

RGC WORCESTER SOCIAL NETWORKING POLICY

JANUARY 2019

1. INTRODUCTION

RGC Worcester recognises that the use of social networking sites and online gaming (Xbox, Playstation) are a rapidly growing phenomenon and increasingly being used as a communication tool of choice by young people. Facebook is the largest site whose mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected.

- 1.1 These sites permit users to chat online, instant message, 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.
- 1.2 Social media platforms have developed to allow the uploading and viewing of video clips, which with the latest cameras and mobile phones becomes easier and with the development of live streaming can be instantaneous.
- 1.3 Social networking can be a great tool to promote organisations and individuals if used in the correct way. Whilst these technologies provide exciting opportunities, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

2. GOOD PRACTICE

2.1 All RGC Worcester club personnel and British Gymnastics members in a position of trust and/or responsibility (as defined in the British Gymnastics Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy) should not be in contact with any young people through any social networking sites whether the young person is a member of the club or any other club.

2.2 Should a young person request to become a named friend on any RGC Worcester club personnel or members/volunteers in a position of trust and/or responsibility social networking page or request that you become a named friend on their social networking page, that request should be declined as you are in a position of trust and responsibility within a British Gymnastics registered club.

2.3 The above also applies to official club social networking sites. Only club staff and parents, should be permitted access.

2.4 Social networking sites should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise British Gymnastics, affiliated Home Countries, Regional Gymnastics associations, British Gymnastics members or British Gymnastics clubs. To do so would be in breach of British Gymnastics Standards of Conduct.

2.5 The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as any other media – please refer to the Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.

3. RGC Worcester understands that parents are becoming members of social networking sites that their children sign up to for security reasons and in order to ensure the wellbeing of their own children by being able to view their child's site. This will give the parents access via their child's site to all children listed as friends of their child. It would not be appropriate for RGC Worcester to

prevent a parent who is also a coach from using this form of practice for their child's online activities.

3.1 Therefore in such cases the coach can:

3.1.1 Have gymnasts on their site they are accessing providing the under 18 year old members on the site are listed as friends of their child; However in this case the following also applies;

3.1.2 The coach concerned should not have direct contact with gymnasts other than their own child through the social networking site;

3.1.3 The coach should not accept such gymnasts as friends on their personal site;

3.1.4 The coach should inform the Club Welfare Officer of this arrangement and a record kept of such.

4. RGC Worcester recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool for judges, coaches and officials within British Gymnastics clubs to share information with other judges, coaches or officials, If, however, the judge, coach or official is under the age of 18 while they may be a colleague, the requirements of the above paragraphs must be adhered to.

4.1 However, for young people aged 16 or 17 RGC Worcester understands that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, judges or officials may be detrimental in their professional development in their role in British Gymnastics.

4.2 Therefore in such cases if the parent of a young person in a position of responsibility aged 16 or 17 and the young persons themselves requests to have contact with an adult club official or coach for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role RGC Worcester will;

4.2.1 Gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned;

4.2.2 The named adult must sign an arrangement to keep the contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club ;

4.2.3 All such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (eg the young person's parent/guardian or Club Welfare Officer) and

4.2.4 If the young person or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action must be taken by RGC Worcester, cease the communication and where appropriate refer to British Gymnastics for further consideration and action.

5. GUIDANCE FOR CHILD MEMBERS OF RGC WORCESTER

5.1 To protect yourself online, RGC Worcester provide the following guidance:

5.1.2 Do not ask your coach, judge, helper/volunteer or club official to be your social networking site friend – they will refuse as this would breach good practice and the British Gymnastics Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.

5.1.3 Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk.

5.1.4 Consider who you are inviting to be your friend and follow the good advice of social networking sites to ensure that you are talking to the person you believe you are talking to.

5.1.5 Never share your personal details online and ensure your privacy settings are secure.

5.1.6 Ensure that your social media platforms are password protected and that you do not share this password, unless your parent/guardian requests it.

5.1.7 Always remember that anything you say including photos, pictures and video clips posted on your site may be shared with people other than those for whom it was intended.

5.1.8 Never post, share or send any photographs that may be hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on or used by other people in a way you did not intend or want.

5.1.9 Remember that it can be difficult to delete information that has been uploaded to the internet, it may have been shared or copied as soon as it was uploaded.

5.1.10 Do not put any pictures of other club members on your site within the club setting as you may breach the British Gymnastics Photography Policy. You should always ensure that the gymnast concerned, their parents/guardians are happy with any picture you have of them on your site.

5.1.11 Always be aware that social networking sites are a method of communication like email and the spoken word. They are bound by the same laws and rules. Such technology is instant and allows you, as the user, to react in the 'heat of the moment. Never place a comment on the internet that you would not say in person or put in writing.

5.1.12 If you have any concerns report them to a coach, club official, club welfare officer or responsible adult.

6. GUIDANCE TO PARENTS – WAYS TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE

6.1 Get to know your child's online habits. Knowing the sites they go to, the people they meet there and what they do will help to keep your child safe.

6.2 Stay alert to any sudden changes in mood or appearance, or to any major changes in habits or increased secretiveness. Keep lines of communication open, tell your child they can always talk to you or another trusted adult, such as a teacher or Club Welfare Officer, if they do end up in some sort of trouble on the internet.

6.3 Spend time with them surfing the internet together, discuss why some apps, games and social media platforms are not suitable. Show them ones that are.

6.4 Set parental controls. Be aware that you can install internet filtering software which shows a Child Safety Online Kitemark.

6.5 There have been occasions where parents of British Gymnastics members have used social networking sites to criticise or verbally abuse gymnastics clubs, its officers, officials, coaches, judges and some gymnasts in an inappropriate and unacceptable manner. This has on some occasions led to action being taken through statutory agencies or statutory legislation to address the issue. If any parents of British Gymnastics members affiliated to RGC Worcester are found to be abusing or working outside of these good practice guidelines they may be subject to disciplinary action or investigation as outlined in the British Gymnastics Complaints and Disciplinary Procedures.

7.1

7. PROCEDURE

If RGC Worcester becomes aware that a child or young person is being subjected to upsetting, hurtful and/or inappropriate communication/messages on any social media platform from a fellow member of the club the following steps should be taken.

Any such communication/message should be reported to the Head Coach or Welfare Officer.

RGC Worcester ask that a picture is taken of the alleged message/communication.

Where the alleged sender of such communication/message is a child(children), if applicable, parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.

The alleged sender will be spoken to by the Head Coach or Welfare Officer who will explain the situation and try to get them to understand the consequences of their actions. An apology should be sought from the sender to the recipient. Sanctions or disciplinary action will be imposed if necessary. Actions taken will be reported and recorded.

Any further incidents of this nature will result in the member being asked to leave the club.

8. If you have any concerns about what you have seen or being told about on social networking sites below is a list of agencies who can be contacted:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk – the main UK Government website with advice for parents on how to keep children safe online.

www.ceop.police.uk – the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre is the Government body dedicated to eradicating abuse of children.

www.iwf.org.uk – the Internet Watch Foundation (WP) works to remove illegal material from the internet.

A number of specialist websites contain general advice that may be of help to parents. These include www.nspcc.org.uk, www.barnardos.org.uk and www.beatbullying.org

www.Childline.org.uk or Childline 0800 1111 is another NSPCC support service. Using this website children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors online.

