



Weymouth Rugby Football Club Ltd

Founded 1872

Affiliated to the Rugby Football Union and the Dorset and Wilts Rugby Football Union

Patron: The Mayor of Weymouth & Portland

Presidents: D Quick

Monmouth Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 5HZ

Tel: 01305 778889

Weymouth RFC Website and Online Guidance

This guidance is important. It is based on current legislation and guidance. It should be read in full along with the notes after each section on how this is managed at Weymouth RFC and the person(s) responsible (marked in *Italic Blue*).

Club Websites

Websites are a key part of the daily operation of most clubs. They are probably the most flexible way to communicate with members, and to anyone interested in joining a club. They also have the potential to be a very safe way to communicate with children, given their wide accessibility. However, in the same way that a club has responsibility for the physical safety of a junior member when visiting the club's premises, that club must also ensure that there is nothing on its website which could harm a child, directly or indirectly. A club is responsible for the content of its website. There are 2 key risks to guard against, and which are constant themes in the more detailed provisions in this guidance:

1. Disclosing personal information about a child to people accessing the website. This could be the child's name, address, or any information about a child's life, interests or activities which would help a stranger target a child, or engage that child in conversation.
2. Abusive or inappropriate content (photos, video or text), on the site itself or on linked sites.

Website content generally

There are three main child protection risks associated with content:

1. Inappropriate content (for example violent, sexual or hateful content). Although it is possible to impose restrictions on access, it is overwhelmingly likely that children will be able to access all areas of a club's website. Indeed, most clubs will positively want the website to generate interest among children. The risk applies both to text on the club's website, and on any linked websites. *Any Additions to the website other than photos (see below) & Live Facebook/Twitter feeds (see below) can only now be made by Kate Berry or Chris Davis; both hold a RFU enhanced CRB.*
2. Bullying. This could be material on the site which criticises or humiliates a child. It could also be information which places undue pressure on the child to participate in some aspect of a club's activities. *Any information added to the website is checked to ensure that information about any children is not disclosed without the specific express permission of the Parents concerned. i.e. A Player is selected to represent the county etc.*
3. Disclosure of personal information of children. This could lead to grooming. *As 2 Above*

Blogs

Weblogs (also known as Blogs) are a type of content which is becoming commonplace on websites. The creation of a blog is straightforward. It does not require technical or design expertise, and it can be updated remotely. Blogs present two particular challenges:

1. A central part of the attraction of a blog is that it is updated frequently. However the same risks apply to its content as apply to all other content on the site. A club cannot distance itself from the content of a blog it chooses to include on its site.
2. Blogs often contain a lot of opinion, as opposed to purely factual information. *Weymouth RFC do not operate and or participate in any blogs and currently have no plans to do so. Please see below re Facebook and Twitter.*

Linked sites

Many sites contain links to other sites. This could be for commercial reasons, such as the sites of sponsors or advertisers, or simply to communicate information to be found on other websites. Before creating a link, a club should check thoroughly the content of the other website, both for child protection reasons, and to ensure the content poses no other risk to the club's reputation. Once a link is included on the site, the club should check its content periodically (the frequency of the checks depending on how frequently the content changes), and remove any link immediately if concerns arise. *Checks are made by either Kate Berry and or Chris Davis on a regular basis.*

Registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 - Register No. 29859 R

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An additional concern with linked commercial sites is inappropriate advertising or marketing aimed at children. The advertising industry is self-regulating through the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), and has produced detailed guidelines covering marketing to children.

Recommendations:

- Content must be checked that it is appropriate to be seen by children, and that it does not have the potential to bully, before it is included on the website. Sometimes these decisions can be finely balanced. If there is any doubt, the text should not be included. *These are checked by Kate Berry & Chris Davis with ongoing checks taking place on a regular basis.*
- The responsibility for checking content needs to be allocated clearly to individual(s) who understand properly the issues involved. This may well be the individual at the club with responsibility for child protection, but this is not essential. The individual should be familiar with this guidance. *This is undertaken by the club Safeguarding Officers Sally Chittick & Chris Davis*
- In the unusual circumstance that it is possible any content will go onto the website without being checked by someone else (such as a blog) the club must satisfy itself that the author is sufficiently aware of child protection risks, and the content of this guidance, to be able to self-check effectively. *The club does not run and or support any blogs*
- Where members of the public can email comments which would then appear on the website (often called a message board, or chatroom, or discussion forum) the content of these emails should be checked before appearing on the website. Publication should not be automatic. *Non Applicable for Blogs see below re Facebook & Twitter*
- If a club receives any complaints about content, it should remove the content in question immediately, and reinstate it only once the complaint has been resolved. A club needs to be able to react quickly in the event of any complaint. *These can be actioned immediately by either Kate Berry or Chris Davis*
- Personal information about children over and above the child's name should not feature on the website. *This is checked on a regular basis*
- Links to another website should not be placed on a club's website unless that club has checked the site's content and is satisfied that the content is appropriate. It is good practice to discuss any proposed link with the owner of the other website, and obtain the owner's assurance that the linked site is designed to be suitable for children at all times of the day or night (some websites' content is different and more adult during the night). If the linked site has marketing content aimed at children, the club should obtain a further assurance from the other website owner that it complies with ASA guidelines. *Checks are carried out on a regular basis by Kate Berry & Chris Davis*
- The content of linked sites should be checked thoroughly at least once every 6 months. *Checks will be carried out and recorded due December 2011*
- If a club learns of any concerns over the content of the linked site, it should investigate immediately. Unless it is clear that there is no need for concern, the link should be removed immediately, and any decision to restore only made after the concern has been investigated. *Any Link can be removed immediately by either Kate Berry or Chris Davis*

Photos and video

Photos and video clips can make any child featured vulnerable to grooming if information about the child (name, address, activities or interests) is also disclosed. Furthermore, posting an image on the website carries a risk that the image could be taken and adapted for an inappropriate use. *The club has three photographers who can upload photos to the website, Chris Davis, Andy Stallman & Alison Hunter, all of which hold a RFU Enhanced CRB.*

Recommendations:

- Use group images, rather than individual images. *Whenever possible any Photos sent in to the local papers contain as many players as possible, file names do not contain any names of players.*
- For images of individual children (such as in action shots) where possible use models or illustrations. *Group's shots are used whenever possible*

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- Only use images of children in suitable dress, to minimise the risk of inappropriate adaptation of the image. *These are Checked by Chris Davis*
- If a child is named on the site, do not include an image (individual or group). If a child features in an image on the site, do not use the child's first name or last name, either in text on the site or in the image file name. *This is only done with the express permission of the parents, i.e. player gets selected for county squad etc.*
- Parents (in this guidance, the term "parents" covers whoever cares for the child), and the child if old enough to understand, should be notified of the intended use of an image on the website. The image should not be used if the parents or the child object (a requirement of the Data Protection Act as well as good child protection practice), and ideally clubs should obtain positive written consent. Where a club regularly uses certain types of image, such as team photos or match photos, notification and a consent request should be included in the information given to junior members and their parents upon joining the club. *Written consent is provided for on the membership forms, these are completed on the first day of any player joining the club even if they are on a 4 week trial to see if they suited to rugby.*
- If consent was given initially, but is subsequently withdrawn by parent or child, the image should be removed from the site. *This can be done immediately by either Kate Berry or Chris Davis*

Mobile and on-line communication with children

Technology is moving very fast in this area. There are now many different ways for people to communicate. In addition to land-lines, there are mobile phones for voice and text, and most new phones incorporate cameras that take still shots and video. Two-way video calling is set to grow fast. On-line communication can be by email, instant messaging, chatrooms, and social networking sites.

The risks posed by such methods of communication arise from:

- The privacy. It is usually one-to-one (often chatrooms have the facility for individuals to communicate 1:1 within the chatroom).
- The wide range of content that can be transmitted, including content of a violent, sexual or hateful nature.
- The ease with which images can be forwarded onto others.
- The difficulty in knowing truly who you are communicating with. Where grooming happens, it often involves this type of communication.

In sport, there are additional risks:

- Inappropriate pressure can be exerted by adults, particularly coaches, on children (such as to play when injured).
- There can be inappropriate criticism of a child's performance.
- An official position or role within a club, such as Coach, can carry with it a level of authority, and engender a level of trust, that facilitates the control of a child.

Against this background, a club needs to establish rules covering how adults connected with that club communicate with children connected with that club.

Recommendations:

- Club Officials and Coaches should not communicate with individual children by text or on-line at any time, on any matter, unless there is an immediate risk to the welfare of that child which can be lessened by such contact. *Weymouth RFC has 1 official facebook group and 1 official twitter account, these are managed by Laura Beare and Chris Davis respectively. Any posting made to these groups will appear on the Home page of the clubs website. All Unofficial groups must be open groups and not private in any way, admin rights must be held by an Adult. Ideally all members should join the official recognised & managed group. Coaches & Team Managers should not become friends with any child. Any communications must only be via Postings on Facebook only.*
- When communication by phone is needed, where possible Club Officials and Coaches should speak to the parent of a child.

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- Club Officials and Coaches can speak to individual children on mobile phones provided they have prior consent from the child's parents, and from the child if old enough to understand. *This would only apply to the under 16's age group (and Above)*
- If a club needs to communicate club-related information to children by email (such as training or match details), it should use email groups comprising email addresses given by parents. Such emails should only come from specific designated individuals, and children and their parents should know who these designated individuals are. Lists of the individuals within these groups (names only) should be publicised within the club, and easily available. Individuals must consent before they are included in the lists, and must be removed from the list if they wish to leave. *Emails should only come from Team Managers , Coaches and or club officials*

Notes

- *Match reports may contain the names of the players and if so then the full names of the players concerned. Care should be taken that more than one name is included in the match reports and wherever possible names of all the players that participated in the team game are included. Match reports will be checked prior to forwarding on to Local newspapers etc.*
- *Everybody should be aware that email, Facebook & Twitter postings are instantly delivered and or seen and care needs to be taken in the writing at all times.*
- *The club`s Policy`s and guidance are posted on the clubs website and noticeboard.*

Chris Davis

Club Secretary

November 2011