# ONLINE SAFETY

## Online technology continues to advance and change the way people communicate and interact on a daily basis.

Sports organisations, coaches and others involved in providing activities for children and young people are increasingly using the internet and social media to promote sport and communicate with them.

Communication online provides benefits and risks, and all online communications and promotions should be in accordance with this guidance and fully risk assessed.

**There are several safeguarding risks for children and young people including:**

- The possibility that personal information can be used to identify and locate a child offline.

- Use of social media and online communications for grooming a young person with the intention of sexually abusing them.

- Exposure to inappropriate content, including pornography, racist or hate material or violent behaviour.

- Glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking.



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# It is therefore important to minimise any risk through a combination of awareness raising, for young people and adults, and clear guidelines to support online safety.

**To prevent online safeguarding risks it is important to:**

- Be open and transparent in all communications, whether online or by traditional means.

- Make sure your use of social media as an organisation is in line with your aims and values.

- Ensure staff and volunteers who manage the organisation's online presence have appropriate training on the types of technology, sites and applications young people use – the NSPCC's **Keeping children safe online** course offers an overview of the platforms used by young people and the risks associated with them.

- Address the safeguards that affect young people through clear guidelines for them to follow, as well as informing them of who they can contact if they have any concerns, by developing an **acceptable use statement** and writing online behaviour into your codes of conduct.

- Equip young people with knowledge about the risks to them and how to deal with and report any concerns by referring them to **Childline's resources**.

- Develop guidance for staff and volunteers that includes advice on how to behave online when representing the organisation and how to respond to inappropriate behaviour – you can include this guidance in your **online safety policy** and in codes of conduct for staff.

- Think about how social media is used in your organisation both during activities or events and outside of normal 'office hours', and make sure that's reflected in your policy and procedures.

- Reference your online safety policy in your safeguarding policy and make sure staff are aware of your reporting procedures for online abuse.

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# When communicating electronically, through email, text, applications, instant messaging, on social media, etc it is important to follow the following key principles:

- Adults should not communicate on a one-to-one basis with young people, but instead communicate through group messages where possible, copying in parents.

- Adults should limit all electronic communication to volleyball related matters only.

- Parental consent is required for communication between the adult and young person.

- All staff, volunteers, parents and members should behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting. They should not post or discuss unfavourable comments about coaches, players, any helper or volunteer, parent or club.

- Electronic communication should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise Volleyball England, its members, or clubs and to do so would be in breach of Volleyball England codes of conduct and therefore subject to disciplinary action.

- Volleyball England members in a position of trust and/or responsibility should not have young people as friends/fans/followers on personal social networking sites when the primary reason for their relationship is volleyball.

- Clubs using social networking sites must only accept members of the clubs as their friends/fans/followers or contacts on the social networking site/page/group. This must be stated on the site and must be set up for that reason. It is important the site's privacy settings are set ensuring that an outside adult may not be able to make contact with a young person by first gaining access via the club social networking site.

- Young members should be encouraged to set their privacy settings and not accept requests either from people unknown to them or from adults within volleyball. Likewise, adults should not accept requests from young people involved in volleyball. Moreover, all social networking sites are restricted to people over 13 years of age.

# All safeguarding concerns around online communication or interaction should be reported following the Volleyball England procedures.