



Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy

When an adult communicates with children they must do so in an appropriate and safe manner. All those in positions of responsibility within Repton Swimming must not the use of social networking or messaging sites, personal mobile phone numbers, personal email addresses or text to communicate with those under 18 years of age. Adults should either go through a parent / guardian or, if Repton School pupils, use their Repton email or Microsoft Teams accounts.

Repton Swimming has adopted Swim England's Wavepower document, which provides guidance on how to react to a child if they disclose concerns or abuse in person. Wavepower advises that if member uses other forms of communication to disclose concerns, even if Swim England guidance has been followed and the adult has not shared phone, e-mail address or social networking details with that person, the communication should not be stopped.

Instead, the Welfare Officer should be advised immediately of the contact. The guidance in Wavepower will be followed as to how to deal with any disclosure or concern raised.

Repton Swimming coaches, teachers, committee members, and volunteers will not share contact information unnecessarily with members, which means that they will not find the adult's phone number, e-mail or social network site details. However, if this should happen and they are not disclosing concerns as outlined above the member will be made aware that there will be no communication with them on this medium and the Welfare Officer will be informed immediately. The Welfare Officer will take action as required, ensuring contact by the member is not repeated.

Electronic Messaging

Mobile phones, text messaging, e-mail 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 or young people.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Swim England best practice that Repton Swimming follows for its coaches, teachers, and those in a position of trust regarding:

- The use of mobile phones whilst having responsibility for the supervision and safety of young people.
- Direct communication between coaches or teachers and children of the organisation via mobile phone, email and social media messaging.

The guidance on the use of social networking below applies to phones as well as tablets, laptops, desktop computers or other applicable devices.

Phoning, texting, emailing or messaging a child

- Coaches and teachers will not personally hold the mobile phone numbers or e-mail addresses belonging to children, subject to point 3. This includes apps such as WhatsApp where a child's number is displayed and visible to a group. This is particularly important where a coach or a teacher holds a position of trust over a child.
- Coaches can hold the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of members' parents / guardians with their consent, in order to get messages to members. It is then the responsibility of the parent / guardian to inform the child.
- In very 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 will be 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. If this is necessary, where possible this will be done on a phone owned by Repton School, not a personal device. Should it be essential to hold a swimmer's personal mobile number, this will be done in the knowledge of the Chair, Welfare Officer and Parents. In this case, the members' phone numbers will then be deleted after the event.
- Repton Swimming coaches and teachers may wish to have the ability to contact members on a group basis. This may be required in order to inform members of changes to training or lesson times, for example. For Repton School pupils, the school policy of using Microsoft Teams messages or Repton email is used. For club swimmers this will be communicated via parents / guardians.

Inappropriate photographs and footage

- The inappropriate use of mobile phones is against the club rules, and in the case of taking indecent images of children, including over/under adjoining cubicles, it is against the law.
- Swim England and Repton Swimming have introduced a **zero tolerance** approach to someone being reported for inappropriate use of mobile phones in the changing rooms or on poolside, and in particular if someone reports seeing a phone in a changing room under or over a cubicle wall.
- If a credible allegation is made and the identity of the person is known, Repton Swimming will report the incident to both the police and Swim England and place a temporary suspension on the club member involved. Swim England will then follow this up with the club and the individual. Where appropriate, this will be with a view to working with the individual to demonstrate a change of behaviour and for them to return to membership.
- If there is a suspicion of a crime taking place but there is no identifiable person involved, Repton Swimming will record as much information as possible and inform both the police and Swim England of the incident.

Use of mobile phones by coaches and teachers

- Coaches and teachers should not take or make calls whilst supervising young members in a teaching or training session. It is permissible for a coach to make or take a call during an event, providing they are not the sole supervisor of the members and are not actively engaged at the time of the call.
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- Coaches and teachers who have mobile phones with camera facilities must fulfil the obligations set out in Swim England Photography Guidance and the Repton Staff Code of Conduct.
- Coaches and teachers will not enter changing facilities with any mobile phone turned on.
- The publishing of a photograph of a member under 18 years should only be done with the parent's / guardian's consent and it should be noted that parents / guardians have the right to refuse to have their child photographed.
- If a photograph is taken for publication, it should adhere to the guidance provided in the Swim England Photography Guidance. Details which identify the individual in the photograph, such as full name, place of residence or school attended, will not be given alongside the photograph.
- In the event of a member showing a coach or teacher a text message or image that is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, the coach / teacher must advise the nominated person at the organisation, most likely the Welfare Officer.

Coaches aged 18 to 21

Repton Swimming recognises that many young coaches aged 18 to 21 will have been members themselves before becoming a coach, and will be friends with their fellow members, some of whom will still be between the ages of 16 and 17. It is therefore plausible that they will have the personal contact details for those members. Repton Swimming accepts it would be inappropriate to require young coaches to remove the details of those members from their contact lists.

Therefore, in such cases:

- If a coach aged 18 to 21 had phone and/or e-mail details who were/are swimmers aged between 16 and 17 prior to undertaking the role of coach, Repton Swimming does not expect them to remove those members from their contact list.
- However, the young coach is advised to inform the Welfare Officer and the Head Coach.
- The Head Coach should make every effort to ensure the young coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

Guidance on the use of social networking

There is a growing awareness of the increasing communication between adults and young people and indeed their peers on social networking sites. There are risks associated with these developments, and 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.

Swim England and Repton Swimming recognise that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and instant messaging tools such as Whatsapp, TikTok and Snapchat, continue to grow rapidly and are increasingly being used as the communication tools of choice by young people.

Increasingly, many sites provide a platform for uploading and viewing video clips, which with the latest cameras and mobile phones, becomes ever easier and can be instantaneous. More recent apps 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.

Whilst the ever-developing technologies provide exciting opportunities for our members, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

It is important to note that the misuse / abuse conducted on social media may result in a criminal investigation and members are encouraged to directly refer criminal activity to the police. This also includes action between members engaged in a Swim England and/or Repton Swimming activity and in those circumstances such action may also breach the Codes of Conduct or Codes of Ethics and result in disciplinary action.

If 'out of sport' inappropriate social media activity emerges, members are encouraged to report this directly to the social media platform provider.

Coaches, teachers and other staff

- A coach, teacher or other employee or volunteer of Repton Swimming, will not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they are a member of Repton Swimming.
- Should a child in Repton Swimming request to become 'friends' via personal social networking sites, this will be declined if the coach/teacher/staff member:
 - Is in a position of responsibility in respect of that child.
 - Holds a position of trust and/or responsibility at the club.
 - Or if the 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 the Swim England Photography Guidance.

Coaches, teachers and other staff who are under 18

Swim England and Repton Swimming recognise 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, while they may be a colleague, the requirements of this policy must be adhered to.

If the young coach/teacher/staff member is aged 16 or 17, it is the view of Swim England and Repton Swimming 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 in Swim England and Repton Swimming.

Therefore, in such cases, if the parent / guardian of a child in a position of responsibility and they themselves requests to have contact with an adult member of staff for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role, Repton Swimming will:

- Gain written consent from the parent / guardian and child 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 club.
- Ensure all communications are shared with an identified third person (eg the child's parent / guardian or Welfare Officer) and done via a Repton email account.
- Ensure that if the child or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action will be taken by the club to address the concern and/or ensure that the breach is referred to the Swim England or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

Coaches aged between 18 and 21

Swim England and Repton Swimming recognise 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, Swim England and Repton Swimming accept 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, Swim England and Repton Swimming do 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.

Guidance from Swim England and Repton Swimming to members of the organisation under the age of 18

- Do not ask your coach or teacher to be your friend on any social networking site – they will refuse as that would breach good practice.
- Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at www.thinkuknow.co.uk for some useful tips.
- Consider who you are inviting to be your friend and follow the good advice of the social networking sites to ensure make sure you are talking to the person you believe you are talking to.
- 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.
- 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 or that 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.
- Do not upload images of other members taking part in your organisation's training, activities or events as you may breach Swim England Photography Guidance. If you do wish to upload such content, you must first seek the advice and consent of your parents / guardians, the consent of the other child(ren) and their parents / guardians, and an officer of Repton Swimming before taking any action. This will not prevent you having images of your friends from Swim England and Repton Swimming on your personal social networking site, as long as they were taken outside of the sporting arena. Even so, it is still a good idea to check that any person in the image, and their parents / guardians, are happy for you to upload the image.
- 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. The delivery of social networking content is instantaneous and this can sometimes result in users reacting in the 'heat of the moment', and your content/ comments may spread far from that of your own social network of friends. This is a major difference between the present and the past in which you would have written 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 someone. To do so may breach Swim England and Repton policies, the Code of Conduct and also the law.

Guidance from Swim England and Repton Swimming to parents / guardian of members under the age of 18

There have been occasions where parents of members have used social networking sites to criticise or verbally abuse an organisation, its officers, officials, coaches, teachers, and/or members in an inappropriate and unacceptable manner. This has, in some cases, led to the person who is the subject of the abuse to take action through statutory agencies or statutory legislation to address the comments made.

It is recommended that parents / guardians actively monitor their children's online activity in line with Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) advice, which is proven to help prevent the risks of harm children may face online from peers and others they may know from the club environment.

Repton Swimming has a Parent / Guardian Code of Conduct which can be found on Repton Swimming's website. This includes expectations of behaviour in club activity online, and as a spectator at all training sessions, events and activities, in treating members, coaches, teachers, committee members and parents / guardians of any of our sport's organisations, be that Repton Swimming or not, with due respect.

Parents / guardians should be aware that posting any content on a social networking site that breaches the above requirements may breach the parents / guardians Code of Conduct.

Parents / guardians who work at Repton Swimming whilst their children are members of and attend the club

Many parents are becoming 'friends' with their children on social networking profile 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. It would not be appropriate for Swim England and Repton Swimming to prevent a parent who is also an employee where their 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 members through the social networking site.
- Where the parent / guardian has access to their child's social networking site (ie knows the user name and password) they must not contact any other children under the pretence of being their child.
- The parent / guardian should not accept their child's friends as friends on their own social networking site.
- The parent / guardian should inform the 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. Swim England has drawn up a list of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you can raise such concerns.

- O2 and NSPCC Online Safety Website
o2.co.uk/help/nspcc
- NSPCC Share Aware Resources
nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety
- Childline
childline.org.uk/get-involved/childline-social-media
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command
ceop.police.uk/safety-centre

- Think You Know
thinkyouknow.co.uk
- Our Safety Centre
oursafetycentre.co.uk
- NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit
the cpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety
- Internet Matters
internetmatters.org
- Childnet International
childnet.com
- HM Government Advice on Keeping Children Safe Online
www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media

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