

West Coast Splash Synchronised Swimming Club

Good Practice Guidelines on the use of Social Networking for the club and our members.

Introduction

The use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter is a rapidly growing phenomenon and is increasingly being used as a communication tool of choice by young people and adults.

Facebook is the largest such site whose “mission is to give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected”, and is reported to have in excess of five hundred million active users worldwide.

These sites permit users to chat on line, post pictures, and write ‘blogs’ etc, through the creation of an on-line profile, that can either be publicly available to all or restricted to an approved circle of electronic friends.

Sites such as You Tube and Google provide a platform for uploading and viewing video clips, which with the latest cameras and mobile phones becomes ever easier and can be almost instantaneous.

In addition to these sites, Twitter is a social networking and micro blogging service that enables users to send and read other user messages called tweets. Tweets are like online text messages of up to a maximum of 140 characters displayed on the author’s profile page. Tweets are publicly visible by default, however the sender can restrict message delivery to their friends list only.

Whilst these technologies provide exciting opportunities, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a recommendation of best practice to all WCS club members and parents on the use of social networking sites as they relate to their role in the club.

Guidance for coaches, volunteers and other officials in a position of trust and responsibility in respect of children in the club.

1. We recognise that some of the older members of the club will be on social networking sites. We also recognise that some coaches are currently Facebook friends with older club members. We are happy for this to continue if the swimmer's parent consents and coaches ensure that the content that club members can view is age appropriate.

2. In the future, should a young person in the club request to become a named friend on a coach (or other official's) social networking site or request that a coach (or other official) become a named friend on the young person's social networking site the coach (or official) should decline if:

- they are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child;
- they hold a position of trust and responsibility in the club;
- their contact with the child is through the club

unless the parent/guardian of the child consents to the contact and the coach/official ensures that content that the club member can view is age appropriate.

3. The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise club members.

4. The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in the Club's Photography Policy.

Guidance to club members under the age of 18

1. Do not ask your club coach to be your social networking site friend unless you have asked your parent/guardian and they agree.

2. Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk.

3. Consider who you are inviting to be your friend and follow the good advice of the social networking sites to ensure you are talking to the person you believe you are talking to.

4. Always consider that any communication, comments, photos and video clips posted on a social networking site may be shared with persons other than those for whom it was intended.

5. Never share pictures of yourself or your friends that might reach other people that you do not wish to see them. Also never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be;

- hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on;
- used by other people in a way you did not intend or want.

6. Do not put pictures of other club members on the site within the club setting as you may breach the Club's Photography Guidance. If you do wish to upload a picture you must get advice and consent of your parent, the other young person and their parent and your coach. This will not prevent you having pictures of your swimming friends on your site taken outside of the sporting arena but it is good advice to always ensure they and their parents are happy with any picture you have of them on your site.

7. Always be aware that social networking sites are a method of communication like letter writing and the spoken word. They are bound by the same laws and rules. Never place a comment on the internet that you would not put in writing or say to the individual concerned face-to-face.