



RLSS UK
Safeguarding

RLSS UK Social Media, Messaging and Internet Policy

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Control Sheet

Document Review

Name	Title
Representatives of	S.E.D.A.G

Document Approval

Name	Title	Department	Signature	Date
Lee Heard	Charity Director	Charity		12/04/2023

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v1.0	Initial document	12/04/2023

Associated Documents

Document	Version
RLSS UK Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	V1.0
RLSS UK Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	V1.0

Review dates

This document should be reviewed in line with the details in section 8 and updated to reflect relevant changes.



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1.0 Policy statement

- 1.1 RLSS UK is committed to ensuring that children and adults at risk who participate in its activities including lifesaving, lifeguarding, community awards, education, sports, competitions and any other events have a safe, positive and enjoyable experience. All groups of people whatever their age, gender, language, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and culture have the right to protection from abuse and to be treated fairly. Everyone involved with a child or an adult who may be at risk is uniquely placed to recognise and respond to abuse and poor practice across RLSS UK.
- 1.2 This policy provides guidance on how the RLSS UK uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines how we expect the staff who work for us, and the children and adults who are members of our organisation or interact with RLSS UK activities, to behave online. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child and Adult at Risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- 1.3 The RLSS UK commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

2.0 Policy Aims

2.1 The aims of our online safety policy are:

- to protect all children and adults at risk involved with our organisation and who make use of technology (such as mobiles phones, games consoles and the internet) whilst involved in our activities.
- to provide staff and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents
- to ensure that RLSS UK is operating in line with our values and within the law regarding how we behave online

2.2 As part of internet, messaging and social media usage, RLSS UK will:

- Assess and manage the safety aspects – including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for staff, children and adults when using websites, social media including: Facebook; TikTok; Instagram; Twitter; Snapchat; apps and video conferencing platforms including but not limited to Zoom, Teams, Skype or WhatsApp.
- Be aware of how staff, members and volunteers in our organisation and the children and adults that they engage with use social media both inside and outside of our setting.
- Ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media or video conferencing platforms.
- Provide training for the staff responsible for managing our organisation's online presence



- Regularly review existing safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
 - Making sure concerns of abuse or disclosures that take place online are written into our reporting procedures.
 - Incorporating online bullying ('cyberbullying') in our anti-bullying policy

2.3 Definitions

2.3.1 The following definitions apply to this policy:

- **Child' or 'children** - applies to anyone under the age of 18 .
- **Adult** – applies to anyone aged 18 or over.
- **Parent** - Refers to birth parents and other adults who are in a parenting role, for example step-parents, foster carers, adoptive parents and LA corporate parents.
- **Personnel** - applies to members of staff, members and volunteers.

2.4 Managing online presence

2.4.1 To be robust in terms of our online presence through our website or social media platforms RLSS UK will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All official accounts will be password-protected
- Accounts will be monitored by at least two designated members of personnel to provide transparency and accountability. These personnel will be appropriately vetted and receive safeguarding training.
- The designated staff managing online presence will seek advice and guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to advise on all areas of safeguarding.
- Designated personnel will remove inappropriate posts by children, adults or staff, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children involved). Where appropriate the matter may warrant referral to the police.
- RLSS UK will ensure that all children and adults (including parents) are aware who to contact if they have any concerns about something that's happened online.
- We will ensure that identifying details such as a child's 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 an organisation and will reflect our commitment to safeguarding and the values of partnership working.
- Parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through direct messaging, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication.
- Parents will need to give permission for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media in line with other related policies.
- Video conferencing sessions involving children will be password protected to maintain children's privacy and prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.



3.0 What the RLSS UK expects from personnel

3.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the RLSS UK Codes of Conduct which clearly documents the standards by which we expect all members of staff, parents, other adults and children to adhere to. The failure to adhere to these standards could lead to discipline proceedings and /or incidents of concerns being reported to the Police. All personnel should therefore be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.

3.2 Staff should seek the advice of the Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.

3.3 Staff should communicate all official messages that they may wish to send out to children to the designated staff responsible for the organisation's online presence.

3.4 Staff should not:

- Communicate with children via personal accounts.
- Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or adults at risk from personal accounts on social media and maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts.

3.5 Staff should:

- Make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate, as children and adults may 'follow' them on social media;
- Where possible communicate with parents through formal means of communication in the first instance, such as face-to-face, in an email or in writing, or use an organisational account or website;
- Avoid communicating with children via email or organisational social media outside of normal office hours;
- Ensure that all emails or messages maintain the organisations standards and should be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate with fellow professionals, avoiding kisses (X's) or using slang or inappropriate language;
- Undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms children and adults use and how to report or remove inappropriate content online
- Ensure that at least one parent must be present during the delivery of any activities via video conferencing platforms at home;
- Ensure that 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
- Minimise background noise and imagery, especially any offensive material, staff are advise to blur their background during video calls.

3.6 All safeguarding concerns should be reported in accordance with the RLSS UK Child and Adult safeguarding policies and procedures to the Club, District or HQ DSL. **Where children or adults at risk may be immediate danger from online or social media activity then the matter should be reported immediately to the Police by telephoning 999.**



4.0 What we expect of children

- 4.1 Children involved with RLSS UK activities should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms.
- 4.2 RLSS UK expect children's behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement.
- 4.3 Children should follow the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement on all digital devices, including smart phones, tablets and consoles - See Appendix A.
- 4.4 All safeguarding concerns should be reported in accordance with the RLSS UK Child and Adult safeguarding policies and procedures to the Club, District or HQ DSL. **Where you believe that you may be immediate danger from online or social media activity then the matter should be reported immediately to the Police by telephoning 999.**

5.0 What we expect of parents

- 5.1 Parents and other adults involved with RLSS UK activities should be aware of this online safety policy and agree to its terms both at induction and annually.
- 5.2 Parents should protect all children's privacy online and think carefully about what content they share online, where they share it and who they're sharing it with.
- 5.3 The RLSS UK expects parents' behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in our acceptable use statement for children (Appendix A) and in our codes of conduct for parents and spectators.
- 5.4 Facilitate logging on to video calls, checking that adults are in attendance and the child is attending the desired meeting
- 5.5 Facilitate logging off video calling software, making sure that the child is logged off before shutting down the device.
- 5.6 Make sure that during video calling that the child is in a suitable environment, with non-offensive background imagery and that everybody in the environment is aware that the call is taking place.
- 5.7 All safeguarding concerns should be reported in accordance with the RLSS UK Child and Adult safeguarding policies and procedures to the Club, District or HQ DSL. **Where children or adults at risk may be immediate danger from online or social media activity then the matter should be reported immediately to the Police by telephoning 999.**



6.0 Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate

6.1 RLSS UK expects that all staff when using mobile phones (or other devices) to communicate by voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger), to take the following precautions to ensure children's safety:

- staff will avoid having children's personal mobile numbers and will instead seek contact through a parent;
- staff will seek parental permission on each occasion that they need to contact children directly; the purpose for each contact will be clearly identified and agreed upon
- a method of accountability will be arranged, such as copies of texts, messages or emails also being sent to another member of staff or to parents
- staff (where appropriate) should have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with parents or children
- texts, emails or messages will be used for communicating information – such as reminding children or young people about upcoming events, which kit to bring or practice timings – and not to engage in conversation

6.2 If a child misinterprets such communication and tries to engage a staff member in conversation, the member of staff will take the following steps:

- end the conversation or stop replying
- suggest discussing the subject further at the next planned activity or event
- inform the organisations DSL in the interest of transparency
- if concerned about the child, provide contact details for the organisations DSL or appropriate agencies and report any concerns using the organisations reporting procedures

7.0. Using mobile phones during sports activities

7.1 So that all children can enjoy and actively take part in sports activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones during such activities. As part of this policy we will:

- make children aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements with the organisation ;
- inform parents of appropriate times they can contact children who are away at events and activities and discourage them from attempting contact outside of these times
- advise parents that it may not be possible to contact children during activities and provide a contact within the club or organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency
- explain to children how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement.

7.2 Please note that RLSS UK do, in certain circumstances, for recognised lifesaving sorting events allow the use of mobile devices for event preparation. In these circumstances the RLSS UK Poolside Mobile Phone Policy must be followed.



8.0. Procedural implementation and review

- 8.1 These procedures were implemented on 1st May 2023 and will be reviewed on an annual basis or in response to changes in safeguarding legislation and/or best practice.

9.0 Useful contact numbers

NSPCC -The NSPCC's guidance for parents on online safety - nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) - Child Exploitation and Online Protection Demand's website - ceop.police.uk

The UK Safer Internet Centre - Safer Internet Centre's advice for parents and children - saferinternet.org.uk

Information and resources related to this topic are available at: the cpsu.org.uk/help-advice/topics/online-safety



Statement of acceptable use of internet and social media

RLSS UK understands the importance of online communication for children’s and young people’s development. However, we recognise that relevant safeguards need to be put in place to ensure children and young people remain safe while online or using social media.

We ask that all parents / carers spend a few minutes to read through and discuss this statement with their child and then sign and return this form to the Club Designated Safeguarding Lead.

***Agreement of child / young person**

1. I will be responsible for my behaviour when using my phone during RLSS UK associated activities, including the content I access and how I conduct myself.
2. I will not deliberately create, browse or access material that could be considered offensive or illegal. If I accidentally come across any such material, I will report this to a member of staff.
3. I will not use social media or the internet to send anyone material that could be considered threatening, offensive, upsetting, bullying or that is illegal.
4. I understand that I should only use the RLSS UK official social media or website communication channels including channels officially advertised by activity providers (such as clubs) to contact them and should not seek out individual members of staff or coaches.
5. I understand that all my use of internet and social media is potentially visible to everyone and that any issues involving my behaviour online may be addressed by my coach or other staff members at the club.
6. I will not give out any of my personal information (such as name, age, address or telephone number) online, or that of anyone else.
7. I will not share my passwords with anyone else.

8. I will not arrange to meet someone that I have met online unless accompanied by a member of staff or parent.
9. I understand that these rules are designed to keep me safe, and if they are not followed my parents may be contacted.
10. I am aware of ways to limit risk to me and others when using the internet, messaging platforms and social media
11. I will avoid using my mobile phone during activities as I understand that it will have an impact on my safety and my opportunity to learn and achieve.
12. I am aware that if I am experiencing bullying behaviour or abuse online, I can contact **[Name of designated safeguarding lead]**.
13. I know I can contact Childline on **0800 11 11** or at **childline.org.uk** if I have any worries about something I've seen or experienced online.

Continued...

Declaration – parent / carer

We have discussed this statement and

(print child's name)

agrees to support the safe use of the internet and social media at **[Name of club or organisation]**.

Signature	✕
Print name	
Today's date	

Declaration – child / young person

Signature	✕
Print name	
Today's date	