



## **CLUB POLICY, GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

### **1. Introduction**

The following is a brief summary of the Swim England's Policies and Guidance on the use of social media by members of swimming clubs and how it affects Kingfishers Swimming Club (the Club) and its members.

A comprehensive statement can be found in Wavepower Section 2.4:  
([http://www.swimming.org/library/documents/files/1205/download pages 72-74](http://www.swimming.org/library/documents/files/1205/download_pages_72-74))

### **2. Intent**

Swim England recognises that the use of Social Media sites and instant messaging tools continues to grow rapidly and are increasingly being used as the communication tool of choice. Swim England has identified a number of issues that have led to both disciplinary and safeguarding concerns stemming from the improper or inappropriate use of such sites by its members.

As a Swim England affiliated club, the Club and its members, paid workers and volunteers are required to follow the Swim England Wavepower policies and procedures on child safeguarding in general. This note explains what this means for the use of social media by the Club, its paid workers and its volunteers.

### **3. Guidance for Coaches, Teachers, other Paid Workers and Volunteers**

As a Coach, Teacher or other paid worker or volunteer of the Club, you should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they are members of the Club. You should not request to become "friends" with a young person in the Club via your social networking site.

Should a young person in Kingfishers Swimming Club ('the Club') request to become "friends" via your personal social networking site, you should decline if:

- You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child (for example, you are a coach or teacher) or
- You hold a position of trust and/or responsibility at the Club (for example, you are on the committee of the Club.) or
- You are not in position of responsibility in respect of that child, you do not hold a position of trust and/or responsibility at the Club but your contact with the child is through the Club and the parent/guardian has not given their explicit consent to such contact. Social networks should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise members or Swim England organisations and to do so may be in breach of the Swim England Rules and Regulations. The publishing of a photograph or video footage



on any social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in the Swim England Photography Guidance.

#### **4. Communication between adult Coaches, Teachers and other Paid Workers with Coaches, Teachers and other Paid Workers who are under 16**

Swim England recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool with which teachers, coaches and other paid worker within the organisation can share information with other teachers, coaches or paid worker. However, if the young Coach/Teacher/Paid worker member is under the age of 16, while he or she may be a colleague, the requirements of the 3.above, must be adhered to.

#### **5. Communication between adult Coaches, Teachers and other Paid Workers with Coaches, Teachers and other Paid Workers who are 16 or 17**

If the young coach/teacher/paid worker member is aged 16 or 17, it is the view of Swim England that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, teachers or paid workers may be detrimental in their professional development of their role in Swim England. Therefore, in such cases, if the parent/guardian of a young person in a position of responsibility aged 16 or 17 and the young person themselves requests to have contact with an adult member or paid worker for the purpose of sharing professional information relevant to their role, the Club should:

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

#### **6. Communication by Coaches, Teachers and other Paid Workers aged 18-21 with 16-17 year olds.**

Swim England recognises that many young Coaches aged between 18 and 21 will have been members of the Club before becoming a Coach and will have been friends with their fellow members, some of whom will be aged 16-17. It is therefore possible they will have contact details for those members and will be friends with them on social networking sites. In these circumstances, Sport England accepts it would be inappropriate to require such friends to be removed from the 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 when appointed to the role of Coach, the ASA 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 persons except on an occasional basis. In all other cases (for example, when an 18-21 year old is appointed as a Coach but is in contact with fellow members younger than 16), then the requirements of 3., above apply, and the Coach should discontinue social media contact with those young members.

## **7. Communication by Coaches, Teachers and other Paid Worker aged 16-17 with members of the club under the age of 16.**

If a coach, teacher or other paid worker is under the age of 18 and also a swimmer in the club, then it is reasonable for them to be in contact via social media with other members of the club who are under the age of 16. If the coach, teacher or other paid worker is under the age of 18 and does not, or ceases to, swim with the club, then they should not be in contact via social media with members of the club younger than 16.

## **8. Guidance for Coaches, Teachers or other Paid Workers or Volunteers of the Club who are also parents to children belonging to the Club.**

Many parents are becoming 'friends' with their children via social networking 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 access to the profiles of other children listed as 'friends' of their child, who are members of the Club. It would not be appropriate for the Swim England to prevent a parent who also holds a position of responsibility in the Club at which his/her child is a member 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 other young members through the social networking site
- Where the parent has access to their child's social networking site (i.e. knows the username and password) they must not contact any other children under the pretence of being their child
- The parent should not accept their child's friends as their own friends via social networking



- The parent should inform the Club's welfare officer that they have access to their child's social networking account(s).

## **9. Guidance for members of the organisation under the age of 18**

There is a comprehensive list of does and don'ts listed in page 73 of section 2.4 of Wavepower 2016-19.

(<http://www.swimming.org/library/documents/files/1205/download>)

## **10. Guidance for Parents**

There is useful guidance for parents in page 74 of section 2.4 of Wavepower 2016-19.

(<http://www.swimming.org/library/documents/files/1205/download>)