

# Launceston Swimming Club – Social Networking Sites Policy

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Launceston Swimming Club

Version Control Sheet

**Policy Name: Social Networking Sites Policy**

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## **Introduction**

### **Good Practice Guidelines on the use of Social Networking Sites by ASA Clubs and Club Members**

#### **Background**

There has been a growing awareness in sport of the increasing communication by adults and young people on the rapidly developing social networking sites and how this media has become a feature of social communication. There are risks associated with these developments, and the ASA has identified a number of issues that have led to both disciplinary and safeguarding concerns, which stem from the improper or inappropriate use of such sites by its members.

#### **Introduction**

The ASA recognise that the use of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, for example, is a rapidly growing phenomenon and is increasingly being used as a communication tool of choice by young people and more recently by adults. Facebook is the largest such site who's "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. A third of the UK population is reported to have a Facebook account.

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.

## Launceston Swimming Club – Social Networking Sites Policy

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 ASA club members and parents on the use of social networking sites as they relate to that individual's role in the ASA club.

Guidance for coaches, teachers and other officers in a position of trust and responsibility in respect of children in an ASA club

1. ASA members in a position of trust and/or responsibility should not be in contact with young people through social networking sites if they hold such a position in respect of that individual young person.
2. Should a young person in your club request to become a named friend on your social networking site or request that you become a named friend on the young person's social networking site you should decline.
3. The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise ASA members or ASA clubs and to do so may be in breach of ASA Rules and Regulations.
4. The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site of anyone other than the swimmer themselves (and

this included others being able to be seen in background shots) would be considered inappropriate.

There is specific Guidance to be found in Wavepower for **Coaches who have children under the age of 18 swimming in the club.**

There is also specific guidance for **Coaches, teachers and officials who are under 18 and if the young coach/official is aged 18 to 21.**

The ASA recognise that many young coaches aged 18 to 21 will have been swimmers before becoming a coach and have been friends with their fellow swimmers, some of whom will be between the ages of 16/17. There is therefore specific guidance and special precautionary measures to be taken.

### **Guidance to ASA members under the age of 18**

1. Do not ask your club coach or teacher to be your social networking site friend – they will refuse as that would breach good practice.
2. Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) for some useful tips.
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

## Launceston Swimming Club – Social Networking Sites Policy

later on; or that could be 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 ASA 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 a club officer before even considering uploading a photo. 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. Such technology is instant and this allows you as the user to react in the ‘heat of the moment’, where in the past you would have been required to write a letter, which would have taken time and allowed for you to think again before sending. So never place a comment on the internet that you would not put in writing or say to the individual concerned face to face as to do so may not only breach ASA Policy but also the law.

The ASA have produced a parent’s code of conduct, which can be found in Wavepower. Section 6 of Wavepower states that parents are expected to:

*“Behave responsibly as a spectator at training and treat swimmers, coaches, committee members and parents of yours and other clubs with due respect, therefore meeting the ASA commitment to equality”.*

## Launceston Swimming Club – Social Networking Sites Policy

What to do if you have concerns as a user of a social networking site, whether you are a child or an adult, you may at some time have a concern about what you are seeing or being told about by another user. Concerns may range from negative or abusive comments and cyber bullying to suspected grooming for sexual abuse.

The ASA has drawn up a list below of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you can raise such concerns.

- The Child Exploitation on Line Protection Unit (CEOP) at [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) or by pressing the CEOP button on Facebook or on the “Child Power” section of the ASA website.
- The ASA through swimline 0808 100 4001.
- Childline 0800 1111 or [www.Childline.org.uk](http://www.Childline.org.uk).
- [www.childnet.org.uk](http://www.childnet.org.uk) which is a NSPCC support service specifically for young people. Using this website, children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors online about any issues or problems they may be experiencing, using an application similar to Instant Messenger (IM).
- The Local Police or Children’s Services their number appears in the phone book.
- The NSPCC helpline 08008005000 or [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk) for adults concerned about the welfare or safety of a child.

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