



# **BWSW Online Safety & Social Media Policy**

August 2024

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# British Water Ski and Wakeboard Online Safety & Social Media Policy & Procedures

## Introduction

British Water Ski & Wakeboard (BWSW) is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive online environment in the use of social media and accepts our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all persons involved in the sport of water skiing and wakeboarding in all its recognised forms.

This policy provides guidance on how organisationally, BWSW uses the internet and social media and the procedures to adopt in so doing. It also outlines how we expect BWSW Network of Staff and the children and young people as BWSW members to behave when 'online'.

BWSW Online Safety & Social Media Policy (and associated procedures) apply to all individuals involved in the sport of water skiing under the auspices of BWSW & includes people working (full or part time, paid or voluntary) within water skiing, such as; 'Staff', 'Official', 'Coach', 'Instructor', 'Team Chaperone', 'Competition Judge', 'Discipline Official', 'Club Welfare Officer' 'Volunteer' etc. and includes Club & Centre committees, affiliates and members of BWSW who collectively shall be referred to as the '**BWSW Network of Staff**'

***The term Coach refers to anyone qualified and registered with BWSW to instruct water skiing or wakeboarding.***

British Water Ski & Wakeboard will encourage and support partner organisations, including affiliate clubs & centres, regions, suppliers, and sponsors to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles as set out in this Online Safety & Social Media Policy & Procedures.

## Acknowledgements

BWSW wish to sincerely acknowledge the assistance and guidance provided by the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit in the formulation of the BWSW Online Safety & Social Media Policy & Procedures.



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## **Policy Aims**

The aims of BWSW Online Safety Policy are:

- To protect all children and young people involved with BWSW and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles and the internet) whilst in our care.
- To provide BWSW 'Network of Staff' (as defined on Page 3 – Introduction) with policy and procedure information and guidance regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents.
- To ensure that BWSW Network of Staff operate in line with BWSW values, and within the law relating to how we behave online.

## **Understanding the Online World**

As part of using the internet and social media, BWSW will:

- Understand the safety aspects, including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for BWSW Network of Staff, children & young people when using websites, social media, apps (applications), and other forms of digital communication.
- Be aware that it does not matter what device is being used for digital interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, tablet, mobile phone, game console or other method of digital communication.
- Ensure that BWSW Network of Staff will adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media platforms (including Facebook, X/Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat) or any other online communicative application.
- Regularly review existing BWSW Safeguarding Policies & Procedures and Codes of Conduct to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated.
- Ensure that concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into BWSW reporting procedures.
- Ensure that bullying ('cyber-bullying') is incorporated into BWSW anti-bullying policy.
- Provide training for the person(s) responsible for managing BWSW online presence.

## **Managing BWSW Online Presence**

BWSW online presence through our website and social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- BWSW website and all linked social media platforms, accounts and email addresses will be appropriate and, fit for purpose.

- BWSW website and all social media platforms and accounts are password protected, and designated members of BWSW HQ staff and external staff will have access to the website and such social media platforms, accounts and passwords.
- A designated person shall be appointed as a 'moderator' for the BWSW website and the content of BWSW linked social media platforms, and the removal of inappropriate content, posts, tweets or hashtag comments. In so doing, the person posting will be contacted and informed of the reasons for the removal, and where a child is involved the parent/guardian will be informed of the circumstances.
- Should the 'moderator' seek to remove any online content, post, tweet or hashtag comment that gives him/her suspicion of it being a safeguarding incident or matter, the facts must be referred to BWSW Lead Safeguarding Officer with immediacy.
- BWSW will ensure that children and young people are made aware of the details of the 'moderator' who manages BWSW social media accounts and his/her contact details should any concern arise over the running of any account.
- All posts or correspondence must be consistent with BWSW Online Policy Aims.
- Identifying details such as a child's home address, name of school attended or the school telephone number must not be posted on social media platforms.
- Parents/guardians will be requested to provide consent for BWSW to communicate with their children through social media, or by any other form of communication.
- Parents/guardians will be requested to provide consent for photographs or videos of their children to be posted on BWSW website or magazine or linked social media platforms.
- In the use of online social media with children, young persons or adults who may be vulnerable, should any parent or guardian gain knowledge or suspicion of a potential safeguarding incident or matter having arisen, the facts must be referred to BWSW Lead Safeguarding Officer with immediacy.

### **Procedures for BWSW Network of Staff & Volunteers**

BWSW 'Network of Staff' (as defined on Page 3 – Introduction) must always:

- Be aware of the BWSW Online Safety & Social Media Policy, and act in accordance with the direction and guidance provided within it.
- Any affiliated Club, Cable Park or other Ski Centre should initiate, adopt and implement their own 'Online Safety & Social Media Policy.'

**NOTE:** To assist our valued Clubs and Centres, BWSW has created an 'Online Social Media Policy Template' which is available without cost and can be downloaded from the 'Safeguarding portal' within BWSW Website. When adopted, please submit an email copy of your own Club/Centre 'Online Social Media Policy' to BWSW.

- Seek the advice of BWSW Lead Safeguarding Officer if you have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.

- Communicate any messages they wish to send out to children and young people to the BWSW social media ‘moderator’ responsible for the BWSW website and the content and/or removal of content to the linked social media platforms.
- Ensure they do not ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ children or young people from personal accounts on social media.
- Ensure that any content posted is accurate and appropriate, as young people may ‘follow’ them through social media means and applications.
- Ensure that they do not communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages.
- Rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, BWSW ‘Network of Staff’ and volunteers should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face to face, in an email or in writing, or use BWSW website, or online account.
- BWSW ‘Network of Staff’ should always ensure that at least one other member of staff is copied into any emails sent to children or young people.
- Avoid communicating with children or young people via email outside of normal office hours.
- Ensure that sent ‘Network of Staff’ emails to children or young people are signed off in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as ‘kisses’ (‘X’s).
- Ensure that ‘Network of Staff’ do not engage in ‘sexting’ or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent, menacing or compromising.
- Deal with disclosures of abuse reported through social media in the same way as face to face disclosure according to BWSW Safeguarding disclosure practices i.e. Inform BWSW Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- Remember that Smartphone users should respect the lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of other people if it could invade their privacy i.e. ask permission to take the photograph first.

### **Social Media Best Practice**

The following guidelines are intended to provide a framework for BWSW Network of Staff & Volunteers’ and young persons to conduct themselves safely and responsibly in an online environment:

- Assume nothing is ever private. If you are putting your thoughts on the internet, make sure there is no “invasion of privacy.”
- Remember that your audience is vast, and that what you say in a post can be seen by the world. Anyone such as your best friend, your coach, your fellow competitors to your teachers or work colleagues can see what you post.
- Your tweets and posts are a permanent record, and you can’t take back what you put out on the internet for everyone to see.
- “Retweeting” or replying to a tweet or marking a tweet as a “Like” on X/Twitter also indicates your approval of inappropriate comments and thereby holds you to the same standard.
- Remember that once any information is posted, it becomes the property of the social media site.

- Online complaints about your colleagues/coaches/teammates or committee members will not solve anything. Talk to them directly or through a mediator to solve problems.
- It is against BWSW Social Media Policy to engage with anyone online in an inflammatory, derogatory or negative way. This includes but is not exclusive to BWSW, coaches, Club/Centre employees and/or the public etc.
- Never take or post pictures from the changing facilities or showers.
- Avoid Posting Illegal Activities – i.e. incriminating photos or statements depicting violence; racism; homophobia; sexual harassment; vandalism; stalking; underage drinking; selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; and other inappropriate behaviours.
- Keep in mind that if you retweet something, you agree with it and promote it.
- Avoid Unprofessional Public Profiles. Any information you put on social media sites is considered public information and may be viewed by members of the public.
- Be mindful of the image you create for yourself online when seeking employment. Current and potential, future employers as well as university admissions recruiters & even insurance brokers can access and use information you put on social media sites.
- Avoid Bullying\Threats of Violence - While a person(s) have a right to free speech, that right is not limited to person-to-person interactions. Online 'Cyber Bullying' is a serious problem and vicious, discriminatory or 'trolling' postings and hateful words could lead to emotional depression, self-harming injury, or the suicide of the recipient.

### **General Use of Mobile Phones & Digital Technology**

In the use of mobile phones or other digital devices to communicate by voice, video or text, (including texting, email and other instant messaging devices) BWSW Network of Staff and Volunteers will at an affiliated Club or Centre take the following precautions to ensure the safety of children and young people:

- Staff and volunteers will avoid having children's or young people's personal mobile numbers and instead will seek contact through a parent or guardian.
- Staff and volunteers will seek parental permission on each occasion we need to contact children or young people directly, and the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon.
- Staff and volunteers will arrange a method of accountability, such as copies of texts being sent to parent(s) or guardian(s), or within a Club or Centre, with the Club Welfare Officer.
- Staff and volunteers should have a separate phone from their personal one for any phone contact with the parent or guardian and the child or young person.
- Texts must only be sent for communicating information i.e. reminding child or young person of forthcoming events, training session timings, kit required for the session, and not merely to engage in conversation.
- Should a child or young person misinterpret such communication, and seek to engage a staff member or volunteer in conversation, or become 'over familiar', that person must take the following steps:
  - End the conversation or stop replying.
  - Suggest discussing the subject at the next practice or event.
  - Contact the child/young person's parent/guardian to discuss the issue.
- If the conversation of the child or young person is considered to be a 'disclosure' of any form of abuse against him/her, inform the Club Welfare Officer of the Club or Centre, who

must then inform the BWSW Lead Safeguarding Officer or the relevant local Children's Services.

### **Use of Mobile Phones During 'On Water' Ski Sessions**

To enable children and young people to enjoy and actively engage in 'On Water' Ski sessions, BWSW discourages the use of mobile phones during such sessions. As part of this policy the BWSW Club or Centre organiser of the activity will:

- Make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with the Club / Centre activity organiser.
- Inform parent(s) or guardian(s) of an appropriate time they can contact children who are away at camps or 'away trips' and discourage them from attempting to make parental/guardian contact outside of these times.
- Advise parent(s) or guardian(s) that it may not be possible to contact children during any 'On Water' ski session but will provide details of a contact within the Club / Centre who will be contactable should there be an emergency.
- Explain to young people how using mobile phones during 'On Water' ski session has an impact on their safety awareness of their environment, their attentive level of participation, their personal progress and achievement.

### **Online Knowledge of Children & Young People**

It is vital that children and young people (commensurate to their age and ability to possess and / or use mobile phones, the internet via computers, tablets, and associated social media platforms) also possess an awareness of 'online personal safety' appropriate to their age.

BWSW therefore recommends that if any digital devices are used as part of any water ski activity taking place under the aegis of BWSW or at any affiliated club or centre - that children and young people should:

- Be aware of this Online Safety Policy and, when online; behave within the policy guidance provided.
- For children of tender years, a parent(s) guardian(s) should explain the policy guidance in simple terms, and establish 'parental controls' of children's computers, tablets and phones etc. to prevent misuse or harm.
- Be informed that if he/she becomes the subject of online abuse, bullying 'trolling' or 'sexting' from any person or source inside or outside of the sport of water skiing, that a parent(s) / guardian(s), or Club/Centre Welfare Officer, or BWSW Lead Safeguarding Officer must be informed to provide support, guidance, & prevent further online abuse.
- Note that adult BWSW Discipline competitive skiers at the elite level and young people skiers on the BWSW Talent Development Programme who receive funding from BWSW or Sport England sources are bound by and must adhere to the BWSW Online Safety & Social Media Policy (and by signature to a Social Media Agreement).



**BWSW is committed to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns swiftly and within these guidelines.**

**For further information and resources for parents and/or carers on keeping children and young people safe from online harm, contact any of the following organisations:**

**BWSW Lead Safeguarding Officer** e: [safeguarding@bwsf.co.uk](mailto:safeguarding@bwsf.co.uk)  
(For reporting concerns of online abuse) t: 07919 131671

**NSPCC / o2 Helpline** [www.o2.co.uk/help/nspcc/child-protection](http://www.o2.co.uk/help/nspcc/child-protection)

**Childnet** [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

**The UK Safer Internet Centre** [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)

**Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre (CEOP)** [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)