



GUIDANCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

1. Social Media

1.1 Social media, when used properly, is exciting and opens up a lot of opportunities, but at times we know it can seem very intimidating. The majority of people now have access to Facebook, Twitter, text messages, Blackberry messenger, Snapchat, WhatsApp and personal emails. The information on social media is out-dated almost as soon as it is written due to how quickly the Internet is progressing. But there are general rules we can all follow to make sure those using social media are safe.

2. Professionals, Coaches and Officials

2.1 Facebook and Twitter accounts are great for promoting your clubs and contacting members, as well as being a fun way to unwind and stay in touch with friends, but it's vital that these two worlds are kept separate. You should have separate club and personal pages; all contact with players should be through the former, and strictly in relation to coaching and games. You should also adjust the privacy settings for your personal account so that content is only visible to accepted 'friends'. This will keep younger players safe from material that may be unsuitable for them, and will prevent your online interactions from being treated as suspicious. Younger players may see you as a friend, and may request to be your 'friend' on a social media site. It's important that you direct them towards the club page and that all contact is purely professional. What they might consider innocent, friendly contact probably won't be seen as such by their parents and possibly other club members.

2.2 When using sites such as Facebook and Twitter, it would be wise to avoid promotional material that targets children, as the minimum age required to set up accounts on these sites is thirteen. It's also important to be mindful of any content that you post online via your club page; remember that you're representing the club and GBWR. It may seem obvious, but ensure that nothing you post could cause personal distress or be seen as inappropriate for children. If you wouldn't put it on the club message board, it doesn't belong on the club's social media pages.

2.3 If you need to contact a player under the age of 18 via text or email, you should be keeping similar things in mind. All contact should be in relation to Wheelchair Rugby. Should you need to contact young players, you should make sure you have contact details for a parent as well, so that any messages can be sent to both. Again, the key is to remember that if you wouldn't leave it on a note on the message board, you shouldn't be sending it in a message to a player.

2.4 If you suspect that someone is using social media in an unsafe or inappropriate manner, you should report their behaviour to your club's Welfare Officer, or to GBWR's Lead Safeguarding Officer. If you believe a child is at risk of harm, inform the police immediately. You will be required to complete an incident record form which can be found in GBWR's Safe and Sound Safeguarding Policy.

2.5 Clubs should ensure all coaches and those who contact children should sign and agree to GBWR's Code of Conduct.



3. Parents / Carers

3.1 This generation is growing up with the Internet as part of their everyday lives. It's a great place for them to learn, to have fun and to chat with their friends. Of course, it's important to make sure that they're safe while they do it.

3.2 Remember: it is against some social media sites rules for your child to have an account if they're under thirteen years old. This is to prevent them from being exposed to potentially inappropriate content. You will find all you need to know about keeping young people safe on Facebook on their official safety page for parents: <https://www.facebook.com/safety/groups/parents/> (Other social media sites will have guidance on age restrictions)

3.3 There are some key tips to help significantly reduce the risks involved with social media and the internet. Make sure that your family computer is in a main living area, and the screen is positioned so that you can see what's going on. Google have some more advice on their family safety pages: <http://www.google.co.uk/familysafety/advice.html>.

3.4 Most importantly of all, it's important that your child feels they can talk to someone if they are being bullied online, or if they've been exposed to something that makes them upset or uncomfortable. You may also want to have a look at the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre's guide to the internet for parents and carers: <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/Parentsold/>.

- Make sure you are aware of who your child has contact with online and via text;
- Be aware of the GBWR's expectations for all its staff in relation to the use of social media and particularly in relation to contact with children; and
- Talk to your children about using social media.

3.5 See the link below to the digital parenting website by Vodafone. The Digital parenting guides are available to download or order. The resource is updated annually and is a useable guide to stay up to date on new areas of social media. <http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents.html>

4. Children and Young People

4.1 The Internet is a great place to learn and to have fun with your friends, and the best way to have fun is to make sure that you stay safe. There are lots of thing you can do to make sure you and your friends are safe. You should think about the points below whenever you use the Internet, or speak to people online or by text:

- If someone isn't your friend in real life, they are not your friend on the Internet. Be careful when accepting friend requests
- Sometimes people on the Internet aren't who they say they are. Remember 'Stranger Danger' still applies on the internet
- Remember to change your privacy settings so that only your friends can see information about you, your wall posts and your photos
- If someone is sending you messages or texts that you are worried about, you should tell your parents, an adult you trust, your teacher or your Club Welfare Officer



- Remember that your coach is a professional, just like your teachers. They should not be your friend on Facebook, and should not be texting or messaging you unless it is completely about Wheelchair Rugby, such as when they are arranging a game or training session
- Bullying can happen online too, and it's known as cyber-bullying. If this happens to you, or someone you know, you should tell an adult that you can trust. Refer to GBWR's Anti-Bullying policy for more information. Have a look at the Think You Know page on the internet for more information about staying safe online: <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>.
- You should never meet someone you have met on social media site. Even if you feel like you know them very well. Speak to an adult if someone is asking to meet you

5. Social Media: Dos and Don'ts

5.1 All who have contact with young people:

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the benefits of social media in promoting your club. • Keep your photos and personal information private. • Have separate social media accounts for club and personal use. • Apply the same standards of professionalism to your social media as all other parts of your coaching / officiating / club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send text messages to juniors without including their parents. • Send inappropriate text messages or post messages on social media that are offensive, nasty or derogatory in any way. • Send private messages to children and young people via social media. • Invite children and young people to become "friends".

5.2 Young people:

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your photos and personal information private • Conduct yourself in a respectful and courteous manner on social media as you would on at home, in school or playing wheelchair rugby • Talk to your parents and/or friends if you are worried about anything on a social media site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send inappropriate text messages or post messages on social media that are offensive, nasty or derogatory in any way • Accept any friend requests from people you don't know or you feel uncomfortable accepting. • Meet any one you have met on a social media site.