if any images of or identifying information about the child may be used. Ensure any consent obtained clearly set outs what the image will be used for, how long consent is valid for and how long the image will be kept for;
- it is strongly recommended that you deliver a webinar or host a livestream with a second adult who can act as a moderator should any attendee behave inappropriately, or any sudden changes or upsetting developments occur. If inappropriate behaviour occurs, please report this in accordance with British Rowing or your clubs' reporting procedures;
- at the beginning of any webinar and before starting a livestream, remind all participants not to share private information, not to respond to contact requests from people they don't know and who they should tell if they see or hear anything upsetting or inappropriate;
- if you or your webinar participants will be visible, please consider the following and provide as guidelines in advance for the webinar/livestream:

  o location: always use a communal space such as a study or dining room and never a bedroom or other private space;
  o personal appearance: be appropriately dressed;
  o background: ensure you have a clear background free from distractions, unwanted or inappropriate imagery and personal items (such as family photographs). In addition, ensure nothing in the background can give away your location;
  o mirrors: remember that mirrors (or even windows) can display items or family members you are not expecting to be seen.

- if you are recording the session, ensure that all attendees are aware of this;
- if you have participants who have accessibility needs, i.e. would benefit from using subtitles, then consider all reasonable adjustments that can be taken to accommodate the needs of your participants.

More information about delivering remote sessions can be found here, [NSPCC Undertaking remote teaching safely](#).

Top tips for helping children stay safe online:

1. Let children know where they can access information and support to stay safe online. CEOP and Childline are great starting places.[3]
2. Make sure you are up to date on online safety, including the websites and apps that children are using.
3. Set clear boundaries for your online communication with children – do not privately message children who are involved in the club (or privately text message). Instead consider a means of team communication which ensures messages are copied into 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 or at least copied 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 children – 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 was as it would be for a face-to-face disclosure.
11. Make sure that your club policy on appropriate online behaviour is known and visible to all members.

---

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

Top tips for staying safe online for children:[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.thinkyouknow.co.uk
ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk
CPSU: https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety/

October 2020

---

[4] http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk/personal-safety/staying-safe-online/

Appendix

Acceptable Use Statement for Digital Events and Social Media Use

British Rowing is dedicated to delivering an online experience which is welcoming and inclusive for everyone regardless of age, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, and background. We will not tolerate harassment in any form, of anyone who engages with our online content, whether this is social media or digital events, such as webinars.

British Rowing recognises that safeguards need to be put in place to ensure anyone, including children, young adults, and adults at risk, remain safe while online or using social media.

Members of British Rowing found to be violating this acceptable use statement may, where applicable, be removed from participation in a British Rowing Digital Event. British Rowing may also take action under its disciplinary procedure which may result in sanctions.

Where a participant in rowing is under 18, we ask that their parent(s)/carer(s) spend a few minutes to read through and discuss this statement with their child and ensure they understand their responsibilities.

As a participant in rowing:

- I will be responsible for my behaviour when using the internet and social media or any digital content in relation to British Rowing, or my rowing club, including the content I access and how I conduct myself.

- I will not deliberately create, browse or access material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material, I will report this to my Club Welfare Officer.

- I will not use social media or the internet to send anyone material that could be considered threatening, offensive, upsetting, bullying or that is illegal.

- I understand that all my use of internet and social media is potentially visible to everyone and that any issues involving my behaviour online may be addressed by my coach, other official at my rowing club, or by British Rowing.

- I will not give out any of my personal information (such as name, age, address, or telephone number online), or that of anyone else.

I will not share my passwords with anyone else.

I am aware that if I am experiencing bullying behaviour or abuse online, I can contact my Club Welfare Officer.
In addition, if I am under 18:

- I understand that I should only use my club's or British Rowing's official social media or website communication channels to contact them and should not seek out individual members of staff or coaches. However I know that my Club has a Club Welfare Officer who I can contact using the contact details they have provided, or British Rowing's Lead Safeguarding Officer by emailing LSO@britishrowing.org

- I will not arrange to meet someone that I have met online unless accompanied by a parent/carer.

- I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe, and if they are not followed my parents may be contacted.

- I will avoid using my mobile or smartphone during activities at my rowing club as I understand that it will have an impact on my safety and my opportunity to learn and achieve.

- I know I can contact Childline on 0800 11 11 if I have any worries about something I've seen or experienced online.

Anyone who feels unsafe, unwelcome or harassed or who has any questions or concerns should contact British Rowing's Lead Safeguarding Officer by emailing: LSO@britishrowing.org.

October 2020