

Guernsey Sports Commission Online Safety and Social Media Policy

Introduction

This policy provides guidance on how the Guernsey Sports Commission LBG (GSC) uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff and volunteers who work for us, and our participants, to behave online.

Aims

The aims of our online safety and social media policy are:

- To protect all children and young people involved with the Guernsey Sports Commission and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care
- To provide staff and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- To ensure our organisation is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online

Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and social media, the Guernsey Sports Commission will:

- Understand the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff and participants – when using websites, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication
- Be aware that it doesn't matter what device is being used for digital interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone or games console
- When using social media platforms (including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) & Instagram) ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines.
- Provide training for the person responsible for managing our organisation's online presence
- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures and incorporating online bullying (cyberbullying) in our anti-bullying policy.

Managing our online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password protected and at least 3 members of staff will have access to each account and password
- The accounts will be monitored by a designated person, who will be appointed by the GSC management team
- The designated person managing our online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead to advise on safeguarding requirements
- The designated person will remove inappropriate posts by participants, public or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as parents of any children involved)
- Identifying details such as a child's address, school name or phone numbers shouldn't be posted on social media platforms
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims
- Any concerns of participants, parents or the public about the running of our accounts will be directed to the designated person to address
- Parents will be asked to give their permission for us to communicate with their children through any means of digital communication
- Parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media
- All of the GSC accounts and email addresses will be appropriate and fit for purpose
- Video conferencing sessions will be password protected in order to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

What we expect of our staff and volunteers

- Staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- Staff should seek the advice of the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of internet or social media
- Staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children and young people to the designated person responsible for the GSC's online presence
- Staff should not "friend" or "follow" children or young people from personal accounts on social media
- Staff should make sure that content posted is accurate and appropriate, as young people may "follow" them on social media. The GSC recommends staff to keep their accounts private where possible
- Staff should not communicate with children and young people via personal accounts or private messages
- Communication with adult participants should not be carried out through personal social media accounts, staff should choose a more formal means of communication such as face-to-face or via a GSC email account or online platform

- At least one other member of staff and a parent/guardian should be copied into any emails sent to children or young people
- Emails should be signed off in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as “kisses” (x’s)
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to the GSC reporting procedures
- Smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy
- Mobile phones and devices should not be used by staff during sessions, unless specific use has been agreed with their line manager or in an emergency
- Staff and young people must not engage in “sexting” or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing
- Staff should record and report without delay any situation where they feel the actions of themselves / others (including young people) may have compromised the organisation’s or their own professional standing. Such incidents should be reported to their line manager

Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging), we’ll take the following precautions to ensure young people’s safety:

- Staff will avoid having children or young people’s personal mobile numbers and will instead seek contact through a parent or guardian
- We’ll seek parental permission if we need to contact children or young people directly; the purpose of contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon
- A method of accountability will be arranged, such as parents and other staff members being cc’d on emails, copies of texts also sent to parents or the GSC welfare officer etc
- A GSC phone should be used for contact with parents or young people, where possible
- Texts will be used for communicating information - such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events, which kit to bring etc. – and not to engage in conversation
- If a young person misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member in conversation, the member of staff will take the following steps:
 - End the conversation or stop replying
 - Suggest discussing the subject further at the next session or event
 - If concerned about the child or young person, provide contact details of the club’s lead welfare officer or appropriate agencies

Using mobile phones during sports activities

So that all children and young people can enjoy and actively take part in sports activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones during such activities. As part of this policy we will:

- Make children and young people aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with the organisation
- Advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a contact within the GSC who will be reachable should there be an emergency
- Explain to young people how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement

Use of other digital devices and programmes

The principles of this policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used – including computers, laptops, tablets, web-enabled games consoles and smart TVs – and whether an app, programme or website is used.

If any digital devices are used as part of activities within the organisation:

- We expect children and young people to adhere to the guidelines surrounding online use and behaviour set out in this policy
- We'll establish appropriate restrictions, more commonly known as “parental controls”, on any device provided to prevent misuse or harm

As an organisation, we commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.