

Creating a culture of online safety for your organisation – Sports administrators

Consider adopting a ‘two-deep’ model for all online communications for the safety of coaches and participants. Coaches should be advised to copy a designated senior member of your organisation and/or a parent/carer into any online communications with a participant – to avoid one-on-one contact via text, social media or other forms of digital communication.



Key messages

- We all have a responsibility to keep children and young people safe, including online.
- Coaching staff have a position of power – for many young people, coaches are perceived as important influencers.
- Be aware that personal social media accounts may be visible to participants and parents/carers.
- Advise participants and parents/carers how and where team related communication will occur – for example: team/school endorsed platforms.
- When coaches communicate directly with participants online, the ‘two-deep’ model should apply.
- Avoid private messaging participants on any platform eg: Facebook messenger, gaming sites.
- Professional social media accounts need to be kept separate from personal accounts.
- Respectfully refuse parent requests to connect on a personal account.
- Make sure coaches understand your organisation’s reporting pathways and procedures and instruct them to share this information with their participants.
- Inform coaches of the organisation/school protocols on taking and storing of videos and photos of young people.
- Selection decisions and other official team business should not be posted on social media.
- Inform coaches that participants have the right to be consulted about their image being posted online and the participant retains the right to have images removed upon request.



Scenario training

The examples below are recommended for use in a training context, to highlight online risks and to discuss risk mitigation strategies with coaches.

As the 18-year-old coach of the under 8s XXXX team/squad, your phone is misplaced and found with multiple images of young kids from your team. How might this be perceived by others??

You are friends on social media with one of your team member’s parent. Their child is not selected for the finals. What issues may result?

You are connected with members of your team on a social media site. A photo is shared and derogatory comments are made about another member of your team. What do you do?