



Social Media Guidance for BWL Clubs

Overview

British Weight Lifting (BWL) encourages members and clubs to embrace and respect the power and opportunity which social media offers weightlifting and para-powerlifting. This social media guidance is designed to encourage and help members and clubs to use social media and other digital media appropriately to enhance our sport. There are many benefits to using social media as it helps communicate, consult, engage and be transparent with the public. Alongside these benefits, you need to be aware of the responsibilities that come with it, and ensure you maintain the highest levels of governance.

It is very important that all clubs and its members know how to conduct themselves on social media platforms. When choosing to use social media, you are acting as a public ambassador for your club and the sport of weightlifting or para-powerlifting. Social media refers to any form of personal online communication. It includes well-known websites and apps such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, SnapChat, Whatsapp and iMessage but also includes less well known and developing apps. Social media is constantly evolving, and this guidance covers these well-established mediums as well as new ones which may arise in future.

When choosing to use social media, you are acting as a public ambassador of BWL so this guidance should help you understand your responsibilities and look after yourself, your club and BWL.

Potential Risks of Social Media

Potential risks to online social media can include, but are not limited to:

- Bullying by peers and people they consider “friends”
- Posting personal information that can identify and locate a child offline
- Sexual grooming, luring, exploitation, and abuse contact with strangers
- Exposure to inappropriate content
- Exposure to racist or hate material
- Encouragement to post sexual images and videos of themselves online
- Encouragement of violent behaviour, such as ‘happy slapping’
- Glorifying activities such as drug taking or excessive drinking
- Physical harm to young people in making video content, such as enacting and imitating stunts and risk-taking activities
- Leaving and running away from home because of contacts made online.



Good Practice Guidelines for BWL Clubs

The following guidelines contain practical safety measures and provide a useful starting point to help you develop an online safeguarding strategy. Clubs should ensure that all areas identified are addressed.

When planning your social media strategy, you should think about your objectives and your first steps should be to:

- Assess what you want to achieve with social media and how ready you are to go ahead
- Decide whether you are principally aiming to interact with users, or publish information, or both
- Consider which types of digital media you want to use and how to integrate them with traditional media. See Sport England's guide to Effective Signposting for more details.
- Consider the potential safeguarding implications of the chosen medium.

Review your existing safeguarding policies and procedures

Review your existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that they address online safeguarding issues, including the potential risks to children/young people/vulnerable adults online, sexual exploitation, online grooming, and cyberbullying. Remember that personal and group disputes can easily overspill from the offline to the online world.

Decide who will manage your social media

Decide who will be responsible for setting up, managing, and moderating (overseeing/reviewing/responding to posted content) your web page or profile. This person will oversee the content that will appear, will decide which links to other sites to accept, and will have online contact with the children and young people who interact with your webpage or profile.

Vet and train your social media manager

You must ensure that you:

- Assess the suitability of the person who will manage your social media, including undertaking an enhanced level DBS check.
- Register that person with the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA).
- Ensure the person accesses recognised safeguarding or child protection training that addresses online safeguarding issues, including warning signs of grooming and sexual exploitation.

Get to know the service you want to use

Once you've identified the service you want to use (eg Facebook), make sure you're up to speed with the way this service operates, and the potential safeguarding implications for children, young people, vulnerable adults and staff *before* setting up your club account. Specifically, you should look at privacy and safety tools, the terms of service (these will



usually cover acceptable and unacceptable behaviour), and how users can contact the service if they have a concern or complaint.

Integrate online safeguarding into your existing safeguarding strategy

Add online safeguarding issues to your current strategy, policies, and procedures for safeguarding and child protection, retention, and management of personal information, use of photographs, and codes of conduct/behaviour. Organisational reporting procedures should also include the reporting of potentially illegal/abusive content or activity, including child sexual abusive images and online grooming.

Different Technologies

As technology develops, the internet and its range of services can be accessed through various devices including mobile phones, computers, and game consoles. Although the internet has many positive uses, it provides the key method for the distribution of indecent images of children.

Furthermore, social networking sites, chat rooms and instant messaging systems are increasingly been used by online predators to sexually groom children, young people and vulnerable adults. In addition, electronic communication is being used more and more by young people as a means of bullying their peers. All adults working with young people in are asked to adhere to the following good practice guidelines. BWL will investigate any coach who is not adhering to good practice in communication with young people.

General Good Practice

It is inappropriate for adult coaches to communicate on a one-to-one basis with lifters under the age of 18 years:

- by text message
- through social networking sites
- by email
- by instant messaging

All electronic communication by the above methods should include (where possible) a copy to a third party, eg copy to the relevant safeguarding officer and/or the parent. Coaches should also limit all electronic communication to sport related matters. It is advisable to always send a group message rather than single messages to one lifter.

For U16 lifters, parental consent is required for communication between the adult and the young person. This can form part of the club membership details given at the start of the year.

For U18 lifters, parents should be informed and aware of the communication between the coach and young person.



All volunteers, parents, and members should always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting. They should not post or discuss unfavourable comments about coaches, lifters, any helper or volunteer, parent, or clubs.

Mobile phones should be turned off during a coaching session except in the case where a phone is used as a club contact number or for emergencies.

Text Messages

Text messages are NOT the preferred method of communication between adults and young people. However, where they are used, they should be group (bundled) messages and should always be copied into the relevant safeguarding officer. In the event of an emergency, individual texts may be used but again must be copied into the safeguarding officer and/or parent.

Emails

Emails are a positive and simple method of communication between coaches and lifters and groups are easy to set up. Group emails are preferred, although in the case of an email to one person, a copy must be sent to the relevant safeguarding officer.

Social Networking

Coaches should NOT have lifters under the age of 18 as their friends on social networking sites when the primary reason for the relationship is lifting. Clubs using Facebook must only accept members of the club as their online contacts on the Club Facebook (or other social networking site) page. This must be stated on the page and the page must be set up for that reason. Where clubs operate a Facebook (or other social networking site) page links may be made from the young person's page to the club page but additional personal links between the pages of adults and young people must not be created. It is important that the site privacy settings are set, ensuring that an outside person may not be able to make contact with a young person by first gaining access via the clubs social networking site.

Young members must be reminded to set their privacy settings and not accept requests either from people unknown to them or to other adults involved in lifting. Likewise, adults must NOT accept friend requests from youngsters involved in lifting. Coaches are reminded that ALL social networking websites are restricted to people aged 13 years and over, this restriction must be adhered to. Coaches are advised to consider carefully what they post as some comments can be seen by friends of friends. This also applies to comments left on other people's pages and the sharing of photographs.

Instant Messaging Services

Instant messaging systems should not be used by adults to communicate with young lifters under any circumstances. Reporting concerns in the event of a lifter showing a coach a text message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate for a child/young person/



vulnerable adult to have, the member must inform the appropriate safeguarding officer, either at the club or BWL.

Confidentiality

You should never disclose confidential and/or commercially sensitive information relating to your club. Confidential information can include contractual or financial information, images of club members and children that consent hasn't been gained for, internal and external communications.

Your social media posts should always respect the rights and privacy of others. You should not post images, videos or information which reveal private moments, or private information about other athletes, members, or volunteers.

Conduct

You must not publish anything on any form of social media which may bring you, the sport or BWL into disrepute. In particular:

- Don't make inappropriate references, criticism or derogatory remarks about other athletes, support staff, BWL or other clubs
- Don't criticise or make fun of officials, coaches, competitors or any other individuals or bodies connected with the sport
- Treat everyone you interact with online with respect
- Don't post any comments, videos or photographs which are likely to upset, offend or otherwise cause harm to others that see the content
- When considering the audience that you are posting to, be aware that there will be different sensitivities and life views. Content which isn't intended to be offensive can cause distress or offense to others.
- If in any doubt, don't post it
- Remember – once something is posted online, it's very difficult to remove it.
- Don't make comments or jokes or post any content which could be offensive to protected groups or communities. This includes content relating to the following:
 - Race, colour, or ethnicity
 - Nationality, ethnic or national origin
 - Gender, including transgender.
 - Religions and beliefs, including those that don't have a belief.
 - Sexuality
 - Disability and other conditions.

Being Prepared

Each club should have a responsible representative to appropriately handle media enquiries. If you know of, or are made aware of, an allegation of abuse on a young person or vulnerable adult at risk, it is important to be prepared in advance for any potential publicity.



Contact the relevant BWL / club representative with responsibility for welfare and give them ALL the facts. alternatively forward the matter direct to the BWL Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Do not hide anything or pretend the situation is not as serious as it is or might become. The press can put a large headline on even the smallest story, and it is important that the relevant person is made aware of all the details.

Other Useful information

Safe Network online safety pages - provides advice and guidance for the voluntary and community sector on the internet and online safety when working with children and young people.

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) - A UK law enforcement agency dedicated to tackling sexual exploitation of children, also provides education and awareness resources on the Thinkuknow website.

UK Safer Internet Centre - Offer a wide range of advice and resources on how to stay safe online whether you are a young person, parent or carer, or working with children.

Childnet International - A non-profit organisation working with others to help make the internet a great and safe place for children.

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