

Communication and Virtual Training Safeguarding Policy

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Objective

Every member of Wycombe Phoenix Harriers AC (the Club) is entitled to participate in an enjoyable and safe environment. To ensure this, the Club is committed to establishing and implementing policies and procedures to ensure a safe athletics environment.

Best practise in athletics benefits everyone - the sport's governing bodies, coaches and officials, teachers, parents, carers and athletes. Most importantly, it ensures that children who choose to participate in athletics have a safe and fun experience.

Our objective is to build a safer future in athletics for all athletes under the age of 18 years.

The Club is committed to devising, implementing and updating policies and procedures to promote best practice when working with children and to ensure that everyone involved with the Club understands and accepts their responsibilities to safeguard children from harm and abuse.

This means, to further the objectives of the Club's Child Protection Policy, establishing clear policies and procedures around communications between coaches and athletes under the age of 18 and for the delivery of virtual coaching through social and other media.

Introduction

This document supports the delivery of policy set out in the Club's Child Protection Policy by setting out the policies and procedures for communication between coaches and athletes under the age of 18 and for the delivery of virtual coaching through social and other media.

This is especially important when the "norm" of face to face training is not available because of legal restrictions imposed during the Covid pandemic.

It also sets out where members (including coaches and parents / carers) can find advice on how to set up Apps in way that protects their child.

The particular safety risks for our young athletes from inappropriate communication and virtual training include, but are not limited to:

- posting personal information that can identify and locate a child offline
- potential for inappropriate relationships between adults in positions of trust and the young people they work with
- sexual grooming, luring, exploitation and abuse, or unwanted contact

This policy seeks to set out how the club, coaches and parent/carers can between them protect these athletes while promoting and encouraging commitment to a good training regime.

In this document:

- “athlete”, “young person”, or “young athlete” refers to an athlete who is under the age of 18, unless the context implies otherwise.
- “Club officer” is used to refer to one or more of licensed coaches, committee members or other persons approved in that capacity by the club Committee.

1. Communication

We are not able to supply Club equipment e.g. mobile phone or club email addresses to coaches and other club officers in general. It is therefore acknowledged that coaches will use their private phones and email addresses etc for club and squad communications and the following guidelines should be followed:

- All squad-wide communications should also include one other licensed coach or other club officer in the recipient list or group;
- For athletes in the FUNdamentals and Foundation squads, coaches and other club officers should communicate via parents / carers of athletes who are under 18 and should not communicate directly with the athlete (or hold their direct contact details);
- For young athletes in event squads, each athlete in any squad communication chat group must also have a parent/carer in that chat group; the athlete should be removed from the squad chat group if there is no parent / carer in the group;
- If a young athlete is contacted directly, parents / carers should always be copied and such communication should only be used for communicating information e.g. progress in training, training advice, up and coming events, which kit to bring, training timings, and not to engage in non -training or -competition related conversation;
- If a young athlete communicates with a coach or other club officer, if the parent/carer is not copied, the coach (or other club officer) should forward the communication to the parent / carer or copy the parent / carer into the reply;
- Coaches and other club officers should not “friend” or “follow”, young athletes on social media unless this is a mechanism to allow young athletes to join a group (e.g. the club Strava group) where messages and comments on are open to all other group members, including coaches and written consent is given by the parent / carer;
- A coach may use a training session planner that allows only the young athlete to receive messages, with the written consent of the parent / carer and must regularly and on request, allow the parent / carer and / or club Welfare Officer(s) to view the messages. The coach should encourage the parent / carer to review the training session planner with their athlete and confirm to the coach that they are content..

Only communication and social media platforms approved by the Club Committee (including the Welfare Officer) can be used for club activity. As part of obtaining consent for a new platform, the safeguarding aspects must be presented to the Committee, who may decide that the platform is not appropriate and cannot be used for club activity.

Currently coaches communicate using a number of applications, mainly: text, email, WhatsApp, Band, the Club website, Instagram, Facebook and comments in Strava.

The Annex has some suggestions on privacy setting for Band.

In addition the club also uses Mailchimp to send club information to members.

2. Managing our online presence

Our official club online presence is on the Club website, Instagram, Facebook and Strava accounts. These guidelines should be followed:

- All social media accounts will be password protected and at least three club officers will have access to each account;
- The accounts will be monitored by these officers who will liaise with the club Welfare Officers on safeguarding issues and remove inappropriate posts, explaining why and

informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any young people involved);

- For closed group social media accounts, the administrators will only admit members and parents / carers of young athletes and, liaising with the Membership Secretary, periodically remove people who resign from the club;
- Where the club uses a social media platform that allows users under the age of 18 to have their own account, the club's platform administrators should obtain written permission from a parent / carer before accepting the athlete to the club's group;
- Where a platform is public (e.g. the website or Instagram) editorial rights will be restricted to agreed club officers.

3. Virtual Training in a group video session

Virtual training includes:

- An athlete following, on their own, a specific, current session set by a club coach; and
- Group training via a video platform such as Zoom, overseen by a club coach.

This section is concerned with the second of these.

Where an athlete under the age of 18 attends, such a virtual session must:

- Have consent¹. from that athlete's parent / carer (who should be encouraged to give that consent in writing);
- As for any session, have a current risk assessment;
- be led only by a licensed club coach or licensed training provider approved by the club;
- have a register taken; and
- in addition to the lead coach, have at least one other adult (preferably a club coach or other club officer) present who is recorded on the register.

As with face to face training, coaches should still be alert to possible welfare issues during virtual sessions and act accordingly in the event of concerns.

1:1 sessions for under 18s should take place only in exceptional circumstances and only when a parent / carer is able to monitor the activity. Any such session must be notified to the Welfare Officer.

Privacy Settings

Session leaders are required to understand the privacy settings of any platforms or apps used to deliver the virtual training session and should set them appropriately. These should be communicated to parents / carers so that they can make an informed decision when giving permission for their athlete to take part in virtual training with those (or more stringent) privacy settings.

Training via a Webcam

- At the start of a virtual squad session on a platform such as Zoom, video must be enabled to allow the coach to confirm that those who have joined the session are WPH members appropriate to that session. This is in order to protect athletes.
- During the session athletes will need to set their name so that the coach can take a register and also make sure the athlete is being given the correct advice.

It is suggested that:

- before joining the name is set to squad initials + athlete's first name (e.g. or JM - Amanda or SC - Joel)

¹ The consent can be for a series / season of virtual training that uses the same platform and protocols and does not need to be given for each individual session. Parents / carers are encouraged to give a written form of consent e.g. via email, text or an app such as WhatsApp or Band and coaches will be supported if they insist on this.

- The camera may be turned off when training. In doing so the parent / carer needs to understand that this will make it more difficult for the coach to see if the athlete is training properly; with the webcam off, injuries may arise for which the coach cannot be responsible.

4. Posting and use of social media

Generally athletes and coaches like to share progress with other members. This is especially relevant when the club has offered training incentives during periods of virtual training and “proof” is required.

Interacting with each other through social media and electronic / online communication platforms is no different to other interaction: all members must adhere to the appropriate Codes of Conduct and standards, whatever the form of contact.

To protect the identity of young athletes, if screen shots are taken during a Zoom training session to be posted elsewhere (either on a public or private platform):

- Personal details of athletes such as address, phone number, full name, school and date of birth must not be shared.
- If possible, photos should not single out an individual.
- If a single young person is shown, their identity should be protected by using a generic title such as “U17b Gold medallist”.

If *video* is to be posted, parents/carers need to be asked for explicit permission as only permission for sharing photos is given when members registers with the club.

5. Using individual Apps for Virtual Training

The main platforms that the club uses for Virtual Training are Zoom and Strava.

This section sets out more specifics, to support the general policies above, for these two platforms.

Parents / carers are advised to look at the privacy settings of any apps. Advice on this can be found below and on the NSPCC website at <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>. This website allows the parent /carer to type in the name of any common App and find out their guidelines for under 18s and coaches.

Zoom

In setting up the Zoom session, the lead coach or account holder should:

- For athletes in FUNdamentals and Foundation squads, invite via the parent / carer on a closed group. For young athletes in the event squads, the link may be sent to both the athlete and parent in a closed group..
- Protect each zoom session with a new, unique password to keep the session secure.
- By using a changing password, the club is comfortable that a "Waiting Room"(which restricts users until they are let into the session) need not be used. The use of a waiting room, can be impractical for a physical training session as some athletes do not join at the start and some drop in and out for various reasons, like connection speed etc.
- Turn off chat between members, so they can't send private messages to each other during zoom, in line with the NSPCC guideline. While athletes should not have time to send messages if they are training properly during the session, this is good practice and does not impact on the training.
- Follow the guidelines in the sections above if screen shots are taken during a Zoom training session to be posted elsewhere (either on a public or closed to club platform)

- If the session is to be recorded and/or posted or shared for any reason, obtain parent / carer permission². Videos should not be kept for longer than necessary. Note that, at registration, the club asks only for permission to share photos.

Strava

The club generally only expects Strava to be used as a tool for our FUNdamental and Foundation squad athletes in exceptional circumstances such as lock down or periods of legally restricted face to face training.

Strava is used more widely in the event squads (members of which may be under 18) outside of these restricted periods.

Strava is an App that allows athletes to record their training runs. It has two aspects:

- An account that allows an athlete to record runs for their own purposes;
- The ability to join a closed WPH Club Group (administered by club officers) which enables athletes to be included in club league tables and see who else in the club uses Strava.).

Our club advice on using Strava, for both parents/ carers and club officers is:

- Use of this application is not compulsory. Where a parent / carer is not comfortable with their athlete using Strava they should discuss with the coach who will work with them to establish other methods to monitor training.
- For privacy it is recommended that parents/carers of younger athletes (particularly those under 13 years) send a picture of a phone app screen (e.g. Strava) or GPD watch of the run to the relevant coach, instead of sharing runs with the WPH Strava group. Athletes in the FUNdamentals and Foundation squads will not be accepted to the WPH Strava group.
- Strava allows athletes under the age of 18 to set up their own account. Parents / carers, if they are happy for such an account to be created, should ensure that such an account is set up with the Strava Privacy Settings, below. Alternatively parents / carers may prefer the athlete to use their parent / carer's account, with each run labelled to distinguish the athlete.
- For those under 13, Strava requires additional consents from a parent / carer to set up the account. Parents / carers should ensure they understand, and are happy with these conditions, before giving consent to set up the account.
- Only young athletes in event groups will be accepted, with their own account, to the WPH Strava Group, and the administrator must have written consent from a parent/ carer which should include confirmation that the Strava Privacy Settings to the account have been set as below.
- Young athletes should try not to train on the same route at the same time everyday for safeguarding purposes. Equally, they may wish to start and end at a location other than their home.

Strava Privacy Settings

In Settings:

- >Privacy, set "Where you appear" to "Followers" and (not everyone) for all 4 settings.
- set "Privacy Zones" to hide runs near your house (e.g. within 400m)

² The consent can be for a series / season of virtual training that uses the same platform and protocols and does not need to be given for each individual session. Parents / carers are encouraged to give a written form of consent e.g. via email, text or an app such as WhatsApp or Band and coaches will be supported if they insist on this.

6. References:

Please refer to the club's website for further information re Club rules, Disciplinary Procedures, Codes of Conduct and contact details of club officers:

<http://www.wycombephoenix.org/>

Policy review date: November 2022

Document Revisions

Type / Version	What	When	By
First draft v1.0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First, rough, draft with basic shape of document and block import of various email exchanges.	17/01/2021	Sally Delgado
Draft v1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inclusions of comments from coaches• Re-ordering of sections• Content list	20/1/2021	Sally Delgado

Annex – Suggested privacy settings for Band

To prevent members sending private messages to other members of the group except the group administrator (i.e. the coach) the following settings are suggested

Within Band Settings -> Manage Chat ->

Manage Chat

Using Chat in this Band



Start a Private 1:1, 1:N Chat

Allow chat room invites.

Admin & Co-Admins ▼

Send a Message to the Admin

You can allow members to send a message to the admin and co-admin(s) without permission.

Admin & Co-Admins ▼

Create a Public Chat Room

Admin & Co-Admins ▼

Delete Public Chat Room

Admin & Co-Admins ▼