# ENGLAND NETBALL




## England Netball Social Media Policy

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| **Responsible Officer** | Safeguarding & Welfare Manager |
| **Group Owner** | Executive Team |
| **Date Created / Modified** | February 2022 |
| **Version** | 2.2 |
| **Review Date** | February 2024 |

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| **Applicable for** | This policy is mandatory. It applies to Clubs, Regional Management Boards, County Netball Associations, and all, members, players, participants, connected participants, volunteers, coaches acting in any capacity within netball. |
| **Summary** | This Policy provides guidance for all members, participants, connected participants, volunteers, staff, organisations and 3rd parties to help them understand the acceptable standards of use of social media in netball. |

Version Control:

| Person Responsible | Version and summary of changes | Date |
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## CONTENTS

1. Purpose and Scope
2. Framework
3. Definitions
4. Usage
5. Good Practice Guidance
6. Social Networks
7. Setting up Club Webpages
8. Advice for Coaches Using Social Media
9. Social Media Guidelines for Players
10. Reporting Concerns
11. Useful Contacts

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

England Netball (EN) recognise the developing the range of technologies used to interactively share, create, discuss issues and content as extremely positive. We encourage individuals and communities to use social media to promote themselves, their clubs, their achievements and the sport of netball.

However, EN will challenge anyone using social media either intentionally or by association to insult, slander, create a risk to personal safety, abuse, or attempt to deceive any individual, organisation or the sport of netball.

This Policy provides guidance for all members, participants, connected participants, volunteers, staff, organisations and 3rd parties to help them understand the acceptable standards of use of social media in netball. It sets out best practice designed to assist everyone in understanding what the potential risks are in using social media and how these can be managed.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and adults at risk is paramount when adults, young people or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices.
- Provide all staff, volunteers, members and connected participants with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety.
- Ensure that as an organisation we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices.

The pace of change in technology means that it is not possible to identify a definitive list of all forms of social media which this Policy applies to, hence it is to be read as applying to all forms commonly understood to be social media and used as such. This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct and you are reminded that misuse of social media can result in Disciplinary Action being taken against a member, connected participant, volunteer or employee. Therefore this policy statement applies to all staff, volunteers, children and young people and anyone involved in England Netball activities.

## FRAMEWORK

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of legislation, policy and guidance which seeks to protect all children and young people in England. Summaries of the key legislation can be found below:

- Online abuse: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- Bullying: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- Child Protection: learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system

- Working together 2018
- Care Act 2014

## DEFINITIONS

### Social media

Is the collective of online communications and media channels dedicated to community- based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration via a range of technologies such as desktop, laptop, tablets, smartphones, gaming consoles and platforms and other internet enable devices. Websites and applications dedicated to forums, micro blogging, social networking, social bookmarking, social curation, and wikis are among the different types of social media and examples of social media platforms include, but are not limited to, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Google+, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn and Reddit.

### Young person

Is used to refer to any person below the age of 18.

### Disciplinary Action

Means action taken under the Disciplinary Regulations of England Netball.

## USAGE

Whilst clubs and Players are encouraged to use social media to positively promote their clubs, themselves and their achievements and the sport of netball, the balance between the right to free speech and the responsibility not to insult, slander, abuse or create risks to anyone's personal safety must be borne in mind. This Policy seeks to assist all platform users in knowing how to achieve that balance.

## GOOD PRACTICE GUIDANCE

As a general principle it is recommended that the club, Players, organisation or individual has a webpage/profile which is used for their netball involvement and that they keep their personal identity, pages and profile separate. This will help in distinguishing between what is part of a person's private life, and what is part of their life in netball. Whilst there will always be grey lines between the two, having separate online identities should assist in focusing the mind on what is and what is not appropriate content and usage, before anything is posted.

Social media as defined above, presents a unique set of challenges for protecting personal safety as all information posted is available to the whole world, indefinitely. Generational differences in understanding the implications of what is being posted means that there are very different

perceptions of risk operating. Whilst young people get great benefits from the online communities they belong to and the instant access they have to friends from across the world, they may need guidance for their safety as to what is acceptable and safe use.

The use of social media to target individuals, whether for grooming, exploitation or the increasing incidences of cyber bullying, has created a set of risks to vulnerable people which is a real challenge to manage. Everyone is creating potential risk to themselves when they post personal information.

*For example, if a person posts that they are going on holiday and has their address on their page, it is easy to see that there is an increased risk to their property whilst they are away. If a top player posts that they are tired, injured, worried about an upcoming event, they are giving their opponents information which provides them with psychological advantages that they would not have otherwise gained.*

## Instant messaging applications (informal communications)

- As a person in a position of trust, do not instant message anyone under the age of 18 directly.
- Any group conversations should not be used as formal points of communication
- Any group conversation must not contain any players U18 with someone who is over 18 in a position of trust. Any Group conversation set up with U18s must have permission of their parent or guardian to proceed.
- Any Group conversation which in acting for the purposes of communicating between person in a position of trust and U18s (i.e U18 Netball Team) may only contain the parent or guardian of the person U18.
- Any group conversations should have at least 2 administrators in it.

## Emailing (formal communication)

- Emails should never be sent to U18s on a 1-2-1 bases. An additional club member should always be copied in as well as parents or guardians, if deemed appropriate the U18 can be copied in.
- Where possible send emails from a club account not a personal email account.
- If using a club email account ensure that 2 people can access that account.
- If in an emergency direct communication is required with an U18, ensure that another club member and a parent or guardian are copied in.

## SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networks are the communities which develop on media applications or via the internet, such

as Facebook and Twitter.

Those in a position of trust and young persons should not be “friending” or “following” each other, outside of the netball relationship, (adults who are not in a position of trust may choose to have friends U18 which from outside the context of a netball setting however, as best practice we advise against this). Communications for netball purposes should be through sites/identities which are public and managed by the club, not through personal accounts. Club accounts should have multiple administrators. This applies to adults in a position of trust as well as to the adults who come into contact with young people through netball.

*For example*, if a coach receives a friend request from a young person who they have met at a training session, they should decline. If the club has a page or identify which allows communication via a public forum, this would be acceptable, provided the site is secure and there are no private messages being sent or received.

## Guidance for Social media

Do:

- Keep all information private. Do not share any information with anyone you don’t know personally
- Restrict your profile, ensure that only people who you want to see your post can
- Think carefully about what your posting and from which account if you have both a personal and club account
- Keep club pages to invite or private only, this way you can monitor who is one the page.

Don’t:

- Add U18s if you are in a position of trust on any social media network
- Message, react or comment on any U18s social media account
- Post personal opinions as an administrator of an organisation page.

It is accepted that some parents/carers are friends with their children, in order to monitor the material posted and seen by them. If the adult then accepts their child’s friends, this is not something which England Netball has any jurisdiction over. We are concerned about social media usage where the primary relationship is one gained through netball. Everyone needs to be mindful that:

**Social media must not be used to insult, belittle or criticise other teams, players, officials or staff of England Netball.**

## Expressing opinion online

Expressing your opinion is fine, being rude in the way you express it or expressing discriminatory views is not and could lead to the individual who posted the comment, anyone who forwards or positively

affirms the comment, and the person with administration rights for the site used, being subject to Disciplinary Action or criminal investigation. Anyone who has posted an offensive message or image is advised to remove the comment as soon as possible, to reduce its impact.

The speed and variety in the development of social media forums, means that posts can be generated rapidly and spread to a wider audience in a very short space of time. All members, connected participants, staff and members of the public can and should report any misuse of social media to the Appropriate Authority (the local County Association, Regional Management Board or the Compliance Team at England Netball), so that appropriate action can be taken to maintain the high standards of behaviour expected within the sport of netball. Any reports should be well founded and not as a matter of person opinion, additionally to this any reports should be provided with evidence.

### Reposting/Sharing

When using Twitter or similar tools, reposting other people's comments or posts can be taken as you adopting the views they have expressed and you would be accountable for the content. Comments made should clearly be attributable to the individual and not to the club, County, Region or England Netball.

## SETTING UP CLUB WEBPAGES

Clubs setting up webpages, including Facebook pages, are advised to ensure that they retain ownership and administration rights over that site. No one individual should have exclusive ownership or administration rights, including the Chair. The Club Safeguarding Officer must be informed about and involved in the administration of any site(s). All these people should be aware of the laws (As per those listed in Sections 2 & 9) and good practice for protecting children from the potential risks of social media.

The primary purpose of the site should be for promoting the club and the sport of netball and for communicating between members of the club. Privacy settings should be set so that members of the public cannot contact individuals from the club by first establishing a link with the club, via their webpage.

A young person's (U18) social media account may link to the club page, but additional links between the pages of an adult and a young person, should not be made. Remember that privacy settings change frequently – keep them under review and update as necessary.

Photos and tagging should be used with consideration for the safety implications which these bring. A photo of the team in play, without any tagging of individuals is fine. Do not use tags as this allows people to be identified and then traced. Whenever a photo is going to be taken and used,

make sure the individual knows and get parental consent [Taking and Use of Photographic and Recorded Images of Young People].

All clubs should provide their members with guidance on the use of the club site and issue their members with Acceptable Use Agreements, which the parent/ carer of a young person also signs. A template Acceptable Use Agreement is appended to this policy.

## ADVICE FOR COACHES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

We want to empower netball coaches to utilise social media in a safe, sensible and professional manner to promote netball activity and avoid safeguarding issues.

Your role as a coach is an important one, where you are responsible for the welfare of your players and preparing them for coaching, training and competition. This can be made all the more easy for you by utilising social media to communicate with your players.

### Guidance

Social media is becoming increasingly popular, particularly among young people. About one third of the UK population has a Facebook account. Concerns have been raised about the use of social media in sport. There have been cases where individuals have used it as a means of starting an inappropriate relationship, to bully or abuse. This can be avoided through effective management and implementing measures to safeguard users.

Clubs and coaches looking to use social media should consider the following points and may impose any reasonable measures they feel appropriate to uphold their own personal integrity and to promote the safety of their players:

- Make the most of it - it is a great way to communicate and share team/coaching info.
- Set up a club/team specific profile page - encourage your players to join this page and openly share appropriate information only as part of the group. No private discussions should take place, particularly between an adult and a young player. Consider including parents in this too.
- Be responsible - lead by example; act as an ambassador for your team/club, county, region and netball.
- Not all information is for sharing - this should only be netball/team/club information. Nothing personal, private or inappropriate. Photos and videos may be fine, but only where parents and carers have specifically consented to this.
- Consider other users - will the posting cause offence? Is it appropriate for everyone who is on the site? A third party moderator should be involved; they should be DBS checked. This could be your Club Welfare Officer (CWO) or a member of your committee.

- Not everyone should be your friend - Being personal friends on social media with the young people whom you coach, teach etc is considered inappropriate and must be avoided due to the position of trust you are in. There are ways and means of using this type of medium and communicating with young people without it being on a personal level, for example, club Facebook pages, group emails etc. Consider your security and privacy settings.
- Take action - Misuse, bullying or abuse should be reported to the CWO, or to the England Netball Compliance Team. Misuse may contravene codes of conduct and be subject to disciplinary or legal action. If you do have any young players as personal friends, then England Netball strongly advises you to remove them from your profile.
- Sensible use - Create a guide and provide advice on appropriate use to your players. Consider type of content/information/topics and the removal of inappropriate content. Ensure you and your players think before posting to avoid any issues.
- Be transparent - Communications should only contain basic and relevant information, nothing personal or inappropriate. Copy in a third party to promote transparency, such as parents, the CWO. Think- would anyone think my messages were inappropriate?
- Parents/carers - should consent to and be aware that their children will be communicating with you through these tools. They should be encouraged to be included in these messages also.

This is not an exhaustive list and any other reasonable measures should be taken to protect you and your players. Whilst the above is guidance for the use of social media, similar considerations should be given to the use of text messaging, emails and instant messaging to contact your players.

## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR PLAYERS

Performance players are in a position of greater prominence than most players in the sport of netball, and this increases as they progress up the Performance Pathway and to possible National Squad selection. As such, these players are the role models for acceptable standards of behaviour and this is as true for their use of social media, as it is for their everyday conduct.

We encourage you to use social media, and we have no desire to control what you do online. But we can help you think about the possible advantages and pitfalls offered by social media as your career goes from strength to strength, and you find yourself becoming a more public figure.

Players are encouraged to show their personality and engage with their fans when using social media. We recommend that were possible the player has a personal and public account. There is a need for professional conduct at all times and the onus remains on them to promote the sport, the team and the events. They are reminded that sponsorship deals depend on the public perception of the sport and they are the public face of the sport. Deals can be lost on the basis of the behaviour of any one player, so it is not just your personal reputation which is important to protect

and nurture. Remember the overriding factor is that the social media publications must not mislead.

Showing your personality and sharing your performances helps show what it takes to be a top player and attracts people to you. Make regular use of your pages/posts so that your fans feel you invest in them and that they have a relationship with you.

Players should make it clear they are posting their own views, providing image/ video rights to the owner. They should not use the England Netball logo, which is owned by England Netball.
Remember that you too have a responsibility to report any posts which contravene the standards expected by England Netball's Code of Conduct and this Policy.

Anyone reporting a concern, or who is the subject of such a report, will be given advice on the procedures which are used to tackle these issues.

## Precautions

Always bare the following two questions in mind when you post anything online:

- Would you say this in front of your parents or grandparents?
- Would you say this to journalists at a press conference, sitting next to your coach?

If the answer to either question is no, think very carefully before posting. Just about everything you say online could eventually be read by anyone, including your grandmother or the editors of tomorrow morning's tabloids.

If you're used to using social media freely, it might seem unfair that you now have to think a little more before you post, but this is just one small part of the increased profile that comes with being a successful players.

## No such thing as privacy

It's important to review your privacy settings regularly on any social network. But it's also important to remember that it's possible that everything you send or post – even to your friends – could potentially become public. Once that has happened, it could be seen by anyone and everyone, forever.

Once something starts to spread on the internet, it's impossible to control it, even once you've deleted the original. An ill-advised comment or photograph could still be popping up when someone searches for your name years from now – including potential sponsors, employers, etc. So check your privacy settings regularly, but also bear in the back of your mind that you can never be completely sure that what you post online will remain private.
Ask yourself;

- Am I happy for what I am about to post to be seen by anyone and everyone?

- Am I happy for this post to be attached to my name and easily-searchable forever?
- If my post was to appear somewhere I never intended it to go, would I be happy about it?

## Respect yourself

You have worked incredibly hard for many years to become who you are - a high performance player in a public sphere. This means that people will form their opinions based on your sporting performances, but also on other aspects of you that they see portrayed publically. Used well, social media has the potential to give you greater control of this than ever before, and to build a reputation for being dedicated, interesting, positive and inspiring.

Ask yourself;

- How do I wish to be portrayed?
- What messages do I want to get across?
- Will my post reflect negatively upon my “role model” status?
- What parts of my life do I want to keep private?
- Is what I am posting going to reflect negatively on my public profile?
- Is what I am posting going to affect future opportunities for my personal brand?
- Remember….You can still be humorous and have a personality online – just think before you post.

## Respect the sport of netball

In the same way that your actions while training and competing reflect on netball in general, so do your actions online. As a player right at the top of your sport, you have rightly earned the respect of many others across the country, from grassroots competitors and club volunteers to elite coaches and other elite players. You can use social media to build on their pride in you and in netball. Don’t comment negatively on others’ professional performance, be they players, officials or coaches. When you post online, make sure your facts are accurate and don't swear or engage in insulting behaviour. Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully.

Ask yourself;

- How will the people who have helped me progress in my sport (such as my coach, my family, my club) feel about me posting this?
- How will this post affect the way netball is viewed in England and further afield?
- If I am tempted to discuss a contentious issue within netball, how important is it for me to have my say in public? Have I thought carefully about my opinion, rather than offering a knee-jerk reaction? Will this be a constructive contribution? Are there other ways I could pursue the matter (face to face, in a private email, or on the phone, for example)?
- Will what I am about to say undermine the hard work of those who came before me, or make life harder for those who come after?
- Could my post upset a current or potential sponsor for me or for the sport of netball?
- Would I expect my own sporting heroes to post in this manner?

## Respect your Audience

Social media offers a great way to connect with friends and family but the reality is that much of what you say to them on social media you also say to strangers, including fans and the media.

There may be many people out there who want to feel as though they know you and social media gives them the chance to engage with you on a new level. You may find yourself talking to strangers with a level of familiarity you would usually reserve for people who know you well.

Remember that people who don't know you personally are less likely to pick up on the context of your comment, or to know when you're joking/being flippant.

Never post anything that's rude, abusive or discriminatory.
Ask yourself;

- Who are my audience? Are they just friends and family? Are they fans? Are they media?
- Would I make this comment to this person face-to-face (for example, would I say this to someone I don't know, who has approached me in public?)
- Could this comment be misunderstood by someone who doesn't know me, or know my sense of humour?
- Would I be happy to see this comment in the newspapers tomorrow? Will my post create a negative news angle?

## Social media and your performance

Although using social media often feels like a relaxing thing to do, being very active on it can take up a lot of time and energy. Be aware of the effect it has on your mental state and your performance, particularly around the time of major competitions. Many performance players step away from the internet completely in the approach to high profile events so they can focus.

It can be tempting to find out what people are saying at times of excitement, and to check and see if you have any good luck messages. But be aware that this might not help you make the most of all your training and turn in the best performance possible. The media are also likely to be paying particularly close attention to what you say online during important events. If you have had a high-profile disappointment, it is a good idea to resist the temptation to go online straight afterwards. Wait until the strongest emotions have subsided so you can reflect, and post with a clear head.
Ask yourself;

- Is the amount of time/attention I am spending online affecting my focus or performance?
- If I saw a negative comment about myself now, how would it affect me?
- Is my post really so important that it can't wait?
- Will I feel differently in a day or two, when my emotions have settled?

- Is this the best place to express my disappointment – could I pick up the phone to a friend/loved one instead?

## Self-responsibility

England Netball can provide advice and guidance on using social media, but at the end of the day it's up to you individually to take responsibility for your online reputation. Make it clear that your posts are your own opinions, and not those of England Netball, and own what you say with pride.

## REPORTING CONCERNS

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, as is creating and maintaining the high standards of behaviour expected of people in the sport of netball. For these reasons, everyone is encouraged to report concerns of misuse or inappropriate usage of social media to the Appropriate Authority, within the world of netball, or outside it.

The first point of contact will usually be the Club Safeguarding Officer, or the Chair of the club. As mentioned above, the Appropriate Authority within the world of netball is the body with the power to take Disciplinary Action. Which level is the most appropriate will depend on the nature of the concern, but if it relates to a potential safeguarding issue, the matter must be reported to the Lead Child Protection Officer at England Netball.

**Threats of immediate harm or danger should be reported to the police and/or Children's Services or the Local Authority Designated Officer** (where the concern relates to someone in a position of trust), contactable via your local authority and the Local Safeguarding Children Board and reported to the Lead Child Protection Officer at England Netball, following the Reporting a Concern process.

Whilst the law does not move as fast as technology, there is legislation and government guidance which applies to social media usage, including:-

- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Protection from Harassment Act 2003
- Defamation Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights
- Equality Act 2010
- Working Together 2018
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

Prosecutions may be taken for comments/content posted on line.

For example those which are offensive, insight hatred or are of an intimidating nature.

England Netball may also take Disciplinary Action against individuals using social media

inappropriately or refer comments of a criminal nature to the police.

## USEFUL CONTACTS

There are a number of organisations who can provide advice and guidance on internet safety and usage, which have been referred to in the development of this policy. They are great resources to reference for the most up to date guidance.

- CPSU Online Safety
- CPSU
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- CEOP Safety Centre

## CONTACT ENGLAND NETBALL

Report a concern via besafe@englandnetball.co.uk . Urgent cases should be referred to the Police and emergency services by calling 999.

NSPCC are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on 0808 800 5000