



Social Media & Communications Policy

The club recognises that the use of social media is a popular and effective way to promote the club and the successes of its members, but also that the same factors which make it powerfully influential can also create risks especially for young people or vulnerable adults. The club therefore has a duty of care to ensure that the use of social media is done with the greatest care at all times to avoid any distress – this applies both for services operated specifically on behalf of BSCC and also the personal accounts of those within BSCC who are generally seen as representing the organisation.

Only the groups described below have been approved by the committee. No other groups may use the club logo or any name that makes them sound as if they represent the club. There is nothing to prevent club members from forming a Facebook or other social media group for their convenience. Although BSCC cannot take any responsibility for such groups, the operation of, or misbehaviour in, such groups would not be outside the scope of club disciplinary procedures where it was brought to the committee's attention.

General

It is the responsibility of all members to:

- Refrain from publishing comments about other clubs or competitors and any controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects and especially not in a disrespectful or rude way;
- Avoid hostile or harassing communications in any posts or other online communications. Harassment is any offensive conduct based on a person's race, sex, gender identity, national origin, colour, disability, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, religion or any other status protected by law. This also applies to any derogatory remarks regarding a member's ability in the sport;
- Respect the views and opinions of other members;
- Respect the privacy of other members;
- When sharing an interesting blog post, article or piece of content, members should always review the content thoroughly, and should not post a link based solely on the headline;
- Avoid posting spam or junk;
- Avoid taking personal details of children and young people
- Be careful how you use photos and images of others in the club, and in particular of children.
- Create an encouraging and supportive environment for other members to feel included and motivated with club activities

The same principles should be applied to any personal social media applications used.

Specific Media

In addition to media used amongst club committee/subcommittees, the club operates:

- A website
- A bulk emailing system through MailChimp
- A X account
- A public Facebook page
- A Strava page
- A business account on "NextDoor"
- A community of closed WhatsApp groups for volunteers and members

These (and any other similar services set up in future to act on behalf of the club) will be operated only by adults approved by the Trustees, who have had appropriate safeguarding training and are deemed technically competent.

Information disseminated through the above channels will be confined to matters relevant to the activities of the club and the sport.

Images of juniors in all media will comply with the BSCC Photography policy.

1. Website

Comments added to the blog on the website must be subject to moderation before publication.

2. MailChimp

A MailChimp database is used to send newsletters and event notifications club-wide or to selected subsets (e.g. coaching groups). Email addresses are only added to the distribution list where consent has been given. Recipients can unsubscribe from the list at any time. Juniors' email addresses are not routinely sought and may only be added with the explicit consent of the junior's parents. In this case, parents will be asked to explain to their children that they should not be contacting any of the email addresses themselves directly.

3. Official BSCC Social Media Accounts (including Facebook, X, Strava)

Parents are reminded that nobody under the age of 13 should be using Facebook or X, or other forms of social media. The Strava group is by invitation only (committee member Rich Winstanley is the administrator) – this has a minimum age of 16.

Juniors will never be contacted through the associated direct messaging services.

It is essential that a number of competent, responsible adults (including the club welfare officer, committee members and those appointed by the committee) are constantly monitoring activity and able to step in if anything inappropriate should arise.

- Parents of participating juniors should be encouraged to access the account as well; and
- Advertising the existence of such accounts to all relevant parties within the club to increase transparency and to avoid the appearance of private cliques.

4. WhatsApp Groups for club members/volunteers

Several BSCC-related groups have been joined together as a WhatsApp Community:

- **BSCC Volunteers** – used to coordinate volunteer activities such as premises maintenance tasks, and practical support for working parties and competition or outreach events. Membership of this group can be extended to ex-members of the club, other family members of club members or other individuals with a long-standing involvement with the club at the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator. The group admin is the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator may also set up temporary groups to coordinate specific tasks such as Marshalling or Catering at competitions.
- **BSF** – General club related news - The group admin is the Director of Canoeing.
- **General** - The group admin is the Director of Canoeing.
- **Thursday Evening kayak session** – informal group of independent paddlers who meet for evening paddling outside of club sessions - The group admin is the Director of Canoeing.
- **BSF Sprint** – For those attending Nottingham Regattas - The group admin is the Director of Canoeing.

In each case,

- (a) Adult club members and parents of junior members can join the group by request to the relevant administrator.
- (b) All participants must identify themselves either by a short message to the group when they join or, ideally, having WhatsApp settings that will display their name.
- (c) The administrator will remove members who leave the club (except in the case of ex-members who are active as volunteers, who may remain the Volunteers group).

(d) Any activity falling outside the general principals described above (page 1) will result in a warning from the administrator and/or removal from the group at the administrator's discretion.

5. One-to-one communication between coaches/officials and members

No adult coach or club official should phone, text, email, direct message or in any way privately communicate with an unrelated junior member. In exceptional cases where it is necessary for the coach or club official to send a text or email, a parent or other appropriate adults (e.g. the club welfare officer) must be included, but such communication is discouraged and must remain strictly limited to the business of the club/sport.

Messages must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language. Care must be taken to avoid over-familiarity or language that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued. Messages should reflect the professional relationship between coach and athlete and the coaches' position of trust.

When sending emails to a number of members who are not already in touch with one another, club officials will use blind copy to avoid publicising email addresses.

6. Coaches'/Officials' personal accounts on Social Media (including Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger and X)

In today's society more and more interaction is happening online and we cannot prevent this. In order that the situation is transparent, coaches and officials within the club who use Facebook are therefore expected to become friends with the club welfare officer (or other competent person designated by the committee) and to enable their friend list to be visible.

Coaches and club officials should not 'friend' or 'follow' unrelated children from personal accounts on social media and should maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts

If a junior member makes a request the coach or club official should inform the club welfare officer and notify the juniors' parents.

Rather than communicating with members or parents of junior members through personal social media accounts, coaches or other club officials should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisational account or website.

Coaches and club officials should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from organisation accounts

Privacy settings on personal Facebook accounts should be set to limit the visibility of content.

No material posted should be offensive or derogatory in any way and everyone is expected to consider carefully the full content of any conversations they join, as their involvement may also publish content to a wider circle. All members are advised to think before they post.

The club takes seriously any allegation of online bullying/ illegal or abusive content between members and any concerns raised should be investigated. Appropriate action will be taken to deter or sanction anyone found bullying. Any club member should feel able to contact the club welfare officer with concerns.