



PHOTOGRAPHY, DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE

Sporting activities can play a big part in the lives of many young people and their families. Understandably achievements and special moments will be celebrated and documented by all of those involved. In some instances, it will also be helpful and appropriate to use photographs or videos as a tool to support skills and development.

However, we should always consider and be mindful of child protection and safeguarding risks attached to taking photographs and videos during an event and how this content will be shared and used. Clubs must ensure that the use of photography and videos comply with their duty of care towards protecting children and young people's personal data.

Potential risks can be minimised which will be outlined in this guidance document.

VIDEOS & PHOTOGRAPHY

Use of social media and taking photographs is largely a positive tool for promotion of rugby and recording of children's participation and enjoyment of the sport. However, there are risks associated and a few key principles should be followed.

Potential Risks:

- There is a greater risk of children and young people being identified when a photograph/video is shared including personal information (full name, address, school etc). This information could be used by individuals looking to locate, contact or groom a child
- Some children may be placed in local authority care, adoptive/foster family in which case it would be potentially dangerous to share information which would identify them
- Inappropriate photos or videos being taken in private situations (e.g. changing rooms, toilet facilities)
- There is no guarantee that any images/videos shared privately online will not be re-shared on another public domain
- It is hard to enforce best practice in a public place where you cannot control who will take and share videos or photographs

Best Practice

- Parental/guardian consent should always be sought for children under the age of 18. Ideally at the start of the season stating how photos/videos will be used, shared and stored (see example consent form on p5)
- If parental/guardian consent is expressly not given the club should manage sensitively so the child does not feel excluded
- Never share personal information alongside an image which would identify a child or young person (full name, age, school etc)
- Children should always be pictured in suitable kit with the focus being on the sporting activity rather than the child or young person
- Images must not be inappropriate or of a sexual or exploitative nature
- Children should be featured as a team rather than individually
- Share the relevant guidance with your club members and lead by example. If photographs/videos are being taken in a public place (e.g. a park) this is very hard to police and to enforce
- Store images and videos securely

SOCIAL MEDIA

Clubs must ensure there is nothing on its website or other social media platforms which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. A club is legally and morally responsible for its online content. As part of using the internet and social media, clubs will:

- Understand the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- When using social media platforms (including Facebook, Twitter / X and Instagram), ensure that clubs adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines

Managing online presence

Clubs should adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 club committee members will have access to each account and password
- The accounts will be monitored by a designated person who will seek advice from the club safeguarding coordinator on safeguarding requirements
- Inappropriate posts by children, volunteers or staff must be removed
- Account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only invited club members can see their content
- Identifying details such as a child's home address, school name or telephone number must not be posted on social media platforms
- Clubs will make sure children and young people are aware of who manages the social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account

- Parents must be asked for permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media via the consent form

What we expect of coaches and volunteers

- Coaches and volunteers should seek advice from the club Welfare Manager if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- Coaches and volunteers should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people from personal accounts on social media
- Coaches and volunteers must ensure any content posted is accurate and appropriate
- Coaches and volunteers must not communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages
- Any disclosures of abuse reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as face-to-face disclosure, according to club reporting procedures
- Coaches, volunteers and young people must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing
- Clubs should make children and young people aware of social media policy

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), clubs will take the following precautions to ensure young people's safety:

- The club uses the Spond platform to communicate with all players. This has the facility to allow a parent or guardian access to all messages which have been received and sent by children and young people
- Coaches and volunteers will avoid having children or young people's personal mobile numbers and seek contact through a parent or guardian.
- Any group chats that are created to communicate regarding children and young people under the age of 16 must be between clubs and parent/guardians
- Young people over the age of 16 at the club can create a group chat at the club's discretion. Any group chats that are made need to be monitored by either the club CPO or two youth coaches.
- Copies of texts also be made available to the club's CPO or to parents
- Texts will be used for communicating information – such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events, which kit to bring or practice timings – and not to engage in conversation
- If a young person misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member or volunteer in conversation, the member of staff or volunteer will take the following steps:
 - End the conversation or stop replying
 - Suggest discussing the subject further at the next practice or event
 - If concerned about the child or young person, provide details for the club's child protection officer or appropriate agencies

Use of other digital devices and programmes

These principles apply no matter which current or future technology is used. If any digital devices are used as part of activities within the club, establish appropriate restrictions, more commonly known as 'parental controls', on any device provided to prevent misuse or harm.

Useful contacts

NSPCC Helpline

0808 800 5000

Fiona Devlin
Welfare Manager

Example Parental/Guardian Consent Form

You might want to include asking for parental/guardian consent at the start of the season along with any new membership documents/fees.

Parental/Guardian Photography and Video Consent Form for Children

Name of Club: _____

We recognise the need to ensure the welfare and safety of all young people and children taking part in any activity associated with our rugby club.

In accordance with our child protection policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of young people to be taken without the consent of the parents/carers and children. We would like to ask for your consent to take photographs/videos throughout the season which may contain images of your child.

The club will take generic group photographs and will not publish any identifying information that could be used to identify your child (e.g. name, age, school etc)

If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform us immediately.

I consent to having my child photographed or recorded for this event.

Child's Name: _____

Parent or Legal Guardian's Name: _____

Parent or Legal Guardian's Signature and Date: _____