

## **CALVERTON AND BINGHAM SWIMMING CLUB**

### **Guidance on online contact, social media and communication with children.**

When an adult communicates with children, they must do so in an appropriate and safe manner, whether that is in person, by phone or text, online or via a social networking/ messaging website.

Generally speaking, if you do not share your contact information with children, and take steps to make your social media accounts private, they will not find your phone number, email or social network site details. However, if this should happen and they are not disclosing concerns you must make them aware that you will not be communicating with them on this medium and inform the Welfare Officer immediately. The Welfare Officer will take action as required, ensuring contact by the Member is not repeated.

Mobile phones, social media, text messaging, email and other forms of electronic communication have become a regular feature of the sporting landscape and there is a need to define what is and what is not permissible when communication is required between adults and children.

#### **Phoning, texting, emailing or messaging a child**

Adults working or volunteering in any Organisation must not hold personal contact details belonging to children on any personal device, or be connected through any social media sites or apps. This includes apps such as WhatsApp where a child's number is displayed and visible to a group. This is particularly important where any coach/teacher may hold a position of trust over a child.

Adults working or volunteering in any Organisation can hold the phone numbers and email addresses of Members' parents/guardians with their consent, in order to provide information to Members. It is then the responsibility of the parent/guardian receiving any such messages to inform the child.

In limited circumstances, it may be necessary for coaches, team managers or chaperones to have mobile phone contact details of the Members, for example 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 must then be deleted as soon as possible after the event.

Apps or social media messaging which are not capable of storing messages, such as Snapchat, are NOT recommended in order to communicate with children, as they have limited safety functionality. Nor indeed are platforms that reveal children's numbers and online identities such as WhatsApp and Instagram.

#### **Coaches aged 18 to 21**

Swim England recognises that many young coaches and teachers aged 18 to 21 will have been Members themselves before becoming a coach or teacher, and will be friends with their fellow Members, some of whom will still be aged 16 or 17. It is therefore plausible that they will have the personal contact details for those Members, or be connected with them on social media sites. Swim England accepts it would be inappropriate to require young coaches or swimming teachers to remove the details of those Members from their contact lists or social media profiles. Therefore, if a coach or swimming teacher aged 18 to 21 has phone and/or email details for Members, or is connected to them on social media, who are aged 16 or 17 upon the role of coach or swimming teacher, Swim England does not expect them to remove those Members from their contact list, unless the coach or swimming teacher is the primary coach or teacher for any of the Members in question

The coach or teacher must inform the Welfare Officer and the Head Coach (if applicable) that they hold these contact details.

### **Use of social networking**

CABSC recognises that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, and instant messaging tools such as WhatsApp and Telegram, continue to grow rapidly and are used as the communication tools of choice by children.

Social networking sites provide a platform for uploading and viewing video clips, as well options for private messaging and public commenting. Whilst the ever developing technologies provide exciting opportunities for our Members, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused.

If 'out of sport' inappropriate social media activity emerges, Members are encouraged to report this directly to the social media platform provider, or seek advice from the Professional Online Safety Helpline.

### **Use of social media by coaches, teachers, staff and volunteers**

As a coach, teacher or other employee or volunteer of the Organisation, you should not be in contact with children (unless a family member) through social networking sites if they are a Member of the Organisation you work or volunteer for.

Should a child in your Organisation 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;
- you hold a position of trust and/or responsibility at the club; or
- your contact with the child is through a Swim England club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their 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 Swim England Regulations.

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on any social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in Guidance on the use of photography

### **Coaches, teachers and other staff who are under 18**

CABSC recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool for teachers, coaches and other staff within the Organisation to share information with other teachers, coaches or staff. If, however, the teacher, coach or staff member is under the age of 18, whilst they may be a colleague, it is essential to mitigate the risks of such sharing.

We recognises that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, teachers or staff may be detrimental in their professional development of their role.

Therefore, if a parent/guardian of a child in a position of responsibility gives consent, and the child themselves request to have contact with an adult Member of staff for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role, the Organisation must:

- gain written consent from the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact, naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned;
- ensure the named adult signs an agreement to keep contact with the child to the discussion of matters relevant to the child's role in the Organisation;

- ensure all such communications are shared with an identified third person (e.g. the child's parent/guardian or Welfare Officer); and
- ensure that if the child or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action is taken by the Organisation to address the concern and/or ensure that the breach is referred to the welfare officer and/or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

CABSC is committed to promote online safety for all its members. If any member or parent/guardian have any concerns please make contact with the Welfare officer on [cabscwelfareofficer@gmail.com](mailto:cabscwelfareofficer@gmail.com)

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