



Glossop Amateur Swimming Club Electronic Communication Policy (including Social Media)

GASC policy as detailed below is based on the ASA electronic communication guidance provided in the Wavepower document and communication with ASA advisors.

Phoning, texting or e-mailing a young person

Coaches, teachers and other GASC volunteers must not personally hold the mobile phone numbers or e-mail addresses belonging to young members of GASC.

Coaches of elite athletes under 18 but over 16 may, with the consent of the athlete's parent or guardian, use text messaging or e-mail to communicate with the athlete for training and competition purposes only. It is recommended that such communications are also copied to a parent or guardian to safeguard the member and the coach.

It was also agreed by the committee that communications will also be copied to the Welfare Officer. The only exception to this rule is when the communication the young person is receiving is part of a larger group email.

Use of a mobile phone by coaches and teachers

Coaches, teachers or other volunteers must not take or make calls whilst supervising young members in a teaching or training session. It is permissible for a coach, teacher or other volunteer to make or take a call during an event, providing they are not the sole supervisor of the members and are not actively engaged during warm up or swim down at the time of the call.

Whenever mobile phones are taken into changing rooms, the camera facility must not be used.

Coaches aged 18 to 21

The ASA recognises that many young coaches and teachers aged 18 to 21 will have been members themselves before becoming a coach, and will be friends with their fellow members, some of whom will still be between the ages of 16 and 17. It is therefore plausible that they will have the personal contact details for those members. The ASA accepts it would be inappropriate to require young coaches to remove the details of those members from their contact lists.

Therefore, in such cases:

- If a coach or teacher aged 18 to 21 had phone and/or e-mail details who were/are swimmers aged between 16 and 17 prior to undertaking the role of coach or teacher, the ASA does not expect them to remove those members from their contact list.
- However, the coach or teacher must inform the welfare officer and the head coach.
- The head coach should make every effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.



Use of social networking

Guidance for coaches, teachers and other staff

- As a coach, teacher or other volunteer of the organisation, you should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they are a member of GASC.
- Should a young person in GASC request to become 'friends' via your personal social networking site, you should decline if:
 - ◆ You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child.
 - ◆ You hold a position of trust and/or responsibility at the club.
 - ◆ Your contact with the child is through an ASA club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.
- Social networks should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise members or ASA organisations and to do so may be in breach of the ASA Rules and Regulations.

Coaches, teachers and other staff who are under 18

The ASA recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool for teachers, coaches and other volunteers within the organisation to share information with other teachers, coaches or other volunteers. If, however, the teacher, coach or volunteer member is under the age of 16, while they may be a colleague, the requirements of the first two points above must still be adhered to.

If the young coach/teacher/volunteer is aged 16 or 17, it is the view of the ASA that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, teachers or volunteer may be detrimental in their professional development of their role in the ASA.

Therefore, in such cases, if the parent of a young person in a position of responsibility aged 16 or 17 and the young person themselves requests to have contact with an adult member volunteer for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role, GASC should:

- Gain written consent from the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact, naming the individual adult(s) and social networking site concerned.
- Ensure the named adult signs an agreement to keep contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club.
- Ensure all such communications are shared with an identified third person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian and club welfare officer).
- Ensure that if the young person or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action must be taken by GASC to address the concern and/or ensure that the breach is referred to the ASA or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

Coaches aged between 18 and 21

The ASA recognises that many young coaches aged between 18 and 21 will have been members themselves before becoming a coach and have been friends with their fellow members, some of



whom will be between the ages of 16 and 17. It is therefore plausible they will have contact details for those members and be friends with them on social networking sites, and be able to communicate via other methods of electronic communication.

In this circumstance, the ASA accepts it would be inappropriate to require such friends to be removed from their social networking sites.

Therefore, in such cases:

- If a coach aged between 18 and 21 had friends on their social networking site that were/are members aged 16 or 17 prior to undertaking the role of coach, the ASA does not expect them to remove those members from their listed friends.
- In such circumstances the coach is advised to inform the welfare officer and head coach.
- The head coach should make every effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

In all of the above cases and including volunteer above the age of 21:

- If the volunteer is friends with a young member on a social networking site because they are both members of another organisation the ASA recognises that this is a plausible situation and would not require the adult or young member to remove them as a contact.
- In such situations the volunteer and young member must not communicate about GASC or the ASA using this media.
- The head coach should make every effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

Parents who work at the same organisation attended by their children

Many parents are becoming 'friends' with their children on social networking profile for security reasons, to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's profile. This may then give the parent access to the profiles of other children listed as 'friends' of their child. It would not be appropriate for the ASA to prevent a parent who is also a volunteer at the organisation where his/her child is a member from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore, in such cases:

- The parent concerned should not have direct contact with members through the social networking site.
- Where the parent has access to their child's social networking site (i.e. knows the user name and password) they must not contact any other children under the pretence of being their child.
- The parent should not accept their child's friends as friends on their own social networking site.
- The parent should inform the welfare officer of this arrangement.

Catherine Robinson

Welfare officer

June 2016