ENGLAND NETBALL

England Netball Social Media Policy

Responsible Officer	Safeguarding & Welfare Manager
Group Owner	Executive Team
Date Created / Modified	June 2026
Version	2.3
Review Date	June 2028
Applicable for	This policy is mandatory. It applies to Clubs, Regional Management Boards, County Netball Associations, organisations delivering Recognised and Authorised activity and all, Members, players, participants, connected participants, Volunteers, Staff, coaches acting in any capacity within netball.
Summary	This Policy provides guidance for all Members, participants, connected participants, Volunteers, Staff, organisations and third 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
Safeguarding and Welfare Manager	Updating of terminology and definitions, Updating links and legislation, Simplification of guidance	June 26

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

England Netball (EN) believes that the growing range of technologies used to share, create, and discuss content and issues interactively is highly positive when used appropriately. 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 who uses Social Media, either intentionally or by association, to insult, slander, create a risk to personal safety, abuse, or deceive any individual, organisation, or the sport of netball.

This Policy provides guidance for all Members, participants, connected participants, Volunteers, Staff, organisations and third parties to help them understand the acceptable standards of use of Social Media and online messaging 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 pace of change in technology means that it is not possible to provide a definitive list of all forms of Social Media to which this Policy applies. Therefore, this policy should be understood as applying to all commonly recognised forms of Social Media. It should be read in conjunction with the Codes of Conduct, and you are reminded that misuse of Social Media can result in Disciplinary Action against any Member, connected participant, Volunteer, or Staff. Consequently, this policy applies to all Staff, Volunteers, Children, Young People, and anyone involved in EN Recognised and Authorised 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:

- Working together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Care Act 2014

DEFINITIONS

Child or Young Person - is used to refer to any person below the age of 18.

Club - a collection of individuals that come together from time to time in the form of a netball club through which some or all individuals become members of England Netball.

Club Safeguarding Officer - the person with lead responsibility within a Club for ensuring safe recruitment, that the appropriate DBS checks are completed by personnel, communicating safeguarding awareness, advising on good practice, and acting on concerns, in accordance with England Netball Safeguarding Policies.

Codes of Conduct - the set of behavioural standards which England Netball establishes as the expected minimum standards of behaviour.

County or County Netball Association (CNA) - an association of Leagues, Clubs, groups and schools as determined by the Board in accordance with the Memorandum of Association or the Articles of Association or other Membership Regulations.

Disciplinary Action - action taken under the Disciplinary Regulations of England Netball.

England Netball (EN) - the All England Netball Association Limited, a private company limited by guarantee and registered in England with the registered number of 1698144.

Member - any individual or organisation appointed as a Personal or Group Member in accordance with England Netball's Articles of Association. Where an organisation is a Member, the leader of the organisation (usually the Chair of the management group/committee) will be held to account on behalf of the organisation (Sanctions, including Interim Suspensions, may be applied to the organisation).

Recognised and Authorised Activity - means recognised versions of the game that have been authorised by England Netball.

Region or Regional Management Board (RMB) - an association of County Netball Associations as determined by the Board, in accordance with the Memorandum or the Articles or the Membership Regulations.

Social Media - is the collective of online communications and media channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration via 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. Examples include Facebook, YouTube, X, Google+, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, Pinterest, Kick, LinkedIn, and Reddit.

Staff - those employed or holding any other form of contract with England Netball whether on full time, part time, or zero hours contracts.

Volunteer(s) - any person who gives their time and talents freely to make netball happen and is not paid more than out of pocket expenses. For the avoidance of doubt this means, any person providing assistance or support to England Netball, County or Regional Netball Associations, leagues or Clubs from time to time otherwise than as Staff and including but not limited to any person providing assistance at Leagues, competitions, tournaments and clubs.

AIMS

The aims of our online safety policy are:

- to protect everyone involved in netball who make use of online technology while in our care, or while engaging with the sport in Authorised and Regulated Activity
- to provide staff and volunteers with principles that guide our approach to online safety
- to ensure our organisation operates in line with our values and relevant legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation and Online Safety Act 2023.
- we seek to provide guidance on how Clubs use social media and instant messaging apps to communicate with players and parents safely and appropriately.

PURPOSE

Social media and digital communication are integral to modern netball. This policy outlines how anyone affiliated with England Netball should use these tools responsibly and respectfully, while safeguarding everyone involved and upholding the reputation of netball.

OUR COMMITMENTS

As part of this policy, Clubs, Leagues, County and Regional Netball Boards will:

- ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using online platforms
- monitor how staff, parents/guardians and children use platforms both inside and outside of the setting to ensure it adheres to this policy, local acceptable use statement and Codes of Conduct
- regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure online safety is embedded throughout their organisation

- keep all apps and platform security up to date, use strong passwords and maintain privacy of all users
- use security and privacy tools available on each platform effectively
- have a zero-tolerance policy towards discrimination, hateful communication, cyberbullying, inappropriate, harmful or illegal content
- inform all staff, volunteers, parents/carers and children what to do in the event they see something that worries them online
- adhere to parental consents and permissions when sharing images, videos or live streaming for promotional or celebrational purposes
- develop an online safety agreement for use with staff, volunteers, parents and carers and the children and young people
- ensure personal information gathered while using online platforms are stored securely and in line with our privacy policies

This policy will be widely promoted and is mandatory for everyone involved in netball. Failure to comply with the policy and procedures will be addressed and may ultimately result in investigation, suspension and sanction by England Netball, and where appropriate, referral to statutory agencies.

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

Whilst we encourage Players, Clubs and other netball organisations to use social media to positively promote 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 considered. This Policy seeks to assist users to achieve that balance.

We seek to provide guidance on how Clubs use social media and instant messaging apps to communicate with players and parents safely and appropriately.

- Use communication channels with responsibility, professionalism, and respect.
- Social media use reflects on individuals, clubs, and the game.
- All contact with players under 18 must occur within safe, transparent, and appropriate boundaries.
- Be respectful and inclusive.
- Think before posting or sharing: would you say this in public or to the media?
- Never post when emotionally compromised.
- Be aware of this England Netball Social Media Policy

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- Private, one-on-one communication by coaches, or volunteers with players under 18 via email, text, or social media should not happen.
- If someone under 18 initiates 1:1 communication, this should be shared immediately with someone with a safeguarding responsibility and (unless there is a safety reason not to) the Child's parent/guardian.

- **Group forums or chats including anyone under 18:**
    - parents or guardians should always be invited to join,
    - should always include a Club Safeguarding Officer or another volunteer, not just coaches.
    - Any group conversations should have at least two adult administrators in it.
    - If possible, private phone numbers should be hidden from users.
    - Spond, Heja, Chatpro, StackTeam and other apps all have a free version and premium pay-for features. Most of these allow contact details to be hidden.
    - See also WhatsApp go-to guide for sports | CPSU (thecpsu.org.uk)
- Content should be limited to netball-related matters such as fixtures, training, or cancellations.
- Encourage young players to follow official club pages rather than personal profiles.
- Coaches and volunteers should avoid entering conversations about individual selections or deselections

Communicating with young volunteers aged 16 or 17:

- The club/organisation should gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have contact naming the individual adult(s) who will communicate with the young person, the purpose and the relevant media to be used.
- The parent/guardian should be invited to take part in that group/chat
- The named adult(s) must sign an agreement to keep the contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's role in the club/organisation

Guidance for high profile players. Roses and NSL players should understand they are in the public eye and realise what they do and say on social media is open to public and media scrutiny.

- Ideally have separate public and private accounts.
- Avoid criticising other players, teams, or officials on their social media feeds, posts, or in comments linked to other people's content.
- Avoid making derogatory comments – particularly in relation to physical difference.
- Always show respect for fair sport, equality, and diversity, for fellow players, Staff, officials and Volunteers.
- Consider their own safety and privacy and that of team-mates, family, and friends. Consider privacy settings, which friend, or other connections/follows to accept.
- Be careful not to engage in online communication or relationships that are inappropriate because of the other person's age or other vulnerability.
- Remember that some of their audience could be critical of aspects of their performance or appearance. Try not to engage in online arguments.
- Report online bullying, abuse, or stalking to the authorities and reach out for support from your team-mates, or England Netball.

MISUSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION

The following non-exhaustive actions **may result in disciplinary action**:

- Implying bias or questioning the integrity of match officials or other individuals.
- Sharing or forwarding inappropriate (offensive, sexual, suggestive) messages or media.
- Any criminal conduct relating to imagery or communications
- Posting discriminatory, offensive, or threatening content.
- Public comments that could bring the game into disrepute
- Engaging in inappropriate communication with children (offensive, sexual, suggestive, bullying or belittling language)
- Adults in positions of trust 'friending' or 'following' any U18s or accepting them as social media 'friends' or 'followers'.
- Using social media or communication platforms or groups to encourage excessive training or drills

SAFEGUARDING AND REPORTING

- Individuals in Positions of Trust must act as role models online and offline.
- For players under the age of 18 - It is essential to inform parents of any communication between adults and young people.
- If a Child or Young Person expresses discomfort about online communication, encourage them to speak to a parent, guardian, trusted adult or Club Safeguarding Officer.
- If a player shares a message, email, or image that may be inappropriate, this must be reported immediately to the Club Safeguarding Officer.
- Serious concerns about online content that is not netball related (e.g. images or grooming behaviour) should be reported to CEOP (www.ceop.uk) or your local police.
- Safeguarding issues relating to online conduct of members should be reported to besafe@englandnetball.co.uk

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

- Breaches of this policy may lead to suspension, England Netball investigation, or reporting to statutory authorities.
- Individuals are accountable for their online and communication conduct.

USEFUL INFORMATION

The following organisations are a good source of the most up to date guidance:

- CPSU Online Safety
- UK Safer Internet Centre
- CEOP Safety Centre
- What is social media? | NSPCC
- Chat apps | NSPCC
- Online safety and social media in sport
- Digital app risk assessment tool
- How to change group visibility in communities | WhatsApp Help Center

CONTACTS

Report a concern via besafe@englandnetball.co.uk

Urgent cases should be referred to the Police by calling 999.

NSPCC are available Mon-Fri 0800-2200, weekends 0900-1800, 365 days a year on 0808 800 5000. NSPCC Helpline | NSPCC