

Online Safety and Communication Policy

Manchester Cross Country Ski Club strives to ensure that all children (anyone under 18) and vulnerable adults are safeguarded from abuse and have an enjoyable snowsport experience. Adults at risk are defined as anyone aged 18+ who has care/support needs, is experiencing (or at risk of) abuse/neglect, and as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves. Ann Craft Trust in line with Care Act 2014.

This document sets out how Manchester Cross Country Ski Club uses the internet and social media, and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines expectations for online behaviour and communication with all.

The principles in this policy apply no matter which current or future technology is used.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect all members including children and vulnerable adults involved with our organisation and who make use of technology (such as mobile phones, tablets, games consoles and the internet).
- Provide coaches and volunteers with policy and procedure information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents.
- Ensure our organisation operates within the law regarding how we behave online.

This policy applies to all coaches, volunteers, members, parents, carers and any other individuals associated with Manchester Cross Country Ski Club.

We recognise that

- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges.
- We have a duty to ensure that all children and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online.
- All children and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- Working in partnership with children and vulnerable adults, their parents, carers, and other organisations is essential in helping them to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

WE WILL SEEK TO KEEP children and vulnerable adults SAFE BY

- Understanding the safety aspects, including what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour for coaches, volunteers, and children and vulnerable adults, when using website, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication.
- Being aware that it doesn't matter what device is being used for digital interaction, but that the same safety aspects apply whether it is a computer, mobile phone, or game console.
- When using social media or video conferencing platforms (including live streaming), ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice ensuring the person managing our organisation's online presence is suitably trained and experienced.

Managing Our Online Presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts will be password-protected, and at least two administrators will have access to each account and password.
- Social media accounts will be monitored by a designated person, who will have been appointed by the club committee.
- The designated person managing our online presence will seek advice from our Club Welfare Officer and Snowsport England to advise on safeguarding requirements as required.
- The designated person will remove any inappropriate posts, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected (as well as the parents of any children and vulnerable adults involved).
- Account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' so that only those invited can see their content.
- Social media pages/groups (e.g. Facebook pages/groups) used to communicate with children and vulnerable adults must be related to an organisation, community or sports group and not personal identifying details such as a child's home address, school details, telephone number or email will not be posted on social media platforms.
- Any posts or correspondence will be of a professional nature.
- We will make sure children and vulnerable adults are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of the account.
- Parents/carers will be asked to give their consent for us to communicate with their children and vulnerable adults through social media, via video conferencing platforms or by any other means of communication.
- Parents/carers will need to give consent for photographs or videos of their child to be posted on social media.
- All of our accounts and email addresses will be appropriate, fit for purpose and only used for venue-specific activities.
- Video conferencing sessions will be password protected to maintain children and vulnerable adults' privacy and to prevent exposure to inappropriate or harmful content by third parties.

What We Expect of Coaches and Volunteers

- They should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- They should seek the advice of our Club Welfare Officer and Snowsport England if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- Any messages they wish to send out to children and vulnerable adults must be sent through the designated person responsible for the organisation's online presence.
- They must not 'friend' or 'follow' children and vulnerable adults from personal accounts on social media and must maintain the same professional boundaries online as they would in person when using organisation accounts.
- They must make sure any content posted is accurate and appropriate.
- They must not communicate with children and vulnerable adults via personal accounts or private messages.

- They must communicate with parents/carers through email or in writing, or use an organisational account, profile or website rather than via personal social media accounts.
- They must copy in parents/carers or at least one other coach or volunteer to any communications sent to children and vulnerable adults.
- They must avoid communication with children and vulnerable adults beyond dedicated event or activity timings, unless it is necessary for professional purposes (i.e. emergencies, whilst on a trip, etc.) and contacting the parents/carers is not possible.
- They must sign off any communication in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols such as kisses (“X’s”).
- They will respond to any concerns reported through social media in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, in accordance with our safeguarding policy.
- They must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent, or menacing to anyone.
- They must ensure any 1-2-1 sessions with children and vulnerable adults involve the parents/carers being able to supervise, or alternatively, that another coach/volunteer is present. This supervision would not necessarily require the parents/carers to be in the same room, as long as they are able to check in on the session.

What We Expect of Members

- They should be aware of this policy.
- They will behave responsibly online and refrain from any bullying or abusive behaviour.

What We Expect of Parents/Carers

- They should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- They should seek the advice of our Club Welfare Officer and Snowsport England if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media.
- They should communicate with coaches and volunteers in a professional and appropriate manner.
- They must not engage in sexting, or send pictures or messages that are abusive, obscene, inappropriate, indecent or menacing to anyone.

Using Mobile Phones or Other Devices to Communicate

When using mobile phone or other devices to communicate, we will take the following precautions to help keep children and vulnerable adults safe:

- Coaches, and volunteers will communicate through parents/carers directly or copy them into all messages to children and vulnerable adults.
- Where it is necessary to contact children and vulnerable adults directly, and it is not possible to copy the parents/carers into the message, we will include a second committee member or coach into the message.
- In some circumstances it may be necessary for coaches and volunteers to message children and vulnerable adults directly for logistical reasons and it is impractical to text the parents/carers, for example when cancelling or rescheduling the lesson.
- Where this type of one-to-one communication by text message is needed, the message will not be deleted from the device to ensure an audit trail exists.
- Messages will be used for professional communication, such as reminders about lesson times, meeting points etc.

- If coaches and volunteers only have one mobile phone, and it is not possible to have a second business phone, they will ensure the parents and child understand this and agree and adhere to clear boundaries.
- If a child tries to engage a member of coach or volunteer in a conversation which is not of a professional manner (for example, their personal life), the coach or volunteer will end the conversation or not reply, inform the Club Welfare Officer as soon as possible and arrange to address the matter with the child and their parents appropriately if the conversation raises safeguarding concerns, and notify Snowsport England as soon as possible.

Using Mobile Phones/Devices During Activities

So that all children and vulnerable adults can enjoy and actively take part in snowsport activities, we discourage the use of mobile phones/devices. As part of this policy, we will:

- Make children and vulnerable adults aware of how and who to contact if there is an emergency or a change to previously agreed arrangements.
- Inform parents/carers of appropriate times that they can contact children and vulnerable adults who are away on trips.
- Advise parents/carers that it may not be possible to contact children and vulnerable adults during activities and provide a contact within the venue or organisation who will be reachable should there be an emergency.
- Explain to children and vulnerable adults how using mobile phones during activities has an impact on their safe awareness of their environment, and their level of participation and achievement.

Situations Requiring One-To-One Communication

Some roles are directly positioned to support a child's well-being and are therefore delivered in one-to-one environments (upon receiving written parental consent). These roles are usually members of a well-being group (Performance Lifestyle Advisors, Sport Psychologists, Clinical Psychologist, Medical Doctor) and collectively have the expertise to support any concerns raised to members.

Practitioners in this group may at times be required to maintain confidentiality in regards to well-being support. This confidentiality may also extend to certain follow up communication, e.g. emails which relate to what was discussed in the session. This means that it may not necessarily be appropriate to include parents/carers or other practitioners in the sessions or related communications.

In some circumstances, practitioners who are not in the well-being group may need to communicate with a child directly. These situations should be limited to logistical or pastoral reasons. For example, to let the child know they are running late, to cancel or reschedule a session, or whilst on a trip it is necessary to call the player directly.

For all practitioners, where one-to-one communication takes place, an audit trail should be retained. For example, ensuring written communication (e.g. email, text messages, etc) are not deleted and that logs are kept of any telephone/video call.

Related Policies and Codes of Conduct

This Online Safety and Communication Policy should be read alongside Manchester Cross Country Ski Club policies and codes of conduct, including:

- Club Safeguarding Policy Statement
- Raising a Safeguarding Concern Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Diversity and inclusion Policy

- Online safety and communication Policy
- Photography and filming Policy
- Code of conduct for Coaches
- Code of conduct for Members and Guests
- Code of conduct for Children
- Code of conduct and ethics for parents of junior members

Useful Contacts

Further information for parents about keeping children and vulnerable adults safe online:

NSPCC CEOP Education (<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk>)

Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre

Policy Review

Online Safety and Communication Policy is reviewed every three years (or earlier if there is a change in national legislation).

Chairperson: Rosalind Brown-Grant

Date: 24 April 2026

Club Welfare Officer: Susie Loates

Date: 24 April 2026