Online safety and social media policy

This policy has been developed to inform our club members about using social media (*Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Tik Tok, Instagram and all other social networking sites and forums)* so people feel enabled to participate, while being mindful of their responsibilities and obligations. This policy provides practical guidance allowing all parties to benefit from the use of social media, while minimising potential risks and protecting those involved.
Throughout this policy, we refer to children and young people as anyone under the age of 18. We also define social media as any website or application which facilitates interaction with others via technology.

Social media platforms in use as of June 2025

WhatsApp groups. Countless have been set up in recent years. Many of the endurance groups have come under a community group umbrella.
Signal: Similar to WhatsApp and used by high jump coaches and athletes (two separate groups)
Facebook closed account Ian Osbourne administrates.
Facebook open account Iain Osbourne administrates.
Instagram: sprints_hurdles_tbac operated by Graham Mattacks
X (previously twitter) there is a club account but not used
Strava; lots of individual use but no club account
TikTok unknown club use
Linkdin account no club use

Managing online presence
Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- all social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least 2 members of the club will have access to each account and password
- account monitoring will be by all members of the community rather than specific individuals. Anyone with concerns about a post for whatever reason should contact a club welfare officer or member of the Executive committee. The matter will be investigated without delay via the Account Administrator
- Designated welfare officer to advise on safeguarding requirements where appropriate.
- WhatsApp administrators will remove inappropriate posts by club members, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved)

- clubs should decline requests from children under 18 to join the club's social media accounts.
- TBAC will make sure all club members are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that's happened online. This should be one of the club's Welfare Officers (Aaron Pritchard or Philipa Spruit on welfare@teambathac.org)
- Identifying details such as a club members home address, school name or telephone number shouldn't be posted on social media platforms
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as a club
- No club postings to children under 18) All communication with children will be through a parent or carer.

WhatsApp and group messaging guidelines

Team Bath AC recommend using WhatsApp as the social media/application of choice for group information and chats. In using WhatsApp, the following concerns need to be taken into account:

- General WhatsApp groups can add participants without their prior consent.
- Participants' telephone numbers are visible on the group as is their profile picture. This is a GDPR and potentially safeguarding concern.
- Unsuitable material may be posted to a WhatsApp group. If this occurs, it should be dealt with in line with other social media posts as outlined in this document.
- Photographs and Videos shared on the group remain in the camera roll on all participants phones. This feature can be removed through settings.
- The Administrator does not have the ability to audit the group's content.
- Consent should be sought to participate through a formal request to join and an option to decline. Participants should never be automatically added without consent.
- Inactive participants may be removed from WhatsApp groups but should first be given notice and have the opportunity to state that they wish to continue.
- All participants must abide by the UK Athletics Codes of Conduct, which have been adopted as club policy by Team Bath AC. These include acting with dignity and displaying good manners towards others; not undermining, putting down or belittling others; avoiding swearing and abusive language; challenging inappropriate behaviour and language by others and reporting any suspected misconduct.

Online behaviours

The code of conducts state the expected behavioural standards, this includes behaviour on social media when posting on behalf of a Team Bath AC social medial page or when engaging with one. Here is some specific does and don'ts to consider:

- Pause and think about what you are saying and the impact it might have
- Be careful, respectful and positive. You are personally responsible for what you post. If in doubt, don't post it.
- Think about your image – 'what do I want people to think about me or my club?'
- Consider who you are interacting with - you will likely come into contact online with under 18s. Familiarise yourself with safeguarding regulations in relation to engaging with under 18s.
- Respect confidentiality within the team e.g. tactics, squad information, announcements, coaching advice, training sessions.

- Remember many different audiences will see your posts including Club members, potential members, children, member's relatives, and friends.

- Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and your privacy settings.
- Don't post content that discriminates against individuals or groups on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- Don't write anything on social media channels that you wouldn't feel comfortable seeing in a newspaper or hearing on TV.
- Don't speak negatively about other club members, competitors, officials or governing bodies. Never use slurs, personal insults or obscenity. Be professional and respectful.
- Be in the right state of mind when you make a post. Don't post when you're angry, upset, or your judgement is impaired in any way. Be very careful what you say, do and post.

- Don't engage in on-line disputes and don't allow family or friends to argue on your behalf.

What we expect from our club volunteers and club staff

- volunteers and staff should not communicate with children (below the age of 18) via personal accounts
- Volunteers and staff should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- Volunteers and staff should seek the advice of the designated welfare officer if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- Volunteers and staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children to the designated staff responsible for the organisation's online presence
- Volunteers and staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' children from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using club accounts.
- Volunteers and staff should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate as club members may 'follow' them on social media
- Rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, volunteers should choose a more formal means of communication, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use a club account or website.
- E mails or messages should maintain the club's tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate in a professional setting, avoiding using slang or inappropriate language
- Volunteers and staff should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from club accounts
- Any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our safeguarding procedure
- At least one parent must be present during the delivery of any activities via video conferencing platforms at home
- Any delivery of activities to children via video conferencing platforms will be supported by an additional member of staff (even if they're not actively delivering) to ensure transparency

What we expect of club members

- members should be aware of this online safety and social media policy and the behaviours set out
- we expect members behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in the code of conducts and anti bullying statement
- members should take the necessary steps to protect themselves online. Children follow the age restructions set out by social media companies

What we expect of parents and carers

- Parents should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms
- Parents should protect all children's privacy online and think carefully about what content they share about our sport online, where they share it and who they're sharing it with
- We expect behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in the code of conduct for parents and carers

Policy breach

Club members who breach this policy (and other related policies) will face a warning in the first instance, perisistant breaches will be dealt with through the clubs grievance and displinary policy.
Any breaches of a safeguarding nature will be addressed through the clubs safeguarding policy and procedure and where appropraite will be reported to UK Athletics.
Whilst the club will try to moderate social media posts, if you do have any concerns or would like to make a complaint please contact the club welfare officer.

Related policies and procedures

- Club Constitution
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Codes of Conduct
- Club Grievance and Disciplinary Policy
- Club Inclusion Policy

- NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000
- Childline 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk
- The UK Safer Internet Centre https://saferinternet.org.uk/
- Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org

All policies can found here:

About - Team Bath Athletic Club

Useful contacts

- Club Welfare Officers: Aaron Pritchard and Philipa Spruit welfare@teambathac.org
- UKA 07920 532552/ safeguarding@uka.org.uk
- EA welfare@englandathletics.org