

E Safety Guidance for Officials, Employees & Volunteers



Many Members, Volunteers and Coaches already use sites such as Facebook and Twitter. It is essential that you keep both yourself and young people safe online and, as an adult, you have a key role to play in actively promoting these safety messages.

A common-sense approach

While social network profiles are easy to set up and use, it is important that you keep a professional distance online, just as you would in the 'offline' world. Think carefully about how digital communication might appear to a third party, compared with a conversation in the real world, as there is increased potential for messages to be misinterpreted and forwarded to others.

If you have a website or have set up a social networking site for your Branch or Linked Centre, bear in mind that once you place something there, it is in the public domain, which means people can access it, potentially change it and share it with others. It is very difficult to have it taken down once something has been posted.

Guidance for adults

- Remember you are in a position of trust as a volunteer / official / coach.
- Remember that all social media sites and apps have an age restriction (i.e. Facebook has a minimum age of 13 years).
- Use separate profiles and communication routes for email or social networking to keep contact with any young people and your private life separate.
- If you use social networking sites, be aware that content is speedily updated.
- Only set up pages for events, activities or groups for which you are responsible.
- Do not use your personal social networking account to communicate with young people
- Conduct yourself in an appropriate way as you would face to face. Be aware of what you say and how you say it - the use of sarcasm and innuendo are not appropriate.
- Don't engage in one-to-one conversation with young people via chat facilities - this is the same as going into a private room and closing the door.
- Do not provide personal details, such as email addresses, school name etc, for young people on your website or social networking channel.
- Always ensure you have parental permission to use any appropriate photos of young people, and only use their first names in captions. Members should not be identifiable in photos or videos posted on the internet to those who do not already know who they are.
- When emailing or texting young people always copy the message to another responsible adult, and use the 'BCC' facility to avoid sharing e-mail addresses.
- Monitor places where interaction occurs - for example, Facebook Wall, forums and comments on photos.
- If you are concerned about the way a young person is attempting to contact you, tell the Branch DC, Centre Proprietor or Safeguarding Officer.
- Know how to block someone online and report them to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) if you feel uncomfortable. Save the www.clickceop.net website to your favourites so that you can report any suspicious behaviour straight away. Have a look at www.thinkuknow.co.uk an advice website from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre www.ceop.police.uk
- Do not criticise Officials, Coaches, Volunteers or Members on social networking sites or by the use of text messaging.

Useful Information & links

Young People & Social Networking Sites Guide – www.childnet.com

Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre – www.ceop.police.uk

Think u Know – www.thinkuknow.co.uk – advice site for young people and parents

NSPCC – www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline – 0800 1111

Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) – www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/cpsu/cpsu_wda57648.html

Internet Matters – www.internetmatters.org