



Online Safety and Communications Policy

1. Introduction

The Woodford Wells Club [hereafter referred to as 'the club'] is committed to the fundamental principle of protecting a person's right to live in safety free from abuse or neglect. This is developed and sustained through a positive culture of vigilance, implementing learned lessons from incidences and best practice whilst working in partnership with statutory agencies, partner services and organisations and our sport's governing bodies.

2. Scope And Purpose Of The Policy

This policy sets out how the club uses the internet and social media and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines the responsibilities and expected behaviours of our committee members, staff, volunteers, coaches, club members, players and parents/carers/guardians when communicating online.

This policy applies no matter which current or future technology is used.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children, vulnerable adults and adults at risk who are involved with the club and its activities, events, or trips and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, tablets, games consoles and the internet)
- Provide committee members, staff, volunteers, and coaches with clear guidance regarding online safety and inform them on how to respond to incidents or concerns
- Ensure the club operates within the law regarding how we behave online

At the club we recognise that:

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities, however, it can also present risks and challenges
- We have a duty to ensure that all children and adults involved with the club are protected from potential harm online
- We have a responsibility to help keep children and adults at risk safe online, whether or not they are using the club's or county's network and devices
- All children and adults involved with the club regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Working in partnership with children, adults at risk, their parent(s), carer(s), guardian(s) and other organisations is essential in helping them to be responsible in their approach to online safety

3. Keeping People Safe Online

The club will seek to keep people safe online by:

- Understanding the safety aspects, including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for committee members, staff, volunteers, coaches,

club members, players children and their parent(s), carer(s), guardian(s) when using website, social media, apps, and other forms of digital communication

- Being aware that it doesn't matter what device is being used for digital interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone, tablet, or game console
- Ensuring that when using social media platforms, we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice
- Ensuring the person/people managing our online presence is suitably trained and experienced to do so

4. Managing Our Online Presence

The club's online presence through our website and social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least two members of staff and/or volunteers will have access to each account and password
- Social media accounts will be monitored by a designated person, who will have been appointed by the committee
- The designated person/people managing our online presence will seek advice from our sport's governing bodies where appropriate to advise on safeguarding requirements as required
- The designated person/people will remove any inappropriate posts, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents/carers/guardians of any children or adults at risk involved)
- Social media pages/groups (e.g. Facebook pages/groups) used to communicate with children must be an organisation, community or sports group and not personal
- Identifying details such as a child's home address, school details, telephone number or email will not be posted on social media platforms
- Any posts or correspondence will be of a professional purpose
- We will make sure children and their parents, carers, guardians are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account
- Parents will be asked to give their consent for us to communicate with their child(ren) through social media, or by any other means of communication
- Parents will need to give consent for photographs or videos of their child(ren) to be posted on social media
- All of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate, fit for purpose and only used for club/county specific activities

5. Responsibilities and Expected Behaviours

Committee Members, Staff, Volunteers and Coaches

- They will be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- They should seek the advice from the General Manager if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- Any messages they wish to send out to children must be sent through the designated person/people responsible for the club's online presence

- They must not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media
- They must make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate
- They must not communicate with children via personal accounts or private messages
- They must communicate with parents, carers, guardians through email or in writing, or use an organisational account, profile or website rather than via personal social media accounts
- They must copy in parents, carers, guardians or at least one other member of staff, coach or volunteer to any communications sent to children
- They must avoid communication with children beyond dedicated event or activity timings, unless it is necessary for professional purposes (i.e., emergencies, whilst on a trip, etc.) and contacting their parents, carers, or guardians is not possible
- They must sign off any communication in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as kisses (“X’s”)
- They must respond to any disclosure of abuse in line with the safeguarding policy and procedures
- They must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent, or menacing to anyone

Children and Young People

- They should be aware of and adhere to this policy in the use of all devices

Parents, Carers, and Guardians

- They should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- They should seek the advice from the General Manager if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- They should communicate with staff, coaches, and volunteers in a professional and appropriate manner
- They must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent, or menacing to anyone

6. Using Mobile Phones Or Other Devices To Communicate

When using mobile phone or other devices to communicate, we will take the following precautions to help keep children safe:

- Staff, coaches, and volunteers will communicate through parents, carers, or guardians directly or copy them into all messages to children
- Where it is necessary to contact children directly, and it is not possible to copy for the parents, carers, or guardians into the message, we will seek parental consent to do this
- Messages will be used for professional communication, such as reminders about lesson times, meeting points etc.
- If a child tries to engage a member of staff, coach or volunteer in a conversation which is not of a professional manner (for example, their personal life), the member of staff, coach or volunteer will:
 - end the conversation or not reply
 - inform the General Manager as soon as possible and arrange to address the matter with the child and their parents appropriately



- if the conversation raises safeguarding concerns, notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible

7. Using Mobile Phones/Devices During Activities

So that all children can enjoy and actively take part in our sports activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones/devices.

As part of this policy, we will:

- make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements
- inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away on trips
- advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a contact within the club or organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency

8. Monitoring and Quality Assurance

The club is committed to striving for excellence in the provision of all its activities, events, and trips. We do this by actively monitoring and reviewing the policies, procedures, and systems in place. This policy will be reviewed every three years to ensure it remains reflective of current legislation, guidance, and best practice. Any amendments will be submitted to the General Committee for approval.

9. Linked Policies and Procedures

This safeguarding policy and associated safeguarding procedures are linked to the following policies, procedures and documents and therefore should be read in conjunction:

- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy

Date of Last Review	August 2022	Owner	General Committee
Review Period	Three Years	Date of Next Review	August 2025