

# BISHOP'S STORTFORD SWIMMING CLUB

(Affiliated to Swim England East Region)



## BSSC Social Networking Policy

### 1. BACKGROUND

There has been a growing awareness in sport of the increasing communication by adults and young people on social networking sites and how this media has become a feature of social communication.

There are risks associated with these developments, and Swim England 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.

Swim England recognise that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and instant messaging tools such as WhatsApp and Snapchat, continue to grow rapidly and are increasingly being used as a communication tool of choice by young people and adults. Whilst these technologies provide exciting opportunities, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

The purpose of this policy is to provide best practice to all BSSC coaches/teachers/volunteers/officials, club members and parents on the use of social networking sites as they relate to that individual's role in the club. This policy will set down acceptable use for all BSSC created social networking communication platforms and the personal social media of members and parents. It also includes Swim England guidance on photography.

### 2. TECHNOLOGIES

This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies: -

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Heja
- Teamer
- YouTube
- WhatsApp
- BSSC Website
- Personal Web Sites and Blogs

### 3. PRINCIPLES OF USE

The following rules must be adhered to by all users: -

1. At all times the rights of other people must be respected.
2. No derogatory or offensive comments in relation to BSSC or any other swimming club will be posted on any social media site.
3. No comments criticising or verbally abusing swimmers, coaches, officials or Club Members within BSSC or any other club will be tolerated.
4. The posting of photographs onto the club's external social media platforms such as the Bishop's Stortford Swimming Club Facebook page, Twitter or Instagram is not allowed, as they may be in breach of the Swim England Photography Policy (Appendix 1). Any photographs should be forwarded to the Communications team ([comms@bsswimclub.org.uk](mailto:comms@bsswimclub.org.uk)). Photographs will then be posted, or permission granted to post, after having regard to the Swim England guidance on the publishing of photographs (see Appendix 1).
5. Parents and members posting photographs on the Internal BSSC Facebook page (BSSC Members only) should adhere to the Swim England Photography Guidance (Appendix 1). Any photographs in breach of the policy will be removed by the administrators.
6. No content will be posted, or action taken on any social media technology platform that infringes or violates someone else's rights or otherwise violates the law.
7. No false information will be posted on any of the club's social media platforms.
8. No content that is hateful, threatening, or pornographic; incites violence; or contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence is acceptable.
9. No information that contains alcohol-related or other mature content (including advertisements) is allowed to be posted.

### 4. OFFICIAL USE OF BSSC OWNED SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Use of the Bishop's Stortford Swimming Club social media sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) will be limited to named individuals, and governed by the Communications Team and the following guidelines:

- Should a young person from BSSC request to become a named friend on one of the club's social networking sites, or request that BSSC become a named friend on the young person's social networking site that request will be denied.
- The BSSC social media accounts (such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook) will not follow any individual BSSC swimmers or individual swimmers from other clubs. GB Team Members and other International swimmers may be followed.
- The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise Swim England members or clubs and to do so may be in breach of Swim England Rules and Regulations.
- The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in the Swim England Photography Policy (Appendix 1).

### 5. INDIVIDUAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY COACHES, TEACHERS, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER STAFF

BSSC operates in accordance with the Swim England [Wavepower 2020-2023](#). However, the basic information for use of social media by Coaches, Teachers, Poolside volunteers and other officers is as follows.

As a coach, teacher or other employee or volunteer of the organisation, you should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they are a member of the organisation you work for.

Should a young person in your club request to become a named friend on your social networking page or requests that you become a named friend on the young person's social networking, 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 at the club;
- Your contact with the child is through the club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.

Social network sites should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise swimmers, coaches, officials, club members or other clubs and to do so would be a breach of this policy.

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the Swim England Photography Guidance (outlined in Appendix 1).

#### 5.1 COACHES, TEACHERS, AND OTHER STAFF WHO ARE UNDER 18

Swim England recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool for teachers, coaches and other staff within clubs to share information with other coaches, teachers or staff. If, however, the coach, teacher or staff member is under the age of 16, while they may be a colleague, the requirements of the first two bullet points in section 5 must be adhered to.

If the young coach/teacher/staff member is aged 16 or 17, it is the view of Swim England that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, teachers or staff may be detrimental in their professional development in their role at the club.

Therefore, in such cases, 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:

1. Gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned;
2. Ensure 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;
3. Ensure all such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian or welfare officer); and
4. Ensure that 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.

## 5.2 COACHES WHO ARE BETWEEN 18 AND 21

Swim England recognises that many young coaches aged between 18 and 21 will have been members themselves before becoming a coach and have been friends with their fellow members, some of whom will be between the ages of 16 and 17. It is therefore plausible they will have contact details for those members and be friends with them on social networking sites, and be able to communicate via other methods of electronic communication.

In this circumstance, Swim England accepts it would be inappropriate to require such friends to be removed from their social networking sites. Therefore, in such cases:

- If a coach aged between 18 and 21 had friends on their social networking site that were/are members aged 16 or 17 prior to undertaking the role of coach, Swim England does not expect them to remove those members from their listed friends.
- In such circumstances the coach is advised to inform the welfare officer and head coach.
- The head coach should make every effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

## 6. INDIVIDUAL USE – SWIMMERS

BSSC operates in accordance with the Swim England [Wavepower 2020-2023](#).

However, the basic information for all swimmers is as follows.

- No mobile phones or devices that can capture images are to be used by swimmers in the changing room areas or poolside at any time, save if express permission is sought and obtained from a coach or welfare officer.
- Any swimmer inappropriately using a phone will be given a verbal warning and asked to adhere to the rules. A phone can be confiscated by the coach for the remainder of that session, or until an appropriate time is available for discussion with the swimmer/ parent/carer as appropriate.
- Social network sites should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise swimmers, coaches, officials, club members or other clubs and to do so would be a breach of this policy.
- The publishing of a photograph or video footage on any social networking site is governed by the Swim England Photographic Policy (outlined in Appendix 1).

### 6.1 SPECIFIC GUIDANCE TO MEMBERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18

- Do not ask your club coach or teacher to be your social networking site friend – they will refuse as that would breach good practice.
- Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.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.
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- Always consider that any communication, comments, photos and video clips posted on a social networking site may be

shared with more people than you originally intended.

- Never share pictures of yourself or your friends that you wouldn't be happy for your family to see. Also never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that:
  - May be hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on;
  - May be used by other people in a way you did not intend or want;
  - Other people may find inappropriate.
- Do not upload images of other members taking part in club training, activities or events as you may breach the Swim England Photography Guidance (Appendix 1). If you do wish to upload such content, you must first seek the advice and consent of your parents, the consent of the other young person(s) and their parents, and an officer of the club before taking any action. This will not prevent you having images of your friends from the club on your personal social networking site, as long as they were taken outside of the sporting arena. Even so, it is still a good idea to check that any person in the image, and their parents, are happy for you to upload the image.

Always be aware that social networking sites are a method of communication like letter writing and the spoken word. They are bound by the same laws and rules. The delivery of social networking content is instantaneous, and this can sometimes result in users reacting in the 'heat of the moment', and your content/comments may spread far from that of your own social network of friends. This is a major difference between the present and the past in which you would have written a letter which would have taken time and allowed for you to think again before sending. So never place a comment on the internet that you would not put in writing or say to the individual concerned face to face, as to do so may not only breach Swim England Policy but also the law.

## 7. INDIVIDUAL USE – PARENTS

BSSC operates in accordance with Swim England [Wavepower 2020-2023](#). However, the basic information for Parents is as follows.

### 7.1 GUIDANCE TO PARENTS OF BSSC MEMBERS UNDER THE AGE OF 18

There have been occasions where parents of Swim England members have used social networking sites to criticise or verbally abuse swimming clubs, its officers, officials, coaches, teachers, and/or swimmers in an inappropriate and unacceptable manner. This has in some cases led the person who is subject of the verbal abuse to take action through statutory agencies or statutory legislation to address the comments made.

Swim England have produced a parent's Code of Conduct along with the Guidance to Parents that states:

"Parents are expected to behave responsibly as a spectator at all training sessions, events and activities, and treat members, coaches, committee members and parents of other members of any aquatics organisation, be that your child's organisation or not, with due respect in order to meet Swim England commitment to equality and diversity."

Parents should be aware that posting any content on a social networking site that breaches the above requirements may breach the parent's Code of Conduct.

### 7.2 COACHES/POOLSIDE VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER OFFICIALS IN A POSITION OF TRUST AND RESPONSIBILITY WHO HAVE CHILDREN THAT SWIM AT BSSC

Many parents are becoming 'friends' with their children on social networking profile for security reasons, to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's profile. This may then give the parent access to the profiles of other children listed as 'friends' of their child. It would not be appropriate for Swim England to prevent a parent who is also an employee at the organisation where his/her child is a member from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore, in such cases:

- the parent concerned should not have direct contact with those swimmers through the social networking site;
- where the parent has access to their child's social networking site (i.e. knows the username and password) they must not contact any other children under the pretence of being their child
- the parent should not accept their child's friends as friends on their own social networking site;
- the parent should inform the Welfare Officer of this arrangement.

## 8. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

To ensure that all sites are used in good spirit and to the benefit of the Club, all sites will be monitored by the Communications Team and other administrators. The right to remove and/or delete comments and postings that are deemed inappropriate remains with the nominated Administrators, the Communications Team and BSSC Committee.

Those holding responsibility within BSSC have a duty to bring to the attention of the Administrators or Communications Team (or Welfare Officer, if appropriate) any individual who is found to be in breach of this policy.

## 9. SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES, SOCIAL MEDIA AND SPORT: GUIDELINES FOR SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The CPSU Briefing Document Social networking services, social media and sport: Guidelines for safeguarding children and young people (2009) gives more in depth Guidance on social networking sites and can be accessed via the Child Protection in Sport Unit website at [www.cpsu.org.uk](http://www.cpsu.org.uk).

## 10. WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE 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. The nature of these concerns may vary but should these concerns be connected to BSSC then please discuss them with the BSSC Welfare Officer ([welfare@bsswimclub.org.uk](mailto:welfare@bsswimclub.org.uk)).

Alternatively, depending on the nature of your concerns, a list of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you or your child can raise such concerns has been provided below: -

- The National Crime Agency: CEOP Command (formerly the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) at [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) or by pressing the CEOP button on Facebook or on Swim England Child Power website.
- Swimline Swim England/NSPCC Child Protection helpline 0808 100 4001.
- If you are under 18 use the 'Your Chance to Talk' form on the Child Power section of Swim England website.
- Childline 0800 1111 or [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk).
- The local police or Children's Services – their number appears in the phone book or dial 101.
- The NSPCC helpline 0800 800 5000 or [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).
- The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk). The IWF was established to provide a UK internet hotline which can be anonymous for the general public and IT professionals to report criminal online content in a secure and confidential way. They work in partnership with other agencies to minimize the availability of this content, specifically:
  - Child sexual abuse images hosted anywhere in the world.
  - Criminally obscene adult content hosted in the UK.
  - Incitement to racial hatred content hosted in the UK.
  - Non-photographic child sexual abuse images hosted

## Appendix 1: BSSC and Swim England Photography Swimmers Guidance

This guidance applies to all images and videos, which are not suspected of falling under the guidance on indecent/child abuse images of children, taken on any type of camera or recording device (including mobile/smart phones). It applies to all training session, activities and events run by a Swim England affiliated organisation.

It should be acknowledged that although the majority of images taken are appropriate and in good faith, images can be misused and children can be put at risk if common sense procedures are not observed.

### Aims

This guidance aims to help organisations avoid three often unintended and unforeseen potential sources of child abuse:

- a) The use, adaptation, sharing or copying of images for child abuse purposes, either electronically or in print.
- b) The possible identification of a child when an image is accompanied by significant personal information, which can lead to the child being “groomed”.
- c) The identification and locating of children where there are safeguarding concerns; such cases would include, for example, children who could be compromised by an image because:
  - They have been removed from their family for their own safety.
  - There are restrictions on their contact with one parent/guardian following a parental separation.
  - They are a witness in criminal proceedings.

### Recommended best practice by BSSC Coaches/Officials/Volunteers, Members and Parents

The publishing of a photograph of a swimmer under 18 either on a notice board or in a published article or video recording (including video streaming) of a swimming competition (“publication”) should only be done with parental consent and in line with Swim England guidelines.

A parent or guardian has a right to refuse to have child photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal should not be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming competition. Therefore, any photo that may go to press or on a notice board, be it through a member of the club or official photographer, should receive parental consent before being published or displayed, preferably in writing. The BSSC photography consent form allows parents (and swimmers) to indicate refusal of consent.

In the case of any event or competition where the host club has an official photographer, or for example intends to stream the event or competition online all parents\guardians or members who are attending should be made aware of this in the event details. If photos are to be published anywhere, each individual parent/guardian should be given the opportunity to withhold their consent. Their right to do so should be specifically drawn to their attention.

Swim England guidelines state that all photographs for publication must observe generally accepted standards of decency, in particular:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualised image in a sporting context.
- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swimming costume.
- Poolside shots of children should be above the waist only in a swimming costume. Full length shots are permitted if the children are fully clothed.
- Photographs should not be taken from behind swimming blocks or that show children climbing in and out of the pool.

Published photographs may identify the individual by name and club but should not state the members place of residence or school attended. Swim England do not wish to stop parents/guardians photographing their children if they wish, but all organisations must ensure they do all they can to safeguard every child’s wellbeing, helping parents/guardians understand why they should refrain from including other individual children in such shots.

### The official photographer

In some cases, the organisation will ask a member or officer to act as an official photographer for an event in some cases they may employ a specialist photographer. Their role is to take appropriate photos that celebrate and promote one of our sports. When taking any image, they should be asked to:

- Focus on the activity rather than the individual child.
- Include groups of children rather than individuals, if possible.
- Ensure all those featured are appropriately dressed.
- Represent the broad range of children participating in one of our sports.
- Organisations should screen applicants for their suitability (just as they would check any other member of staff or volunteer

working with children) and then provide training and information on the organisation's child safeguarding policies and procedures.

- The Official photographer (whether a professional photographer or a member of staff) should receive clear instruction, preferably in writing from the organisation at an early stage.
- The organisation should provide them with a copy of this guidance and a clear brief about what is appropriate in terms of content.
- Images should not be allowed to be taken outside the activity being covered.
- The organisation should determine who will hold the images recorded and what is to be done with them after they have served their purpose.

### **Guidance on filming children during training sessions**

Filming during training sessions is not recommended unless there is a legitimate need or purpose for the filming. For example, wishing to film children to assist in their stroke technique.

If there is a legitimate need or purpose parents/guardians must be provided with full information such as when the filming is proposed its purpose who is filming, how the film will be used or published and an agreement on what will happen once the film has served its purpose. This allows parents/guardians to provide informed consent or otherwise. Written consent to the filming should be requested from the parents/guardians. Invite parents/guardians to be present at the filming; if this is impractical allow them to view the film before publication.

### **Mobile/smart phones**

Members must be made aware that while Swim England does not support the banning of phones, as children may need them to keep in touch with parents/guardians, particularly in emergencies, we do support the requirement that phones should emit a "noticeable sound" if the camera facility is used.

Clubs should also remind members that any photos taken should fall within our guidelines and that if devices are taken into changing rooms, the facility to take photos must not be used. See Changing Room Policy (on BSSC website)

It is vital that any suspected misuse of mobile/ smart phone devices is reported in accordance with Wavepower guidance.

### **Should photographs or footage of children be posted on an organisation's website or social media platform?**

It is recommended that photographs or footage of individual children should not be kept on an organisations' website or social media platform if the site is publically "open to the world to see", particularly images of a child with their name displayed, that could lead to that child being identified, approached and placed in a vulnerable position. The same could apply to printed material as such as an organisations' annual report or kit.

Many organisations have member only areas on their website or have privacy setting on social media platforms to allow and control access so that only members and their families can see the content.

It is recommended that children are not fully identified on such sites. Many organisations use just a first name, a surname or a nickname or simply just refer to the squad name. If an organisation wishes to publish a child's name this should only be done with the consent of the parent/guardian.

Parental consent may be withdrawn at any time and the organisation should take all reasonable steps to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian.