

Social Media Guidance

Social media allows clubs to advertise to a wider audience, celebrate their successes and interact with their members in creative and engaging ways. These benefits make the use of one or more social media platforms an attractive prospect for many clubs.

However, improper or careless usage can expose clubs to both civil and legal action and put their members at risk. This risk is further increased where children and young people are engaged in club activities.

Below are some guidelines clubs might want to follow, but they are by no means exhaustive. If you require further support on the use and management of social media platforms please contact UK Ultimate.

Use of Images

Photos offer an excellent way to showcase the activities of your club and promote future events. However, permissions must be held for all images featuring under 18s.

- Under 18s cannot consent to their images being captured, stored or used as promotional material.
- Written permissions must be sought from the parents/guardians/carers of all under 18s featured in photographs.
- This permission should clearly state how the images will be stored, who will have access to those images and the parent's right to request those images to be destroyed at any time.
- The permission must also make clear how the images may be used. This includes which social media/websites they may be posted to, and the visibility of that location (public, private – managed membership, private – invite only). Again, the parent has a right to request their removal from any of these locations at any time.
- Photos must only be used within the stated permissions. If you wish to use a photo for a different purpose than those originally specified, additional written permissions must be sought for all under 18s featured.

Managing Access

Social media presents the opportunity to boost awareness and visibility of your club, and its achievements. However, it is important that consideration is given to the audience you reach with all shared content.

- When giving consent for images to be posted and shared, individuals must be made aware of the intended audience for those posts.
- It is often possible to limit the visibility of posts and images on social media to authorised individuals only. This feature can make these sites a safer place to host content.
 - If content is to be shared more widely (e.g. on an open website), permission cannot be implied by consent to share on a closed group.
- For at-risk individuals (both children and adults), the sharing of images and other posts which reveal their locations, upcoming schedule or engagement in activities can put them at further risk.
- Always ensure that you have permissions in place for the sharing of images and updates with given audiences, including whether such images or updates will be geotagged.

Managing Comments

A major attraction of social media is the ability to share and interact with content, views and opinions. However, this facility can also be abused, with individuals able to target others.

- Online abuse and cyber-bullying can take many forms, and may look different to different people.
- If an individual feels threatened, victimised or uncomfortable as a result of a post or comment made on social media, they have the right to have their concerns taken seriously and investigated.
- In addition, as a club, you may feel that certain content and comments are unsuitable for your public forum.
- There are a number of ways in which inappropriate content can be dealt with, depending on the nature, the individual responsible and severity.
- If the individual responsible is part of the club, you may wish to handle it internally by removing the offending content/post before approaching them directly to discuss their actions, the reason their behaviour was deemed inappropriate and the expectations placed on future posts.
- If the individual responsible is not part of the club, or they are repeatedly posting content deemed inappropriate, many social media websites have robust procedures in place to block and report individuals. This website lists the action which can be taken for the major social media networks:
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-social-networks/>
- If the content posted is considered to constitute or incite a criminal offence (including posts involving or encouraging prejudice against individuals and groups), it can be reported to the police.
- In all cases, ensure that you keep written records of all action taken and conversations held (as you would with any safeguarding issue).

UK Ultimate recommends that clubs provide guidance for their members on the use of social media. This includes:

- Advice for those posting on behalf of the club regarding suitable content and tone of posts.
- Guidance for users on the content which will or will not be allowed (some content, such as political commentary, may not be offensive, but may cause division).
- Clear procedures for all members to follow should they wish to flag any content for removal, or report content and individuals for abuse. It is likely that such a process will involve the club's Safeguarding Officer, and they may wish to seek specialist safeguarding training for an online context.