



**Burgess Sports Media Policy**  
Internet, email and texting communication guidelines for workers

**Introduction**

As a children's or youth worker in Burgess Sports, we recognise that using the Internet (and other forms of technology) is an important part of the lives of the children and young people we work with. We understand that for many children and young people, using the Internet is a regular part of their lives and has a significant impact on their social development. In accordance with Burgess Sports's Safeguarding Policy, we recognise that we must take all possible steps to protect young people from significant harm or risk whilst using the Internet or any other form of technology. We also recognise the importance of establishing and updating procedures to ensure workers are protected whilst they work with children and young people. All workers are responsible for reading any policies produced regarding safeguarding and communication matters and are expected to adhere to the guidelines in the current policies. At the end of this document, you will find a notes section, which relates to specific parts of this policy.

**Reasons for contacting a young person via the Internet or email**

It is not appropriate to have private non-work related contact in the form of electronic communication with the children and young people with whom we work. We recognise that there will be times when it is necessary and important to use electronic communication. However, we recognise the need for an appropriate response and always encourage face-to-face contact as opposed to a contact or reply via online methods of communication.

**Guidance for workers**

Workers should only use electronic communication for reasons relating to work with children and young people, not for general socializing (see guidelines below). Workers should make their line manager or youth group leader aware when they are using electronic communication. This must be set up as part of a group communication and not individual.

**Parental awareness and consent**

Parental consent for using electronic forms of communication is essential and should be included on your annual consent forms or by letter with a return slip agreeing to the use of this form of communication. You should outline what means you will be using for communication and what you will be communicating. It is important to explain this policy and practice to parents and careers and seek to ensure they are aware and are happy that we use electronic communication and what type of electronic communication we are using (e.g. email).

**Specific definitions**

'Internet' communication specifically refers to the use of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and other websites of a similar nature. 'Email' communication specifically refers to the use of emails, including written text and/or pictures sent from

personal or work accounts.

### **Email communication**

Email should only be used to communicate specific information (times and dates of events, for example). It should not be used as a relationship-building tool. We recommend having a 'shared' staff email account where all staff can access any emails, regardless of whether it is private or public. This would allow communication amongst staff and young people to remain safe. Only group emails should be used. Workers should encourage appropriate 'face to face' contact where possible. Conversation (repeated sending of emails between two individuals) via email is discouraged. Workers should make their line manager or team leader aware when they are using email to contact young people. Email histories should be kept and dated.

### **Email and accountability**

As specified above, email should only be used to convey information and not used as a relationship tool. However, if a young person discloses information or anything of a concerning matter arises via email, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Read and follow the Burgess Sports Safeguarding Procedures relating to disclosures.
2. Do not respond to the email. Make attempts to contact the young person via other methods of communication and where possible, arrange to meet face to face if necessary.

### **Language**

All language should be appropriate and where possible 'standard responses' should be used (eg if you have sent an email out containing event details and receive a reply asking for further details, create a standard response with additional details so that all young people receive the same information). Workers and volunteers should take great care over the language used to reduce the risk of misinterpretation. When sending emails, workers should not use informal language such as shorthand or 'text language' as this can often be misunderstood and lead to further complications.

### **Hours of communication**

When using email/the Internet for communication with young people (within the guidelines above), it is advised that it should take place between the hours of 9am-5pm. If a project takes place in the evening (after 5pm) and it is necessary to send an email/use the Internet, Workers should seek advice from their line manager but there should be no email communication after 9pm.

**We don't initiate conversations with the opposite sex via private messaging  
Initiating contact after 9pm is unacceptable unless an activity is run past this time.**

### **‘Adding friends’ on Facebook and similar sites**

You should not add children or young people on your personal social networking page who are part of Burgess Sports and who are under the age of 18. You can set up a Facebook group for your project or group and invite them to be members (that is, if they are over the required minimum age limit – which is 13 for Facebook). Workers should only use an agreed social networking account for contact with children and young people with whom they are working. This should normally be an account set up specifically for this purpose on behalf of a group rather than an individual (use project accounts, never personal accounts).

You can set up a group via a personal Facebook account but ensure that your personal settings are secure and have limited viewing. It is possible also to set the Facebook group privacy settings so they can't see the profiles of others who have joined (on Facebook, click on the little star-like icon in the top right hand corner, then select 'Privacy Settings' from the drop-down menu). Workers should not use their personal social networking or instant messaging accounts for contact with children and young people. Workers should seek to ensure that their personal profiles on any social networking sites should be set to the highest form of security to avoid young people accessing personal information or seeing any pictures of a personal nature.

### **Security when using Facebook**

#### **How to create a secure profile when setting up a group:**

1. Select the friends list from your profile.
2. Each young person has a 'add to list' option. Add the young people to the 'limited profile' group.
3. Once every young person is in the group limited profile, select 'Settings' and 'Privacy Settings' from the top of your Facebook page.
4. Select 'Profile' within the privacy settings page.
5. The privacy settings are then broken into profile, basic info, photos etc.
6. On each item that needs to be kept private select 'Edit custom settings'. A pop-up box will appear. At the bottom it will say "Except these people". Type "limited profile" into that box. Do this for every part of your profile to be kept private. You can also change the privacy settings to 'Only Me'. Click on 'Privacy Shortcuts' (the padlock icon in the right hand corner of your Facebook page), then click on 'Who can see my stuff?', and then select 'Only me' from the drop-down menu under 'Who can see my future posts?').The process is now complete.

#### **How are pages different from groups? Which one should I create?**

Pages allow real organisations, businesses, celebrities and brands to communicate broadly with people who like them. Pages may only be created and managed by official representatives. Groups provide a closed space for small groups of people to communicate about shared interests. Groups can be created by anyone. Other differences include:

## **Pages**

**Privacy:** Page information and posts are public and generally available to everyone on Facebook.

**Audience:** Anyone can like a page to become connected with it and get news updates. There is no limit to how many people can like a page. **Communication:** Page admins can share posts under the page's name. Page posts appear in the news feeds of people who like the page. Page admins can also create customized apps for their Pages and check Page Insights to track the page's growth and activity.

## **Groups**

**Privacy:** In addition to an open setting, more privacy settings are available for groups. In secret and closed groups, posts are only visible to group members. **Audience:** Group members must be approved or added by other members. When a group reaches a certain size, some features are limited. The most useful groups tend to be the ones you create with small groups of people you know. **Communication:** In groups, members receive notifications by default when any member posts in the group. Group members can participate in chats, upload photos to shared albums, collaborate on group docs and invite members who are friends to group events.

### **How do I create a group?**

1. From your home page, go to the 'Groups' section and click on 'Add Group'.
2. Click on 'Create New Group'.
3. A pop-up box will appear, where you'll be able to add a group name, add members and select a privacy setting for your group.
4. Click the 'Create' button when you're finished. Once the group is created, you will be taken to the group's page.
5. To get started click at the top right of the page and select 'Edit Group'.
6. From here you can add a group description, set a group email address, add a group picture and manage members.

### **Create a Facebook page**

It's free to set up a page and it only takes a few minutes to get started.

1. Choose a category and a name that represents your business.
2. Pick a logo or another image that people associate with your business to use as a profile picture.
3. Write a sentence about your business so people understand what you do.
4. Set a memorable web address for your page that you can use on marketing material to promote your presence on Facebook.
5. Choose a cover photo that represents your brand and showcases your product or service. It's the first thing people will see when they visit your page.

## **Chat facilities**

### **Messenger and live chat**

Use of live chat facilities between workers and children or young people is not permitted. Youth workers should refrain from engaging in conversation via these mediums. Live chat services and chat facilities cannot be kept on record and are therefore an unsuitable form of communication between workers, children and young



people.

### **Skype and other visual methods**

Use of Skype and any other webcam or visual communication via the Internet is not permitted. Workers should refrain from using such methods on a one-to-one basis as they cannot be recorded.

It can be used for conference call and is considered appropriate if a project or group uses a webcam/Skype in a group environment for project purposes and has clear aims and objectives for its use. Always seek to inform a line manager or group leader when this is taking place and keep a record of it.

### **Cyber bullying and the law**

Most children and young people use mobile phones and the Internet appropriately. However, when technology is abused there may be legal consequences Burgess Sports operates a zero tolerance to bullying of any kind. We will put disciplinary procedures in place and if necessary, ask for the person bullying (whether that be a staff member, volunteer or young person) to leave the organisation and not be attend our activities and events.

### **Mobile Phones**

The rationale for texting and calling is the same as social networking and email contact.

When you have received a phone call/text or made a phone call/text to a young person that is not giving out information you must make a record of the conversation and report it to your line manager. As much as possible do not give children or young people your personal number. Or set up an online texting service that only allows outward communication to a group and is managed online. But in all cases gain parental consent and limit your texts to the above guidelines. This policy works in conjunction with the Burgess Sports Social Media Safety guidelines on using the Internet and other forms of communication should be displayed where children and young people can see them (also have details for ChildLine, CEOPS and the Anti-Bullying Alliance available).

### **Addressing the media**

If there is an instance where Burgess Sports are contacted by the media about issues that have been reported in the news or a young person has been involved in something that has brought media attention, as an organisation we positively promote young people and always aim to protect them. This includes how they are represented in the media and within the community.

Vernon Neve-Dunn ([Vernon@burgesssports.org](mailto:Vernon@burgesssports.org), 07703053759) handles all press and will give statements accordingly.

### **Notes relating to the document**

- With regards to young people who have left the group or are now over the age of 18, please use discretion with regards to this policy and seek advice where necessary.



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- For useful resources and support material to use with parents and carers, volunteers and children and young people visit [www.ceops.org.uk](http://www.ceops.org.uk) or [www.thinkuknow.org.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.org.uk)
- Other policies include guidelines for parents, guidelines for 5-11 year-olds and Guidelines for 11-18 year-olds. These are all available to download from [www.childrenandyouth.org.uk](http://www.childrenandyouth.org.uk).

Use these guidelines in consultation with the Burgess Sports Safeguarding Policy.

**Monitoring social media**

Burgess Sports staff are responsible for setting up, managing and moderating (overseeing/reviewing/ responding to posted content) Burgess Sports web pages and its profile. The staff will oversee the content that will appear, will decide which links to other sites to accept, and will have online contact with the children and young people who interact with your webpage or profile. We keep records of our activities on social media. We apply the same level of recording of you online activities as we do in face-to-face work. Our pages are monitored daily during normal working hours (provision will need to be made to cover holiday times, bank holidays etc) removing any content that is inappropriate.

Date reviewed
Date approved By Trustees