



# **GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES BY BRITISH TAEKWONDO CLUBS AND CLUB MEMBERS**

## Good Practice Guidelines on the Use of Social Networking Sites by British Taekwondo Clubs and Club Members

### (1) Purpose of Document

Social Media has become a way of life for many. There are many benefits from clubs and people in sport making use of social media, however there are also some potential risks associated with its use.

This policy aims to lay out an approach to the use of social media to make the most of the benefits while also laying out best practice to minimise the risks. Our club believes in maintaining the safety of all participants. We will take action if improper or inappropriate use of social media is suspected.

### (2) Introduction

British Taekwondo recognise that the use of social networking sites such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter is a rapidly growing phenomenon and is increasingly being used as a communication tool of choice by young people and more recently by adults. Facebook is the largest such site whose mission is to 'give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected'.

These sites permit users to chat online, post pictures, and write 'blogs' etc. through the creation of an online profile, that can either be publicly available to all or restricted to an approved circle of electronic friends.

Sites such as You Tube and Google provide a platform for uploading and viewing video clips, which with cameras and mobile phones becomes ever easier and can be almost instantaneous.

In addition to these sites, Twitter is a social networking and micro blogging service that enables users to send and read other user messages called tweets. Tweets are like online text messages of up to a maximum of 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page. Tweets are publicly visible by default however; the sender can restrict message delivery to their friends list only.

Social networking can be a great tool to promote yourself or your club if used in the correct way. For example, British Taekwondo uses Facebook to link to web stories, provide videos and photos to its members and promote events and activities with the click of a button, instantly reaching over 5,000 people. The British Taekwondo twitter account adds another dimension as it allows access to a larger audience, promoting the sport through various channels and connections.

Whilst these technologies provide exciting opportunities, they are accompanied by dangers and negative consequences if abused by users.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide a recommendation of best practice to all British Taekwondo club members and parents on the use of social networking sites as they relate to that individual's role in the British Taekwondo club. It is important to understand however that if used correctly, social networking can be a fun, safe and productive activity.

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

**(3) Guidance for Coaches, Judges, helpers/volunteers and other officers in a position of trust and responsibility in respect of children in a British Taekwondo club**

- (a) British Taekwondo members in a position of trust and/or responsibility (as defined in the British Taekwondo Child Protection and Adults at Risk Policies) should not be in private or individual contact with young people through social networking sites if they hold such a position in respect of that individual young person.
- (b) Should a young person in your club request to become a named friend on your (or their) Social Networking Page you should decline if any of the below apply:
  - You are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child.
  - You hold a position of trust and responsibility in the club.
  - Your contact with the child is through a British Taekwondo club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.
- (c) Social networking sites should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise British Taekwondo, British Taekwondo members or British Taekwondo clubs and to do so would be in breach of British Taekwondo Standards of Conduct.
- (d) The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as any other media - see the British Taekwondo Photography Policy.

**(4) Guidance to coaches who have children that they coach in the club**

The issue has been raised that parents are becoming members of social networking sites that their children sign up to for security reasons in order to ensure the wellbeing of their own child by being able to view their child's site. This will give the parent access via their child's site to all children listed as friends of their child. It would not be appropriate for British Taekwondo to prevent a parent who is also a coach in his/her child's club from using this form of protection for their child's online activities.

Therefore, in such cases the coach can have players in the club on the site he/she is accessing providing the British Taekwondo under 18 year old club members on the site are listed as friends of his/her child;

However, in this case the following also applies:

- The coach concerned should not have direct contact with players other than their own child through the social networking site;
- The coach should not accept such players as friends on his / her home site; and
- The coach should inform the Club Welfare Officer of this arrangement.

**(5) Coaches/Judges/Club officials who are under 18**

British Taekwondo recognise that social networking sites can be a useful tool for judges, coaches and officials within British Taekwondo clubs to share information with other judges, coaches or officials. If, however, the judge or official is under the age of 18 while they may be a colleague, the requirements above must be adhered to.

However, for young people aged 16 or 17 it is the view of British Taekwondo, that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, judges or officials may be detrimental in their professional development in their role

in British Taekwondo.

Therefore, in such cases if the parent of a young person in a position of responsibility aged 16/17 and the young person themselves requests to have contact with an adult club officer or coach for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role the following should apply:

- Gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned;
- The named adult must sign an agreement to keep the contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club;
- All such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. The young person's parent/guardian or club welfare officer); and
- If the young person or the adult is found to breach the above agreement, action must be taken by the club to address the concern and/or the breach referred to British Taekwondo or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

**(6) Guidance to British Taekwondo members under the age of 18**

- (a) Do not ask your coach, judge, helper/volunteer or club official to be your social networking site friend - they will refuse - as that would breach good practice and the British Taekwondo Safeguarding Policy.
- (b) Use the internet positively and do not place yourself at risk. Have a look at [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk) for some useful tips.
- (c) Consider who you are inviting to be your friend and follow the good advice of the social networking sites to ensure you are talking to the person you believe you are talking to.
- (d) Always remember that anything you say including photos, pictures and video clips posted on your site may be shared with people other than those for whom it was intended.
- (e) Never post or send any photographs, videos or make comments that may be:
  - Hurtful, untrue and upsetting and you may regret sharing later on; or
  - Used by other people in a way you did not intend or want.
- (f) Do not put pictures of other club members on the site within the club setting as you may breach the British Taekwondo Photography Policy. If you do wish to upload such a picture you must get advice and consent of your parent, the other young person and their parent and a club officer before even considering uploading such a photo. This will not prevent you having pictures of your Taekwondo friends on your site taken outside of the sporting arena but it is good advice to ensure that they and their parents are happy with any picture you have of them on your site.
- (g) Always be aware that social networking sites are a method of communication like letter writing and the spoken word. They are bound by the same laws and rules. Such technology is instant and this allows you as the user to react in the 'heat of the moment', where in the past you would have been required to write a letter which would have taken time and allowed for you to think again before sending. So never place a comment on the internet that you would not put in writing or say to the individual concerned as to do so may not only breach British Taekwondo Policy but also the law.

## **(7) Guidance to parents of British Taekwondo members under the age of 18**

As children grow up, parents and carers have to teach them a variety of things to ensure that they are equipped to face the challenges of the modern world. We have to teach them how to cross the road safely, how to deal with strangers and how to engage with other children and adults appropriately in a variety of different settings, including the home, school and in the world at large.

When our children go out to play, we want to know where they are going. We satisfy ourselves that they know how to get there without any mishaps or being exposed to any real dangers en route, that they will be safe when they get there and that they will be with responsible people throughout. Typically, when our children come home, we ask them if everything was OK. We take a very close interest.

Using the internet safely requires similar skills, which is why it is important that parents and carers find out more about the internet for themselves.

In the overwhelming majority of cases, the benefits of the internet easily outweigh any drawbacks. To keep it that way, parents and children need to know that there are places on the internet that promote racial hatred, contain violent images or pornographic material all of which adults, as well as children, may find distressing. Regrettably, it is also true that certain sites will attract a number of adults with a highly inappropriate interest in children.

Beyond these dangers, other websites have the potential to harm impressionable young people through the presentation of extremist views. Sites may be very disrespectful of other people's religious beliefs or cultural backgrounds or seek to distort history. Sites may also promote anorexia or self-harming, for example, in ways that might attract the attention of a particular child who could be going through a vulnerable or difficult phase in their life at that moment. There are other more insidious threats around too. Without the experience to distinguish between genuine and misleading messages, children may be fooled by scams of various kinds.

There are a few simple steps that parents can take to help their children use the internet safely.

## **(8) Some simple ways to keep children safe online**

Get to know your child's online habits. Children are inquisitive. They will look to explore the internet as much as they do the real world. Knowing the sites they go to, the people they meet there and what they do will help to keep children safe.

Stay alert to any sudden changes in mood or appearance, or to any major change in habits or to increased secretiveness. These are often tell-tale signs that something is not right.

Keep lines of communication open - tell your child they can always talk to you or another trusted adult, such as a teacher, if they do end up in some sort of trouble on the internet. Make children aware that there are things on the internet that may distress them.

Spend some time surfing the internet yourself. The more that you know about the internet, the better able you are, in turn, to help your child navigate around it without coming to any harm.

Install internet filtering software showing a Child Safety Online Kitemark on your computer. Filtering products with a Kitemark have been independently tested to provide a simple and effective means of support to parents, helping to ensure that a

child's online experience is a safe one. The Kitemark scheme is sponsored by the Home Office and Ofcom.

British Taekwondo members found to be abusing or working outside of these good practice guidelines, may be subject to disciplinary action or investigation by British Taekwondo as outlined in the British Taekwondo Complaints & Disciplinary Procedures.

**(9) Social networking services, social media and sport: Guidelines for safeguarding children and young people**

The CPSU Briefing Document 'Social networking services, social media and sport: Guidelines for safeguarding children and young people' gives more in depth guidance on social networking sites. It can be accessed via the Child Protection in Sport Unit website at: [www.cpsu.org.uk](http://www.cpsu.org.uk)

**(10) What to do if you have concerns**

As a user of a social networking site, whether you are a child or an adult, you may at some time have a concern about what you are seeing or being told about by another user. Concerns may range from negative or abusive comments, and cyber bullying to suspected grooming for sexual abuse.

British Taekwondo has drawn up a list below of agencies that you can contact, anonymously if you wish, where you can raise such concerns.

**Think You Know** - [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) the main UK Government website with advice for parents on how to keep children safe online

**CEOP** - [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk) the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) is the Government body dedicated to eradicating abuse of children. Concerns about inappropriate contacts between a child and an adult, including online, can be reported directly to CEOP. Reporting can be accessed by pressing the CEOP button on the British Taekwondo website's CEOP page.

**Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)** - [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk) works to remove illegal material from the internet. If you have found any material you believe to be illegal e.g. child sex abuse images, other obscene material or material that incites racial hatred, you can report it to the IWF.

A number of specialist websites contain general advice that may be of help to parents. These include [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk), [www.nch.org.uk](http://www.nch.org.uk), [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk), and [www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org).

Other sites can offer parents support on broader issues. These include [www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

**Childline** - 0800 1111 or [www.Childline.org.uk](http://www.Childline.org.uk) is another NSPCC support service. Using this website, children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors online about any issues or problems they may be experiencing, using an application similar to Instant Messenger (IM).

**Stop It Now** Freephone - 0808 1000 900 or [www.stopitnow.org.uk](http://www.stopitnow.org.uk)

**The Local Police or Children's Service** - their numbers can be found in the phone book.

Alternatively you can contact British Taekwondo's National Lead Safeguarding Officer on 077177 40125 or by email - [safeguarding@britishtaekwondo.org](mailto:safeguarding@britishtaekwondo.org)