



National Yacht Club Online and Social Media Policy

Section 1 – Introduction

This policy provides guidance on how the National Yacht Club (“the Club”) uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect coaches and Club volunteers, and members and other young visitors who are under 16 (referred to in this Policy as “young people”) to behave online. The principles in this policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used – including computers, laptops, tablets, web-enabled games consoles and smart TVs – and whether an app (including *WhatsApp*, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, *Snapchat*, *TikTok* or other similar app) or website is used.

Section 2 – Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to protect all young people involved with our Club and who make use of technology (such as mobiles phones, games consoles and the internet) while in our care;
- to provide coaches and Club volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents; and
- to ensure that our Club is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

Section 3 - Understanding the online world

As part of using the internet and social media, we:

- understand the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for coaches, Club volunteers and young people – when using websites, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication;
- are aware that it doesn’t matter what device is being used for digital interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone or game console or other device;
- ensure, when using social media platforms (including but not limited to *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*) that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines;
- regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including making sure that concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are reported to one of our Child Protection Officers (see below);
- make sure that those responsible for managing our Club’s online presence and/or administering social media platforms are aware of this Policy.

Section 4 - Managing our online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 coaches, Club volunteers or members of staff will have access to each account and password (“Authorised Persons”).
- Only Authorised Persons may post content on the Club’s social media platforms.
- Each social media account will be monitored by a designated person (who may be one of the Authorised Persons) who will remove inappropriate posts, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any young person involved).
- Identifying details such as a young person’s home address or contact details (including telephone number) will never be posted on the Club’s social media platforms.
- All posts and correspondence will be consistent with the aims of the Club and will not bring the Club or its members into disrepute.
- Young people will be made aware of who to contact in the event they or their parents have a concern about anything posted on a Club social media platform.
- Parents/guardians will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media – this should be part of the booking process for training and other events.

Section 5 - What we expect of our Club staff, coaches and volunteers

Our Club staff, coaches and volunteers:

- should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it;
- should seek the advice of one of the Club’s Child Protection Officers if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media;
- should ensure that *WhatsApp* and other communication groups established for training and other events should be set up with young peoples’ parents, and not with young people themselves;
- should ensure when ‘friending’ or ‘following’ young people that they do so only for purposes connected with their role at the Club;
- should make sure that any content posted by them (whether on Club social media platforms or their personal accounts) is appropriate, as young people may ‘friend’ or ‘follow’ them on these accounts;
- should avoid communicating directly with young people via personal accounts or private messaging services;
- should report any abuse through social media in the same way as any in-person abuse in line with our reporting procedures;
- should ensure that mobile phones are used appropriately and that they do not take or distribute pictures of young people that would invade their privacy or amount to bullying or harassing behaviour; and
- shall not engage in ‘sexting’ or taking or sending obscene, indecent or menacing pictures to anyone and must report any instances of behaviour of this type to one of the Club’s Child Protection Officers.

Section 6 - What we expect of parents

Parents of young people:

- should communicate this Policy to their children;
- should explain to their children how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement;
- should ensure that *WhatsApp* and other communication groups established for training and other events are used only for bona fide organising purposes (and not for sharing jokes etc.);
- should ensure that all content posted by them on *WhatsApp* and other communication groups established for training and other events is appropriate;
- should refrain from using *WhatsApp* and other communication groups established for training and other events for commentary or complaints; complaints should be made in person or by email to a member of the Club staff, Committee or Junior Organiser; and
- should seek the advice of one of the Club's Child Protection Officers if they have any concerns about the use of the Club's internet or social media platforms.

Section 7 - What we expect of young people

Young people using the Club:

- should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it, including when using their mobile phones or other devices at the Club;
- should report any concerns that they have about the use of the internet or social media at the Club to any coach or member of staff;
- should make sure that any content posted by them on their personal accounts relating in any way to the Club (or other young people) is appropriate;
- should ensure that mobile phones are used appropriately and that they do not take or distribute pictures of other young people that would invade their privacy or amount to bullying or harassing behaviour; and
- shall not engage in 'sexting' or taking or sending obscene, indecent or menacing pictures to anyone.

Section 8 - Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

When using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging), Club staff, coaches and volunteers:

- should avoid having and/or using young people's personal mobile numbers and instead seek contact through a parent or guardian;
- should only communicate directly with young people where absolutely necessary to do so, and then only with the consent of the relevant parent /guardian;
- should, if communicating directly with young people, ensure that copies of messages sent are copied to the young persons' parent or guardian;
- should avoid communicating with young people outside of normal office hours;
- should ensure that any messages to young people are signed off in a professional and appropriate manner;
- should ensure that mobile phones are used solely for communicating information – such as reminding young people about upcoming events – and not to engage in conversation.

If a young person misinterprets such communication and tries to engage in conversation, the staff member, coach or volunteer concerned should (i) suggest discussing the subject further at the next practice or event and (ii) end the conversation.

Section 9 - Using mobile phones during sailing activities

The use of mobile phones during junior sailing and onshore training activities at the Club is discouraged, except where used for genuine purposes (e.g. to video sail trim for coaching purposes) and on a limited basis to promote the activities of the Club on approved social media platforms (for example the Club's Junior Sailing Instagram account).

The use of mobile phones in the Club changing rooms is not permitted, whether by staff members, coaches, volunteers, young people or other Club members.

Section 10 – Our commitment

As part of this Policy:

- we recommend that young people should not bring mobile phones to courses/sessions. Should they require them after courses/sessions, they must remain powered off in their bags. The Club is not responsible for lost or damaged phones. If young people do not bring a mobile phone there will be a course phone number available for parents to contact them on.
- we will make young people aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with the Club;
- we will advise parents/guardians that it may not be possible to contact young people during activities at the Club and provide a contact within the Club who will be reachable should there be an emergency;
- we will explain to young people how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement; and
- we commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Club's Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement (available on the Club website and posted on the Junior Noticeboard).

If you have a concern please contact one of the Club's Child Protection Officers: as follows

Alison Pigot: 086-8386020 \ Henrietta Senkowsky 086-3071186

Further information for parents and carers on keeping children safe online

The following websites provide information for organisations and parents about online safety to help them protect their children from harm:

<https://www.webwise.ie>

<https://www.ispcc.ie/parenting-hub/>

<https://www.cybersafekids.ie>

The UK Safer Internet Centre – www.saferinternet.org.uk

Policy Adopted: March 2023

Policy Reviewed & updated 25th June 2025