

WATERSIDE GYMNASTICS CLUB

Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young Persons

Guidelines on the use of Electronic Communication e.g. Social Networking, Texting and e-mailing

Introduction:

Safeguarding and Child Protection has to be at the centre of any organisation working with children. Communicating with Young People, whether it is children or young adults, in the modern world brings about its own set of challenges. The increase in popularity of social networking, texting and e-mailing raises an increase in risk and potential dangers to Young People.

The Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) produces guidelines which cover the risks and benefits of communicating via text messaging, e-mailing and social network sites. British gymnastics adheres to its guidance and so we, in Waterside Gymnastics Club, must also adhere to it.

In its guidance, the CPSU acknowledges that modern forms of communicating produces a new set of risks to both children and adults. They produce a set of guidelines and good practice for social networking, text messaging and e-mailing.

Definitions:

In this guidance the term '**Adult**' refers to all over 18's who volunteer at this club. This includes Junior Coaches, Adult Coaches, Committee Members, Officers of the Club and Volunteer Helpers.

'**Electronic communication**' refers to any social networking media, any form of texting or messaging or any kind of e-mailing or communication via an electronic device.

A **Child** or **Young Person** is defined as a person under the age of 18.

Compliance:

If these guidelines are not adhered to Waterside Gymnastics Club cannot support an Adult should a relevant welfare issue arise. Our priority has to be the safeguarding of children. Adults have a responsibility to support and endorse this if they are in a position of respect and authority within the Club.

Guidance for Adults:

1. Social Networking

Waterside Gymnastics Club Adults are in a position of trust and responsibility and therefore should not be in contact with Young People through social networking sites if they hold a position within the Club in respect of that individual Young Person. This means:

- No Adult should have under 18's, for which they have a responsibility, on their personal Facebook or social network page at all, either as a friend or a contact.
- Should a Young Person request to become a named friend on your Social Networking Page or request that you become a named friend on the Young Person's Social Networking Page you should decline if any of the below apply:
 - You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child.
 - You hold a position of trust and responsibility in Waterside Gymnastics Club.
- No Adult should contact under 18's via social networking by posting messages or responding to posts.
- Whilst we understand that friendships occur between coaches and Young Person of a similar age (around the age of 18), we encourage Adults to protect themselves and the gymnasts by ceasing contact until that person is 18.

2. Texting and e-mailing

- No Adult shall communicate with a Young Person under the age of 18 via electronic communication **UNLESS there are exceptional circumstances**. In such a case as this the Adult concerned may communicate with an under 18 **ONLY if the parent consents and they also copy the communication to the Club Welfare Officer**.
- If a Child (under 18) communicates to a coach via text or email do not reply. Reply instead to the parent. Please also inform the Welfare Officer for the protection of the Child and Adult.

3. Use of YouTube / Video

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as any other media. We adhere to the British Gymnastics policy which can be found in our Club Handbook or on the British Gymnastics website.

Guidance for Children, Gymnasts and Young Persons under the age of 18

1

- Do not ask your Coach to be your social networking site friend – they will refuse as that would breach good practice.

2

- Do use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at www.ceop.gov.uk for some useful tips.

3

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

4

- 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. Restrict and customize what you share.

5

- Never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be: hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on; or may be used by other people in a way you did not intend or want

6

- Do not put pictures of other club members on the site as you may breach the Photography Policy. If you do wish to upload such a picture you must get the advice and consent of your parent, the other young person and their parent, and that of a club officer before even considering uploading such a photo.

7

- 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. Such technology is instant and this allows you as the user to react in the 'heat of the moment', where in the past you would have been required to write 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 to the individual concerned, as to do so may not only breach British Gymnastics Policy but also the law.

What to do if you have a concern

As a user of electronic communication, 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. Concerns may range from negative or abusive comments and cyber bullying to suspected grooming for sexual abuse.

If you wish to raise a concern from within the Club please contact the Child Welfare Officer.

Alternatively, the following is a list of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you can raise such concerns.

- **The Child Exploitation online Protection Unit (CEOP)** at www.ceop.gov.uk or by pressing the CEOP button on Facebook
- Childline 0800 1111 or www.Childline.org.uk
- www.childnet.org.uk which is a NSPCC support service specifically for Young People
- www.childline.org.uk is another NSPCC support service. Using this website, children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors online about any issues or problems they may be experiencing, using an application similar to Instant Messenger (IM).
- **Stop It Now** freephone 0808 1000 900
- **The Local Police or Children's Services** – their number appears in the phone book.
- **The NSPCC helpline** 0800 800 5000 or www.nspcc.org.uk for all adults concerned about the welfare or safety of a child.
- **The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)** www.iwf.org.uk The IWF was established by the internet industry to provide a UK internet hotline which can be anonymous for the public and IT professionals to report criminal online content in a secure and confidential way.