



SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

There has been a growing awareness in sport of the increasing communication by adults and young people on the rapidly developing social networking sites and how this media has become a feature of social communication. There are both positive and negative aspects to using social networking sites that BG clubs and members should be aware of.

It is important to acknowledge that if used properly, social media can be a very effective tool. However, British Gymnastics has identified a number of issues that have led to both disciplinary and safeguarding concerns which stem from the improper or inappropriate use of such sites by its members.

Coaches, Judges, helpers/volunteers and other officers in a position of trust and responsibility in respect of children in our club:

- iAM members in a position of trust and/or responsibility (as defined in the BG Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy) should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they hold such a position in respect of that individual young person.
- Should a young person in your club 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 the club.
 - Your contact with the child is through iAM and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.
- Social networking sites should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise BG or iAM, iAM members or BG clubs and to do so would be in breach of BG Standards of Conduct.
- The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as any other media – see the BG Photography Policy in the Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.

Coaches who have children that they coach in the club.

The issue has been raised that parents are becoming members of social networking sites that their children sign up to for security reasons in order to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's site. This will give the parent access via their child's site to all children listed as friends of their child. It would not be appropriate for us to prevent a parent who is also a coach in his/her child's club from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore in such cases the coach needs to follow the following:

- The coach concerned should not have direct contact with gymnasts other than their own child through the social networking site.
- The coach should not accept such gymnasts as friends on his/her own site.

- The coach should inform the Club Welfare Officer of this arrangement.

Coaches/Judges/Club officials who are under 18.

For young people aged 16 or 17 it is the view of iAM, that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, judges or officials may be detrimental in their professional development in their role in the club.

If the parent of a young person in a position of responsibility aged 16/17 and the young person themselves requests to have contact with an adult club officer or coach for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role the club should:

- Gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned.
- The named adult must sign an agreement to keep the contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club.
- All such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian or club welfare officer)
- If the young person or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action must be taken by the club to address the concern and/or the breach referred to BG or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

Astrid Academy of Movement members under the age of 18

- Do not ask your coach, judge, helper/volunteer or club official to be your social networking site friend– they will refuse as that would breach good practice and the Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy.
- Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at www.ceop.gov.uk for some useful tips.
- Consider who you are inviting 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.
- 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.
- Never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be:
 - Hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on
 - Used by other people in a way you did not intend or want.
- Do not put pictures of other club members on the site within the club setting as you may breach the club Photo Policy.
- Always be aware that social networking sites are a method of communication like letter writing and the spoken word.

Members found to be abusing or working outside of these good practice guidelines, may be subject to disciplinary action or investigation by the Club as outlined in the Complaints & Disciplinary Policy/Procedures.

Any concerns:

As a user of a social networking site, 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.

BG has drawn up a list below of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you can raise such concerns.

www.thinkuknow.co.uk : the main UK Government website

www.ceop.police.uk : the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)

www.iwf.org.uk : the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

www.nspcc.org.uk , www.nch.org.uk , www.barnardos.org.uk , www.beatbullying.org & www.parentlineplus.org.uk

BG through the Ethics and Welfare Department on 0845 129 7 129 ext 2347

Childline 0800 1111 or www.Childline.org.uk is another NSPCC support service.

Stop It Now freephone 0808 1000 900 or www.stopitnow.org.uk

The Local Police or Children's Services – their number appears in the phone book.

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Approved by: Hannah Reader