

Good Practice Guidelines on the use of mobile phone and emails by ASA Clubs and Club Members

Background

When this guidance was first written there was growing concern being expressed about what is and what is not permissible in the area of communication between adults and children and young people in sport with a number of cases in sport relating to this issue.

Understandably, with the rapid development of mobile phones, text messaging, email and other forms of electronic communication, these methods of communicating have become a feature of the sporting landscape.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a recommendation of best practice to swimming teachers, coaches and those in a position of trust regarding the following:

- Use of mobile phones whilst having responsibility for the supervision and safety of young people.
- Communication between coaches and teachers and young swimmers to the swimmers' mobile phones / emails.

A significant number of smart phones can also gain access to the internet and the guidance below on Social Networking sites also relates to the use of those phones to access social networking sites as well as via computers.

Note: Throughout this guidance a young person / children is anyone under the age of 18.

Guidance

Phoning, texting or emailing swimmers

1. Coaches and teachers should not hold the mobile phone numbers or email addresses belonging to swimmers.
2. Coaches can hold the phone numbers and email addresses of swimmers parents with their consent in order to get messages to swimmers. It is then the responsibility of the parent to inform the child of the message from the coach.
3. In limited circumstances it may be necessary for coaches, team managers or chaperones to have mobile phone contact details of the swimmers i.e. at an away camp for reasons of safeguarding. In such circumstances the person holding the phone details must be CRB checked, have undertaken appropriate safeguarding training and the consent of each swimmer's parent or guardian to temporarily hold that information for the purposes of the event. In such circumstances the swimmers phone numbers should be deleted after the event is completed.
4. Clubs and coaches may wish to have the ability to contact swimmers on a group basis. This may be required to inform swimmers of changes to training times for example. It is recommended clubs consider developing a secure page on the club website for this purpose, which is open for all to view and accessible through smart phones. Access to this could be by the swimmer or parent as no direct one to one contact is available to individual swimmers.
5. Coaches of elite swimmers over 16 may, with the consent of the swimmer's parents or guardian, use text messaging or email to communicate with the swimmer for training and competition purposes only. It is recommended such communications are also copied to parent or guardian to safeguard swimmer and coach.

Use by Coaches of mobile phones

1. Coaches and teachers should not take or make calls whilst supervising young swimmers in a teaching or training session. It is permissible for a coach to make or take a call during a swimming event providing they are not the sole supervisor of the swimmers and are not actively engaged in supervising warm up or swim down at the time of the call.
2. Coaches who have mobile phones with camera facilities must fulfil the obligations set out for the use of cameras and guidelines for the use of photographs.
3. Any teacher or coach wishing to use the phone to take photographs at an event must register the phone/camera with the promoters of the event. Whenever mobile phones are taken into changing rooms the facility to take photos must not be used.



4. The publishing of a photograph of a swimmer under 18 years should only be done with the parent's consent and it should be noted that parents and guardians have the right to refuse to have a child photographed.
5. If a photograph is taken for publication it should adhere to the guidance provided in the ASA Photography Policy. Identifying details such as full name, place or residence or school attended should not be given alongside the photograph.
6. In the event of a swimmer showing a teacher or coach a text message or image, which is considered to be inappropriate for a child to have, the teacher / coach must advise the nominated person at the club.

Young Coaches aged 18 to 21

The ASA recognise that many young coaches aged 18 to 21 will have been swimmers before becoming a coach, and will be friends with their fellow swimmers, some of whom will be between the ages of 16/17. It is therefore plausible they will have those swimmers phone and email contact details.

For this purpose the ASA accepts it would be inappropriate to require such swimming friends to be removed from their friendship group.

Therefore in such cases:

1. If a coach aged 18 to 21 had friends phone and email details who were / are swimmers aged 16/17 prior to undertaking the role of coach the ASA does not expect them to remove those swimmers from their listed friends.
2. In such circumstances the coach is advised to inform the club Welfare Officer and the head coach.
3. The head coach should make very effort to ensure the coach is not the primary coach for those specified young persons except on an occasional basis.

Good practice guidance on photography at ASA training and events and use of photographic equipment

This guidance applies to all photographs taken on film or digital camera (including mobile phones) and any form of moving pictures including video recordings (and video streaming). The terms "child" or "children" include anyone under the age of 18 years.

It should be acknowledged that the great majority of images are appropriate and are taken in good faith, it is a fact that images can be misused and children can be put at risk if common-sense procedures are not observed.

The following procedure is an update of the previous ASA Photography Policy.

Aims

First, as in all matters concerned with the safeguarding of children, the ASA aims to help clubs establish and develop good practice.

Second, the ASA aims to help clubs avoid three potential sources of child abuse:

- a. The use, adaptation, or copying of images for child abuse, either on the Internet or in print.
- b. The possible identification of a child when an image is accompanied by significant personal information, which can lead to the child being 'groomed'.
- c. The identification and locating of children where there are safeguarding children concerns. Such cases would include, for example, children who could be compromised by an image because:
 - They are removed from their family for their own safety.
 - There are restrictions on their contact with one parent following a parental separation.
 - They are a witness in criminal proceedings.

Clubs recommended best practice

1. The publishing of a photograph of swimmer under 18 either on a notice board or in a published article or video recording (including video streaming) of swimming competitions ("Publication") should only be done with parents' consent and in line with ASA guidelines.

2. A parent or guardian has a right to refuse to have their children photographed. The exercise of this right of refusal should not be used as grounds for refusing entry into a swimming competition. Therefore, any photo that may go to press or on a notice board, be it through a member of the club or official photographer, should have received parental consent before publishing / displaying the photo, preferably in writing. A suggested template allowing parents to indicate refusal of consent is provided in Wavepower section 2, sub section 3.
3. Under ASA guidance on the taking of photos, once a parent has signed the club's Photography Book Register we are happy for them to take photos on the belief that their swimmer is the main subject of the photograph. Other competitors nearby may be included in the shot but should not be the main subject of the photo. However, another person can object to a parent / carer taking a photo if they believe their child, not the child of the photographer, to be the main subject of the photo, but in practice this seldom happens.
4. In the case of open meets and other competitions where the host club has an official photographer present, all parents attending should be made aware of this in your meet details. If photos are to be published anywhere, the individual parent should be given the opportunity to withhold their consent. Their right to do so should be specifically drawn to their attention. The ASA guidelines on photos for publication are as follows.

All photographs must observe generally accepted standards of decency in particular:

- Action shots should be a celebration of the sporting activity and not a sexualised image in a sporting context.
- Action shots should not be taken or retained where the photograph reveals a torn or displaced swimming costume.
- Poolside shots of children should normally be above the waist only in a swimming costume, though full length tracksuit shots are approved.
- Photographs should not be taken from behind swimming blocks at the start of a race or exhibit young swimmers climbing out of the swimming pool.



Published photographs may identify the swimmer by name and club but should not state the swimmer's place of residence or school attended. The ASA do not wish to stop parents photographing their children if they wish at their "moments of glory" but all clubs have to ensure they do all they can to safeguard children's well being in the current climate of concern.

The official photographer

In some cases clubs will ask a club member / officer to act as an official photographer for an event and in some cases they may employ a specialist photographer. Their role is to take appropriate photos that celebrate and promote swimming.

Anyone in this role should be CRB checked and when using a self employed photographer the ASA recommends the club ask to see proof that the photographer has a current CRB and references from other service users.

When taking any images they should be asked to:

- Focus on the activity rather than the individual child.
- Include groups of children rather than individuals if possible.
- Ensure all those featured are appropriately dressed.
- Represent the broad range of youngsters participating in swimming - boys and girls, children with disabilities, members of minority ethnic communities.
- Clubs should screen applicants for their suitability (just as they would check any other member of staff or volunteer working with children) and then provide training for them in the club's child safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The official photographer (whether a professional photographer or member of the club staff) should receive clear instructions, preferably in writing, from the club at an early stage.
- Clubs should provide them with a copy of this guidance and a clear brief about what is appropriate in terms of content. Images should not be allowed to be taken outside the activity being covered.
- Clubs should determine who will hold the images recorded and what is to be done with them after they have served their purpose.

Good practice guidance on filming children during club sessions

The filming of children during club sessions is not recommended. Any filming must be justified by the club as to why the film has been made, (e.g. to assist in swimming stroke development).

Assuming filming is justified written consent is required from the parents of the children with an invitation to the parents to attend the videoing and subsequently view the video.

Filming should cease and / or the footage destroyed should any concerns be raised or if consent is withdrawn.

After filming, unless it can be justified as to why the footage is to be kept, it should be destroyed once it has served its purpose.

Additionally, the individual filming should be extremely careful in the content of the footage.

Mobile phones

Mobile phones should be registered as a camera if it has that facility in line with our policy. All clubs need to make its members aware that while the ASA does not support the banning of phones, as children need them to keep in touch with parents, particularly in emergencies, they support a requirement that manufacturers ensure they add a "noticeable sound" that it is audible if a phone camera is used.

Additionally clubs should remind members that any photos taken should fall within our guidelines and that if mobile phones are taken into changing rooms, the facility to take photos must not be used.

Should photographs or filmed footage (with or without) names of children be posted on a club website?

It is recommended that individualised photographs should not be kept on a club's website and certainly not with identifying names as this could lead to a child being approached and placed in a vulnerable position. The same applies to a club's printed materials such as a club's annual report or the club kit.

Many clubs with parental consent will use a child's first name or surname only or a child's swimming nickname so as not to identify them fully.

The only exception to this guidance is where the child's parent or carer provides specific written consent to the club publishing photographs.

This consent may be withdrawn at any time and clubs should take all reasonable steps to respect the wishes of the parent / carer.