



## SOUTH DURHAM GYMNASTICS- SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

### **Purpose of this Policy**

South Durham Gymnastics (SDG) is committed to making the best use of all available technology and innovation to improve the way the Charity operates. This includes using all reasonable and cost-effective means to improve the way we communicate, reach out and interact with the different communities we serve.

'Social media' is the term commonly given to web-based tools which allow users to interact with each other in some way – by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interests online. As the name implies, social media involves building online communities or networks to encourage participation and engagement. These platforms open up many new and exciting opportunities. However, the practical application of such technology by SDG is continually developing and there are many potential issues to consider.

To avoid major mistakes which could result in reputational, legal and ethical issues, and misuse/abuse of a well-functioning social media relationship, it is important that we manage any potential risks through a common-sense approach, as well as proactively monitoring the development of such applications.

### **Aims**

These guidelines aim to provide our members with information concerning the use/development of any social media application and help them get the best out of the tools available whilst maintaining a safe environment and protecting themselves, as well as SDG.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with other relevant policies including:

- [SDG's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy](#);
- [SDG's Anti-Bullying Policy](#);
- [British Gymnastics' Safeguarding Policies](#);
- [British Gymnastics' Social Networking Guidelines](#).

### **Definition of Social Media**

For the purposes of these guidelines, **social media** is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This includes, but is not limited to e-mail, online social forums, blogs, video- and image-sharing websites/apps and similar facilities.

### **Parent/Carer Consent for Gymnasts**

- SDG actively uses the media, social media and the internet to publicise its work, celebrate the success of its gymnasts and engage with the wider public. This often requires the use of videos, images and written comments, which name and identify gymnasts;
- All media consent is carried out in line with the SDG [Privacy Policy](#);
- At SDG, we hold all information relating to our members on a central database. As members of SDG, parents/carers are required to either give/not give consent for their child to be involved in photography/filming for South Durham Gymnastics/Pink Leisurewear - to be used in advertising, social media or for training purposes;
  - A copy of this consent form can be requested via the [SDG Office](#).

### **SDG's Expectations regarding Social Media Use**

- SDG uses an open Facebook page, Instagram page and TikTok to appropriately to share information and videos of gymnasts in training/competition, as well as Club updates. Parents/carers/gymnasts should not make any negative or derogatory comments regarding SDG or any of the coaches on any of these platforms;
- Parents/carers/gymnasts/coaches are required to maintain a positive image of the Club and should strive to be a positive influence and representative for SDG online;
- Parents/carers should contact the [Welfare Team](#) if they have any concerns regarding the social media and/or online content that SDG uses in relation to their child.

### **How do we Maintain a Positive Image of SDG Online?**

In addition to protecting children in our Club, those connected to SDG have a responsibility to maintain a positive image of SDG and the sport of gymnastics. It is important to understand, that if used correctly, social networking can be a fun, safe and productive activity.

The following guidelines refer to any posts, photographs, video, status updates and any other item that can be published on social media, which mentions or directs attention towards SDG:

- Coaches, gymnasts and parents/carers alike should avoid posting comments, remarks, photographs, and videos that could be perceived as disparaging about the Club, coaches, officials or other gymnasts. This applies to private text messaging as well as all social media and instant messaging services;
- Coaches, gymnasts and parents/carers should avoid posting any remarks, photographs or video that could be disparaging or embarrassing to another Gymnastics Club, it's members, coaches or officials;
- Gymnasts should avoid social chat with Club coaches or officials via any instant messaging or text service;
- Parents/carers should avoid interacting with gymnasts other than their own children via social media/text message;
- Coaches/parents/carers/gymnasts must not upload photographs/videos to any social media sites if they contain other gymnasts than their own child - without prior consent from their parent/carer;
- Coaches/parents/carers/gymnasts must not upload photographs/videos to any social media sites if they contain Club coaches/officials/volunteers - without their prior consent;
- Coaches/parents/carers/gymnasts must not copy and upload professional photographs/videos without the consent of the photographer;
- Parents/carers are encouraged to monitor their children's use of social media in order to protect them and guide them in its appropriate use.

Additionally, SDG members and their parents/carers should remember that using social media channels to specifically communicate with coaches, especially in visible communications (e.g. via Facebook pages) is not generally appropriate. Any direct communications for coaches should utilise private channels such as e-mails or face to face conversations. This is particularly relevant when members and parents have concerns or complaints. Coaches, gymnasts and parents/carers should inform SDG if at any point they notice a contravention to these guidelines.

#### **Additional Guidelines for SDG Staff, Coaches and Officials**

- SDG staff, coaches and officials should avoid chatting to gymnasts via any instant messaging service;
- If you receive any messages/requests from gymnasts by way of social networking/chat/text please do not respond to the child directly, please respond via their parents;
- Coaches and officials should not text gymnasts in their care for any reason, except for cases where the express permission has been sought and given by the parent. Please always communicate through the parent;
- Coaches and officials could face serious consequences if it is found that young people in their care have been exposed to inappropriate material/content via their social media pages.

By following the above we will ensure relationships between coaches and gymnasts remain professional whilst protecting gymnasts, coaches and parents/carers from allegations of inappropriate conduct. By setting clear guidelines for parents/carers, coaches and gymnasts concerning the use of social media/text messaging, we will preserve the reputation and positive image of the Club, coaches, volunteers and trustee members.

SDG reserves the right to take the appropriate action against any member of SDG who is in breach of these guidelines and our Social Media Policy, in order to protect the safety, well-being, welfare and reputation of SDG members and the Club.

#### **Staying Safe Online**

Helping to make the internet a great and safe place for children is a challenge. Below are some of SDG's top tips for helping our members to stay safe online:

- Don't post any personal information online – like your address, email address or mobile number;
- Think carefully before posting pictures or videos of yourself. Once you've put a picture of yourself online most people can see it and may be able to download it, it's not just yours anymore;
- Keep your privacy settings as high as possible - ideally completely private;
- Never give out your passwords;

- Don't befriend people you don't know;
- Don't meet up with people you've met online. Speak to your parent or carer if people suggest you do;
- Remember that not everyone online is who they say they are;
- Think carefully about what you say before you post something online;
- Respect other people's views, even if you don't agree with someone else's views, it doesn't mean you need to be rude;
- If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, unsafe or worried: leave the website, turn off your computer if you want to and tell a trusted adult immediately!

Below are the links to a series of 1-page guides to the Safety Settings to the most popular apps at the moment:

- [Facebook,](#)
- [WhatsApp,](#)
- [Snapchat,](#)
- [Instagram,](#)
- [YouTube,](#)
- [TikTok,](#)
- [Twitch,](#)
- [Kik](#)

**Suggested Review Date:** After significant changes, or annually  
**Annual Review Date:** 18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

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