



WEBSITES & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Document Control Sheet

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CONTENTS

1.	GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS ON THE USE OF WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS	1
2.	WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY	1
3.	GUIDELINES FOR WEBSITES.....	1
4.	MESSAGE BOARDS & PUBLIC FORUMS.....	2
5.	GUIDELINES FOR MESSAGE BOARDS.....	2
6.	USE OF MOBILE PHONES.....	2
7.	USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES.....	3

1. GUIDANCE FOR CLUBS ON THE USE OF WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

With increased use of websites and social media sites as communication tools within sport it is important that guidance is given to ensure the safe use of these interactive social networks to protect everyone involved in your club. The information below is intended to provide guidance to your club on ways to protect your members while using these communication tools as well as providing information on what is deemed acceptable/unacceptable behaviour.

2. WEBSITE & SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Squash Ulster would recommend that every club agrees a club website and social media policy following discussions at your Club Management or Executive Committee and with members, including any junior club members. This Policy will promote your strategy on the safe use of the Internet and also outlines the parameters of behaviour you expect from those within and representing the Club, highlighting the consequences of breaching those parameters.

3. GUIDELINES FOR WEBSITES

- Decide at the outset what purpose your website serves.
- Appoint a web master to manage your web site on behalf of the club.
- Ensure that the web master is answerable to a member of the Club's Management Committee such as Chairperson, Secretary, PRO.
- The Club Management Committee should agree at the outset the style, design and content policy of the web site with the appointed web master, prior to going on-line.
- Agree if you will have a specific youth section and if so also agree the extent and the limitations of its content etc.
- Ensure that your practices in relation to the use of images and personal details are in line with the Club's Privacy Policy and GDPR. Your Club must have and display a privacy policy advising how the Club will use personal data.
- Consider the age of children and young people when deciding on the web site policy.

- Consult with the Club's Children Officer and/or Designated Safeguarding Officer when designing the web site and agreeing the usage policy and content material.
- Agree to review the overall maintenance and upkeep of the web site at regular intervals.
- Agree a procedure in the club for dealing with any complaints or concerns that may be raised about the content of your website.

4. MESSAGE BOARDS & PUBLIC FORUMS

Club websites often include a message board or other form of public forum. Such boards can add interest to a website and promote social networking, club camaraderie and interesting debates. However, they are not without their dangers and clubs should be aware of this and make decisions on accessibility to such forums.

Posts on such boards often use inappropriate language which is read by younger members. Derisive statements or criticism can be very hurtful and may be seen as form of bullying.

5. GUIDELINES FOR MESSAGE BOARDS

1. Decide if the forum is open to all or is only for registered members.
2. Ensure that moderators are appointed with the ability to delete inappropriate material.
3. Set out clear parameters for what is acceptable or not acceptable.
4. Appoint a person to deal with any complaints which may be brought by parents or young people in regard to published material.
5. Have systems in place to ban abusers of the board.

6. USE OF MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are often given to children for security, enabling parents to keep in touch and make sure they are safe. Young people value their phones highly as it offers a sense of independence. In addition, mobile phones allow quick and easy access which can make for safe and efficient ways to carry out club business. However, such technology also allows an increase in direct personal contact with young people, in some cases they have been used

to cross personal boundaries and cause harm to young people. Within clubs there is a need to encourage responsible and secure use of mobile phones by adults and young people.

As a young person remember:

1. If you receive an offensive photo, email or message, do not reply, save it, make a note of times and dates and tell a parent or Children's Officer/Safeguarding Officer within the club.
2. Be careful about who you give your number to and don't respond to unfamiliar numbers.
3. Change your phone number in cases of bullying or harassment.
4. Do not use your phone in certain situations- inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person e.g. in changing rooms.
5. Treat your phone as you would any other valuable item and protect from theft.

As a Coach / Leader remember:

1. Use group texts for communication among athletes and inform parents of this at the outset of the season. It may be more appropriate to communicate directly with a group of parents.
2. If it is not appropriate to have constant one-to-one communication with individual athletes.
3. Do not use your phone in certain situations- inappropriate use of your camera phone may cause upset or offence to another person e.g. in changing rooms.

7. USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are becoming increasingly more popular than websites to communicate information, results etc. They provide an easy method of communication and allow people to chat to each other. However they are not without their problems and all clubs, coaches/leaders should be aware that:

- Inappropriate, derogatory or defamatory remarks or inappropriate language or images should never be used.
- Clubs, leaders, managers and coaches should also warn young people about the language, remarks and or images which they say on these sites.
- Leaders and coaches should not engage in any inappropriate chat with young members nor should they use such sites to criticise a player's performance, or the opposition, umpires etc.
- Many funding bodies and external partners or sponsors access sites like this on a regular basis so be very careful of the messages you are communicating.
- Young people may do themselves and their club a disfavour if they are not careful about what they post.