



## SOCIAL MEDIA / COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

The Warwickshire Union of golf Clubs Ltd has issued this policy to give clear guidance and boundaries to employees and volunteers with regard to communicating with young people online and via mobile devices. It is recognised that young people communicate using various forms and this is an important part of their 'world'. It is therefore essential that we engage with it. By setting good practice, guidelines and boundaries we aim to protect all employees and volunteers whilst helping our young people stay safe online.

Children under the age of 13 will not be communicated with directly via any form of social media, email or texting. All communication will be direct with parent(s)/guardian(s)

### **General Principles:**

The following are general principles to be applied in the use of social media, email, and mobile phone;

- Do not use any form of private messaging to communicate to individuals.
- No young person should be identified in the public domain e.g. Facebook, Twitter.
- Do not become 'friends' with young persons, or accept friend requests from young persons.
- Do not upload or distribute photographs of any young people.
- Generally, do not communicate between the hours of 10pm and 8am.
- The tone of any communication should be friendly but not over-familiar or personal, and not suggest or offer a special relationship.
- Volunteers should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to WUGC Ltd work with young people, and not for general socialising.
- Social media 'groups' or 'events' should always be created as private. Whilst they can be a very useful organisational tool, if not created and managed appropriately then they could put young persons who are a part of the group at risk.

### **Email communication guidance:**

Email is generally not an effective way to communicate to young people, and is more effective with parents as a good way to keep them informed of what is happening. If and when email is used to communicate to young people it should be used within the following parameters:

- Should be open (not Bcc) and always include parent(s)/guardian(s) and/or another WUGC Ltd official.
- Used only to communicate specific information (e.g. times and dates of events).
- Used to recruit or encourage young people to be involved in WUGC Ltd activity.
- Not to be used for 'ping pong' conversations or private communication.

If a potential safeguarding issue is disclosed via email then the following action should be taken:

- Inform Welfare Officer immediately for further advice.
- If a concern is raised about the Welfare Officer then contact the Compliance Department, England Golf, 01526 351824.
- Do not make promises of confidentiality or ask questions relating to the disclosure.

**Text message guidance:**

Traditional text messaging services are private by nature and generally not a good way to communicate with young people.

If used, save messages as text files to ensure an open record exists.

**Twitter use guidelines:**

Volunteers managing or 'running' the County's twitter account should not:

- Conduct themselves in a way that is potentially detrimental to the County or brings the County or its employees, volunteers or partners into disrepute, for example by posting images or video clips that are inappropriate or links to inappropriate website content.
- Include personal information or data about the County's volunteers, employees, partners or players without their express consent – this could constitute a breach of the Data Protection Act 1998, which is a criminal offence.
- Make any derogatory, offensive, discriminatory, untrue, negative, critical or defamatory comments about the County, its employees, volunteers, partners or players.
- Make any comments about the County employees, players or volunteers that could constitute unlawful discrimination, harassment, or cyber-bullying contrary to the Equality Act 2010.
- Disclose any confidential, proprietary or sensitive information belonging to the County.
- Breach copyright or any other proprietary interest belonging to the County, for example using someone else's images or written consent without permission.
- Post about non-WUGC Ltd matters or use it as a general socialising tool.

Policy adopted by the Warwickshire Union of Golf Clubs Ltd  
February 2017