

## 11. Social Media and Electronic Communication with Young People.

**Guidance for coaches, volunteers, officials, umpires and designated officers.**

**Guidance for Parents**

**Guidance for Young People**

*For the purpose of this Best Practice note, the term 'coach' is used to apply to all adults working with young people (U18) in badminton.*

*For the purpose of this guidance note, electronic communication includes contact with young people via email, mobile, text messages, social networking sites (eg Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and instant messaging systems (eg MSN or BBM).*

### **Introduction**

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, electronic communications can be open to misinterpretation, and sadly the internet provides the key method for the distribution of indecent images of children.

Furthermore, social networking sites, chat rooms and instant messaging systems are increasingly being used by online predators to 'sexually groom' children and young people. 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 badminton are asked to adhere to the following best practice guidelines which form part of the BADMINTON England Safeguarding and Protecting Young People in Badminton Policy.

### **Best Practice**

Best practice for adults communicating with young people is that which is highly visible and given to a group rather than an individual. Clearly face to face is best of all!

Key:   👍 - **positive method of communication**  
       👎 - **Proceed with caution**  
       🚫 - **Do not use!**

### **Emails** 👍

- Emails are a positive and simple method of communication between coaches and young players 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 Welfare Officer or parent.

### **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 Welfare Officer.
- In the event of an emergency, individual texts may be used but again must be copied into the Welfare Officer and / or parent.

### **Instant Messaging Services** ☹

- MSN, BBM, Yahoo and other instant messaging systems should not be used by adults to communicate with young players under any circumstances.

### **Social Networking - Personal sites** ☹

- Coaches should NOT have players under the age of 18 as their 'friends' on personal social networking sites when the primary reason for the relationship is badminton and they have a position of trust in relation to that young person.
- Should a young person in your club request to become a named friend on your personal social networking page or request that you become a named friend on their page you should decline if any of the below apply:
  - You are in a badminton position of responsibility in respect of that child.
  - You hold a position of trust and responsibility in the badminton club.

### **Club Facebook (or other social networking site) page** 🙌

- 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 sites 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 club's social networking site.
- Coaches are reminded that ALL social networking websites are restricted to people aged 13 years and over, this restriction must be adhered to.
- Coaches may wish to consider setting up separate professional facebook pages which link into club sites and allow a method of open communication for players and parents.

### **General communication good practice**

- There should not be direct communication with children under the age of 16 years, it should be via their parents only
- For players aged 16 – 18 years, parents should be informed and aware of any communication between the coach and young person, this should be agreed via a parent consent form
- All approved electronic communication should include (where possible) a copy to a third party over the age of 18, e.g. copy to the relevant welfare officer and /or the parent.
- Coaches should also limit all electronic communication to badminton related matters. It is advisable to always send a group message rather than single messages to one player.
- All coaches, staff, volunteers, parents and members should always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or texting. They should not post or discuss unfavourable comments about coaches, players, any helper or volunteer, parents or club/s. Negative comments may contravene the BADMINTON England Codes of Conduct and therefore may be subject to disciplinary action.

### **Beware of what you post!**

- Coaches are advised to consider carefully what they post as comments can be viewed wider than perhaps originally intended. This also applies to comments left on other people's pages and the sharing of photographs. Consider your position as a role model in this area.
- The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is

governed by the same requirements as any other media. For further guidance see the BADMINTON England Photography Policy and always ensure you have parental permission before you post any photo of a young person.

- Your professional reputation is valuable to your current and future career and consequentially managing your online reputation is an essential part of being a coach, player or manager. Always think carefully before making any posts, status updates or having discussions regarding clubs, players or BADMINTON England in an online environment – even if your account is private. Comments made public can easily be taken out of context. Consider the language you use – abrupt or inappropriate comments, even if they were made in jest, may lead to complaints. Anything that is put online is potentially public and permanent.
- Social networking sites should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise BADMINTON England members or BADMINTON England clubs and to do so would be in breach of the BADMINTON England Codes of Conduct and therefore subject to disciplinary action.

### **Guidance to coaches who have children that play in the club where they coach.**

Many parents are becoming members of social networking sites that their children sign up to for security reasons. This enables them to view their child's site and help ensure the safety of their own child. This will give the parent access via their child's site to all children listed as friends of their child. It would not be appropriate for BADMINTON England to prevent a parent in this situation from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore in such cases:

- The coach can have players in the club on the site he / she is accessing providing the under 18 year old club members on the site are listed as friends of his / her child or the club facebook page.
- The coach concerned does not have direct contact with those players through the social networking site.
- The coach does not accept such players as friends on his / her home site.
- The coach should inform the Club Welfare Officer of this arrangement.

### **Coaches/teachers/officials who are aged Under 18.**

- BADMINTON England recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool for coaches and officials within badminton clubs to share information with other coaches or officials. If, however, the coach or official is under the age of 18, while they may be a colleague; the following should be adhered to.
- if the parent of the young coach 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 gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned
  - 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
  - All such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian or Club Welfare Officer)
  - 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 and/or the breach referred to England Badminton or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

### **Reporting concerns**

- In the event of a player showing you a text or instant message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, you must inform the appropriate Welfare Officer, either at club or BADMINTON England national level.
- If a young person is concerned with anything they have seen on the internet they are advised to speak to their Welfare Officer.

### **Further Reading:**

The information in this BADMINTON England guidance note is consistent with the following Child Protection in Sport Unit guidance.

1. CPSU note on text and email messaging:

<https://thecpsu.org.uk/resource-library/2013/text-and-email-messaging-safeguarding-guidelines/>

For CPSU online guidance: <https://thecpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety/>

### **Social Media Guidance for Parents**

As adults in badminton we all have a responsibility to do our best to empower our young people to keep themselves safe. We also need to learn what we can to ensure that we too are doing our best to keep them safe through our actions and advice.

### **Please read and action the following to ensure you are promoting a positive message to young people in your care:**

- Ensure that your child does not have a social media presence until they are at least 13 years old, this age is set for a reason – their safety!
- Be open with your child about the websites they use and ask them to show you how they communicate and what they watch. Check age limits for playing online games.
- Ensure your computers and phones are password protected and ensure appropriate security software is installed.
- Read the BADMINTON England Codes of Ethics and Conduct and ensure you are a positive role model in all aspects of your communication with both young people and adults. Help your child to understand this message.
- Always remember that anything you or your child says including photos, pictures and video clips posted on your sites may be shared with people other than those for whom it was intended.
- Never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be potentially hurtful or upsetting or open to interpretation, once it is posted it cannot be taken back, share this message with your son/ daughter. A useful way to think is would you post the message in a frame in your badminton club / sports hall, if not then don't post!
- Make it clear to your son/ daughter that they should not be asking for links to other adults pages if they know them through badminton as this is against good practice and the safeguarding policy for BADMINTON England. The only exception to this is for coaches / officials ages 16 and over, see below.
- See further information at the end of this document for some useful websites and checklists for online safety.

### **If you have a child who is a young coach / official – aged 16 years and above.**

We recognise that social networking sites can be a useful tool for coaches and officials within badminton clubs to share information with other coaches or officials, however please note the following:

- Ensure you are aware if your child is considering making an online link to other adults / coaches involved in badminton for coaching purposes. Your club / association may require written consent from you, please follow their request if applicable.
- Encourage a requirement for communications to be shared with an identified 3rd person, for example the Club Welfare Officer or you, the parent / guardian.
- Follow the good practice information above regarding postings, comments and photographs.

### **Reporting concerns**

- If you see or hear anything which concerns you please speak to the Club Welfare Officer, either at club or BADMINTON England national level.

### **Further websites for information**

There are many positive websites offering advice and guidance for you to learn how to keep your child safe online and top tips for you too!

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) – there is a specific section for parents.

[www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers](http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers)

For downloadable checklists on internet safety including sexting and grooming, log onto:

[http://www.nspcc.org.uk/help-and-advice/for-parents/guides-and-leaflets/online-safety-checklists/online-safety-checklists\\_wda101288.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/help-and-advice/for-parents/guides-and-leaflets/online-safety-checklists/online-safety-checklists_wda101288.html)

### **Social Media Guidance for Young People.**

#### **Please read and action the following to keep yourself and your reputation safe online:**

- Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. See further information at the end of this document for some useful websites for online safety.
- Always remember that anything you say including photos, pictures and video clips posted on your site may be shared with people other than those for whom it was intended.
- Never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be potentially hurtful or upsetting or open to interpretation, you may regret sharing later on. A useful way to think is would you post the message in a frame in your badminton club / sports hall, if not then don't post!
- Think carefully before you put pictures of other club members on your site. If you do wish to upload a badminton picture you must get the consent of your parent, the other young person and their parent. It is always good practice to ask permission from people before you post their photo.
- Do not ask your coach or club official to be your social networking site friend – they will refuse as that would breach BADMINTON England safeguarding good practice.

- Ensure that you do not have a social media presence until you are at least 13 years old, this age is set for a reason – your safety!

**If you are a young coach / official – aged 16 years and above.**

We recognise that social networking sites can be a useful tool for coaches and officials within badminton clubs to share information with other coaches or officials, however please note the following:

- Read the BADMINTON England Codes of Ethics and Conduct and ensure you are a positive role model in all aspects of your communication with both young people and adults.
- Ensure your parents are aware if you are considering making an online link to other adults / coaches involved in badminton. Your club / association may require written consent from your parent / guardian, please follow their request if applicable.
- There may be a requirement for communications to be shared with an identified 3rd person, for example the Club Welfare Officer.
- Follow the good practice information above regarding postings, comments and photographs.

**Reporting concerns**

- If you see or hear anything which concerns you please tell an adult you trust in badminton this may be your parent / guardian, coach or Welfare Officer, either at club or BADMINTON England national level.

**Further websites for information**

There are many positive websites offering advice and guidance for you to keep safe online:

[www.childnet.com/young-people](http://www.childnet.com/young-people)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)



[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)