

Swindon ASC

Social Networking Guidelines



Purpose:

The ASA (SwimEngland) recognises that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and instant messaging tools such as Whatsapp and Snapchat, continue to grow rapidly and are increasingly being used as the communication tool of choice by young people and adults alike. Whilst these technologies provide exciting opportunities, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a recommendation of best practice to all Club Members and Parents/ Carers on the use of social networking sites as they relate to that individual's role in Swindon ASC.

Note: Throughout this guidance a young person/children is anyone under the age of 18.

General:

These sites permit users to chat online, post pictures and write 'blogs' etc, through the creation of an online profile, that can either be publicly available to all or restricted to an approved circle of electronic friends.

Facebook is the largest such site whose "mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected", and is reported to have in excess of five hundred million active users worldwide. A third of the UK population is reported to have a Facebook account.

Sites such as YouTube and Google provide a platform for uploading and viewing video clips, which with the latest cameras and mobile phones, becomes ever easier and can be almost instantaneous. More recent apps, such as Periscope and Meerkat, allow mobile phone users to stream content directly from their phones, bypassing some of the steps required in uploading videos to YouTube or to social networks such as Facebook.

In addition to these sites, Twitter is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables users to send and read other users' messages known as 'tweets'. Tweets are online text messages of up to a maximum of 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page. Tweets are publicly visible by default, however the sender can restrict message delivery to their followers list only.

The CPSU 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.

Swindon ASC

Social Networking Guidelines



Further to the above the SwimEngland Web Team has produced a user guide for parents and swimmers for Twitter, which is available to view on the SwimEngland website at www.swimming.org.

Coaches / Teachers / Volunteers:

1. As a coach, teacher or volunteer, of Swindon ASC, you should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they are a member of the club (as defined in Wavepower 2016- 2019 section 2.4 page 72).
2. Should a young person in Swindon ASC request to become 'friends' via your personal Social Networking site you should decline if any of the below apply:
 - a. You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child.
 - b. You hold a position of trust and/or responsibility within Swindon ASC.
 - c. Your contact with the child is through Swindon ASC **and** the parent/carer of the child does not give their consent to such contact.
3. Social networks should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise Swindon ASC members or SwimEngland organisations and to do so may be in breach of SwimEngland 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 club's Use of Photography and Filming Policy.

Coaches / Teachers / Volunteers who are under 18:

SwimEngland recognise social networking sites can be a useful tool for teachers, coaches and volunteers within the organisation to share information with other teachers, coaches or volunteers. If, however, the teacher, coach or volunteer is under the age of 16 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 SwimEngland 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 the organisation.

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;

Swindon ASC

Social Networking Guidelines



- 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;
- All such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian or club welfare officer);

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 and/or the breach referred to SwimEngland or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

Coaches / Teachers / Volunteers who are 18-21:

SwimEngland recognises that many young coaches aged between 18 and 21 will have been members themselves before becoming a coach and have been friends with their fellow members, some of whom will be between the ages of 16 and 17. It is therefore plausible they will have contact details for those members and be friends with them on social networking sites, and be able to communicate via other methods of electronic communication.

In this circumstance, SwimEngland accepts it would be inappropriate to require such friends to be removed from their social networking sites. Therefore, in such cases:

- If a coach aged between 18 and 21 had friends on their social networking site that were/are members aged 16 or 17 prior to undertaking the role of coach, SwimEngland does not expect them to remove those members from their listed friends.
- In such circumstances the coach is advised to inform the 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.

Members who are under 18:

1. Do not ask your club coach or teacher to be your friend on any social networking site – 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.thinkuknow.co.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.

Swindon ASC

Social Networking Guidelines



4. Always remember that any communication, comments, photos and video clips posted on a social networking site may be shared with more people than you originally intended.
5. Never share pictures of yourself or your friends that you wouldn't be happy for your family to see. Also, never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that:
 - May be hurtful, untrue or upsetting and you may regret sharing later on
 - May be used by other people in a way you did not intend or want
 - Other people may find inappropriate
6. Do not put upload images of other members taking part in training, activities or events as you may breach the SwimEngland Photography Guidance and the club's Use of Photography / Filming Policy. If you do wish to upload such content, you must get advice and consent of ALL of the following before taking any action:
 - your parent
 - the other young person
 - the parent of the other young person
 - a club officer

This will not prevent you having pictures of your swimming friends on your social networking site taken outside of the Club 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 out loud to the individual concerned as to do so may not only breach SwimEngland Policy but also the law.

Parents/ Carers of Members who are under 18:

There have been occasions where parents of 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 the subject of the abuse to take action through statutory agencies or statutory legislation to address the comments made.

Swindon ASC

Social Networking Guidelines



Swindon ASC have a Member's Code of Conduct which includes specific guidance for Parents/ Carers. Parents are expected to behave responsibly as a spectator at all training sessions, activities and events, and treat members, coaches, committee members and parents of yours and other clubs with due respect in order to meet the SwimEngland's commitment to equality and diversity.

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

Coaches / Teachers / Volunteers who have children who swim in the club:

Many parents are becoming 'friends' with their children on social networking sites for security reasons in order to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's profile. This may then give the parent access to the profiles of other children listed as 'friends' of their child. It would not be appropriate for SwimEngland to prevent a parent who is also a coach/teacher/volunteer in his/her child's club from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore, in such cases:

- The parent concerned should not have direct contact with members through the social networking site
- Where the parent has access to their child's social networking site (i.e. knows the user name and password) they must not contact any other children under the pretence of their child
- The parent should not accept their child's friends as friends on their own social networking site
- The parent should inform the Club Welfare Officer of this arrangement.

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. Concerns may range from negative or abusive comments, and cyber bullying to suspected grooming for sexual abuse.

SwimEngland have drawn up a list of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you can raise such concerns.

Swindon ASC

Social Networking Guidelines



- The National Crime Agency: CEOP Command (formerly the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) at www.ceop.gov.uk or by pressing the CEOP button on Facebook or on the SwimEngland Child Power website.
- Swimline ASA (SwimEngland)/NSPCC helpline 0808 100 4001.
- If you are under 18 use the “Your Chance to Talk” form on the “Child Power” section of the SwimEngland website.
- Childline 0800 1111 or www.Childline.org.uk.
- www.childnet.org.uk which is a NSPCC support service specifically for young people.
- The Local Police or Children’s Services – their number appears in the phone book or dial 101.
- The NSPCC helpline 0800 800 5000 or www.nspcc.org.uk
- The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) www.iwf.org.uk The IWF was established to provide a UK internet hotline which can be anonymous for the general public and IT professionals to report criminal online content in a secure and confidential way. They work in partnership with other agencies to minimise the availability of this content, specifically:
 - child sexual abuse images hosted anywhere in the world.
 - criminally obscene adult content hosted in the UK.
 - incitement to racial hatred content hosted in the UK.
 - non-photographic child sexual abuse images hosted in the UK.

Further Information:

The CPSU Briefing Document *Social networking services, social media and sport: Guidelines for safeguarding children and young people (2009)* gives more in depth guidance on social networking sites and can be accessed via the Child Protection in Sport Unit website at www.cpsu.org.uk