



Registered Charity 1165948

Berkshire Cricket

Social Media, Online Communication and Online Safety Policy

Policy updated: January 2025

Next Review Date: January 2026

Version: 1.0

DEFINITIONS

In this Policy the following terms/expressions shall mean:

- ECB – means England and Wales Cricket Board
- Children – refers to persons under the age of 18
- Safe Hands - means the ECB's cricket policies and procedures for safeguarding children within cricket.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The aim of this policy is to provide procedures and practical guidance for all Berkshire Cricket employees, agents, volunteers, and other professionals and/or partners working alongside Berkshire Cricket to safeguard children.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a constantly changing landscape providing both benefits and risks to those involved in cricket.

Social media platforms enable efficient communication between cricketing organisations and their members, staff or volunteers, players, supporters, and parents/carers.

Risks include cyber bullying, inappropriate content being shared on platforms and security issues such as organisation or personal accounts being hacked.

Codes of Conduct should include aspects around social media and many cricket organisations have formally included expectations around online behaviour into their constitution and/or disciplinary processes, Berkshire Cricket supports this as good practice.

The use of social networking sites also introduces a range of potential safeguarding risks to children and young people. Sport England commissioned the NSPCC Child Protection in Sport Unit to provide safeguarding guidelines for County Sports Partnerships, National Governing

Bodies, and other sports organisations which Berkshire Cricket recommend clubs and local partners utilise when considering use of social media within their organisation.

Social media, when used properly, offers many positive communication opportunities for cricket. There are many different social media platforms which incorporate instant messaging, sharing of images and videos, live streaming, and gaming. As the number of available apps grows and changes, it is important to follow some simple guidelines to ensure that social media can be safely used as a promotional tool and a means of communication for the game remembering cricket is an open age and open gender sport.

CONTACTING PLAYERS UNDER 18

The Children Act defines a person under 18 years as a child. Berkshire Cricket staff should make arrangements for under 18s via their parents or carers; this includes text and email or WhatsApp messages etc.

It is understood that in the case of over 16's this may not be ideal for Berkshire Cricket staff or the parents. An acceptable exception to this rule is to text or email the parent and to copy in the 16- or 17-year-old, with the parent's prior consent. This means the parent can monitor communications, but the 16- or 17-year-old receives the information directly.

If a member of Berkshire Cricket staff receive any responses that appear inappropriate they should be brought to the attention of the parent or carer. Berkshire Cricket staff should not engage in individual text or email conversations with a 16- or 17-year-old without their parent receiving the same messages from them. All contact with children should be in relation to coaching, matches and cricket-related activity.


SOCIAL MEDIA: DO'S AND DON'TS

Berkshire Cricket staff should:

- Before using social media to post or comment, consider whether they would be happy for those they are coaching, or their parents, to see their post.
- Remember they are representing Berkshire Cricket and that their communications should conform with this policy and Safe Hands guidance.
- Have separate social media accounts for cricket related and personal use.
- Keep photos and personal information private.
- Apply the Codes of Conduct and appropriate professionalism to their behaviour online, by text and email.
- Obtain consent before posting any personal information online – this includes photographs where an individual can be identified. Remember the picture/no name guidance for under 18s in the Photo, Video and Live Streaming policy.

Berkshire Cricket staff should not:

- Send text messages to juniors – make arrangements via their parents (see above for exceptions).
- Send any direct communication or have any interaction with a child on a social media platform – this could be misconstrued as overstepping expected professional boundaries.
- Invite or accept children and young people to become “friends”.
- Send inappropriate text messages or post messages on social media that are offensive, nasty or derogatory in any way.
- Criticise players, team members, or their parents online.



If a member of Berkshire Cricket staff suspect that someone is using social media in an unsafe or inappropriate manner, they should report the behaviour to the County Safeguarding Manager or the Cricket Regulator Safeguarding team – email safeguarding@cricketregulator.co.uk.

If a member of Berkshire Cricket staff believe an offence has been committed, or that someone's use of social media is placing a child is at risk of harm, they should inform the police immediately.

USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS

Berkshire Cricket recognises that mobile phones have a valuable role to play in ensuring the safety and welfare of coaches and participants, particularly when an emergency occurs. Therefore, there is not a blanket ban on the use of mobile phones by coaches when coaching.

However, the use of mobile phones by coaches during practical delivery, for the general purposes of either making or receiving calls, is unsafe and inappropriate conduct. The primary responsibility of the coach must be the supervision and safety of the children and young people that they coach and the provision of a structured, quality coaching experience. Anything which compromises the coach's ability to maintain a safe environment and give their full attention to the supervision and coaching of children should be actively discouraged.

Many facility providers also have clear guidance on restricting the use of mobile phones based on the concerns that have been identified about their potential misuse (for example, as part of a facility photography policy). Coaches using mobile phones may be breaching guidance and undermining the ability of a facility to enforce their restrictions.

Berkshire Cricket encourages the use of disclosed lists for sending information via a designated and suitably trained adult (because of their position this person should also have been subject to appropriate selection and vetting processes). Group e-mails should also give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: "If you wish to be removed from this e-mail list please contact the administrator".

Further information is available from the ECB Safeguarding Kitbag at:

[19 ECB Guidance for clubs on the use of Social Media texts apps email and messaging services 2018.pdf \(platform-static-files.s3.amazonaws.com\)](https://platform-static-files.s3.amazonaws.com/19_ECB_Guidance_for_clubs_on_the_use_of_Social_Media_texts_apps_email_and_messaging_services_2018.pdf)

This includes guidance for parents/carers and children/young people on the use of social media, texts, apps and email.