SOCIAL & MEDIA GUIDANCE

Club Website

The club has responsibility for the physical safety of a junior member when visiting the club's premises, that club must also ensure that there is nothing on its website which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. A club is legally and morally responsible for the content of its website.

There are two key risks to guard against, abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text), on the site itself or on linked sites (including adverts, especially from Google or other 'sponsored links) and disclosing personal information about a child to people accessing the website. This could be the child's name, address, or any information about a child's life, interests or activities which would help a stranger target a child, or engage that child in conversation.

Another aspect of inappropriate content can be perceived as bullying. This could be material on the site which criticises or humiliates a child. It could also be information which places undue pressure on the child to participate in some aspect of a club's activities.

Blogs

Blogs are a type of content becoming commonplace on websites. The creation of a blog is straightforward. It does not require technical or design expertise, and it can be updated remotely.

Blogs present two particular challenges: a central part of the attraction of a blog is that it is updated frequently. However, the same risks apply to its content as apply to all other content on the site. A club cannot distance itself from the content of a blog it chooses to include on its site. Further, blogs often contain a lot of opinion, as opposed to purely factual information.

Linked sites

Many sites contain links to other sites. This could be for commercial reasons, such as the sites of sponsors or advertisers, or simply to communicate information to be found on other websites. Before creating a link, a club should check thoroughly the content of the other website, both for child protection reasons, and to ensure the content poses no other risk to the club's reputation. Once a link is included on the site, the club should check its content periodically, and remove any link immediately if concerns arise.

Photos and video

Photos and video clips can make any child featured vulnerable to grooming if information about the child (name, address, activities or interests) is also disclosed. Furthermore, posting an image on the website carries a risk that the image could be taken and adapted for an inappropriate use. For further guidance on photographs see section on Photographic Images below.

Mobile and on-line communication with children

Technology is moving very fast in this area. There are now many different ways for people to communicate. On-line communication can be by email, instant messaging or social networking sites.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from a variety of issues: the privacy provided, the wide range of content that can be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature, the ease with which images can be forwarded onto others and the difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with.

In sport, there are additional risks: inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children or inappropriate criticism of a child's performance. An official position or role within a club, such as coach, can carry with it a level of authority, and engender a level of trust, that facilitates the control of a child.

If anyone has any concerns of the above you should inform the Club Safeguarding Officer: Steve Blanche

Steve.blanche@yahoo.com or

07966454159