

29er UK Social Media Policy

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Guidance and Recommendations for Clubs and Coaches, Volunteers, Sailors and their support team, Officials and Designated Officers

For the purpose of this Best Practice note, the term 'coach' is used to apply to all adults working with young people (U18) in the sport of sailing.

For the purpose of this Best Practice note, electronic communication includes but is not restricted to; contact with young people via email, text messaging, social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc.) and messaging systems (e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc.).

Introduction

As technology has developed, the internet and its range of services can be accessed through various devices including mobile phones, tablets, computers and game consoles. Although digital communication methods have many positive uses, they can also be used in child sexual exploitation to groom and abuse a child, or in the distribution of indecent images of children. In addition, electronic communication is being used more and more by young people as a means of bullying their peers. All coaches working with young people in sailing are asked to adhere to the following best practice guidelines. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken as necessary against any individual who does not adhere to these guidelines.

Conduct when communicating online

Our social media channels are a place for our community to come together to engage with us and each other in a positive way. It is important that everyone does their bit to keep these channels as friendly as possible. When commenting online, whether on social media platforms, websites, WhatsApp groups or other forms of social media, please follow these guidelines:

- Be respectful of others, their opinions and identities.
- Debate ideas, kindly, but don't attack the individual.
- Do not post content that is discriminatory, obscene, inflammatory, harassing, hateful, threatening, profane or personally abusive.
- Do not post anything that could be libellous or defamatory.
- Remember that anything you post could be sent to others. Be mindful of what you post!
- Don't post adverts for commercial products or services.
- Do not post repeatedly about issues that are off-topic i.e. spam.
- If you are concerned about anything you have seen in any of the 29er UK social media channels, please contact the 29er UK Marketing Officer or Welfare Officer in the first instance, or a trusted adult within the 29er Class Association.
- You can also contact Childline on 0800 1111 or via other contact methods shown on www.childline.org.uk

Guidelines for communicating with children under 18 years of age.

It is not recommended for adult coaches to communicate on a one to one basis with sailors under the age of 18 years by:

- text message
- e-mail
- social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter or Instagram)
- electronic communication apps (e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat etc.)
- video conferencing software and Apps

All electronic communication by the above methods should include a copy to a third party, whether:

- as part of a larger group chat
- another coach if the sailor is part of a squad
- the <18 sailor's parent/carer,
- Another class association parent or committee member.

This applies also to any messages sent in the case of emergency - if messages are sent without including a third party, a copy must be sent to a third party afterwards.

Coaches should limit all electronic communication to sailing-related matters.

All coaches, staff, volunteers, parents and members should always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting. (see 29er UK Misconduct & Resolution Policy and 29er UK Anti-Bullying Policy)

They should not post or discuss unfavourable comments about other coaches, sailors, any helper or volunteer, parents or club/s.

Social Networking platforms

It is recommended that coaches do not have sailors under the age of 18 as their 'friends' on social networking sites where the primary reason for the relationship is sailing and they have a position of trust in relation to that young person.

Where coaches have recently been a member of the class association as sailors themselves, and have relatively recently turned 18, we understand they are likely to have friendships with <18 sailors. As per the 'Guidelines for communicating with children under 18 years of age' above, their chat should still be responsible and respectful, and not unfavourable towards others.

Followers of the 29er UK Class Instagram account must be over the age of 13.

Coaches are in the position of a role model and are advised to consider carefully what they post. This also applies to comments left on other people's pages and the sharing of photographs.

Electronic Communication Apps

Communication between coaches and sailors

Coaches may only set up a WhatsApp group with sailors under the age of 18, if there are 2 or more coaches in the WhatsApp group. They must either invite the parents to the group or make the parents of the sailors aware of the group that has been set up.

Sailors should post any online communication with their coaches on the group chat and not individually directly with any of the coaches. If sailors wish to discuss anything privately they should do so either via their parent/carer's WhatsApp account, or by setting up a chat group with the coach and parent, or directly in person.

Communication from the 29er Class to its members

In order to keep the WhatsApp groups safe from unwelcome posts from strangers, the following good practice is followed by the 29er Class Administrator.

1. A new 29er Volunteers Group is set up after each event and any old groups are deleted.
2. After an event is finished, the 29er Events Info group is renamed to reflect the next event, e.g. '29er events Info - GP3 Rutland'. This not only saves people having to join a new group every time, but it also means the chat group is kept current and therefore less likely to be intruded upon.
3. The 29er Class Administrator monitors the groups and has set all the committee members to have the right to be able to remove members, so that if anything inappropriate is posted, it can be responded to quickly.

Video Conferencing software and apps

- Where live video chat or conferencing is used to communicate with groups of sailors under 18 years the following guidance applies:
- One to one contact is not allowed, only group sessions are sanctioned through this media
- The contact details should be sent via the parent (never send the links/meeting requests directly to the child)
- The parent should open and close the session using their own phone/computer
- Ensure another adult (parent/coach) joins the session – never undertake a live video chat/conference with children by yourself
- Ensure everyone can be seen at the same time
- Share details of each session with the Class Welfare Officer (the relevant club is the one at which the child is a member). The Welfare Officer can join the meeting without your permission.
- Location: Neither the child or the coach should live chat/conference from a bedroom
- Everyone should be appropriately dressed
- Be aware of what can be seen on your camera (set the background to blurred where the App allows)
- Group contact should be no more frequent than once per week
- A plan of what will be discussed etc. should be circulated in advance along with rules on behaviour/conduct in the session and what to do and who to speak to if they have a concern about anything occurring within the session
- Follow the additional security guidance issued from time to time relative to platforms such as; Zoom, etc.

Further information

[Club Guide to Social Media Use with Children and Young People](#) is advice from the RYA [Think U Know](#) offers advice and guidance to people who work or volunteer with children. [Safer Internet Centre](#) provides online safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe online.