
Safe online communication

This guide explains safe practices for communicating online with children, young people and adults at risk. There is advice for clubs and organisations, and staff, volunteers, parents and caregivers.

Safe practices for clubs and organisations

Inform everyone, including children, young people and adults at risk, about the potential risks of online communication. Educate staff, volunteers, parents, caregivers and children, young people and adults at risk on appropriate online behaviour and safeguarding practices.

Encourage everyone to report inappropriate behaviour or content. Make the process easy for people and let them know all concerns will be taken seriously and acted on.

Develop and implement policies, procedures and guidelines

Create social media and digital communications policies and guidelines outlining safe practices for contacting and communicating with children and young people. Include:

- publishing appropriate content on the organisation's website and social media accounts
- interacting with children on social media and other platforms, including posting or sharing content within the team or club's platforms
- processes for reporting any online concerns. This can be to your club, organisation or the police if there anyone is in immediate danger.

Get consent from parents or caregivers

Ensure that parents or caregivers give ou consent for any online communication between your organisation and their children and young people, or the adults at risk they care for.

Monitor online interactions

Regularly monitor and review online communication to ensure content and messaging are appropriate and follow policies and guidelines.



For staff, volunteers, parents and caregivers

Keep to group messages

Avoid sending individual messages to a child or young person. Always include their parent or caregiver, or communicate through group messages.

Make sure there are at least two adults present in a group chat that includes children, young people or adults at risk.

What's in the message counts

Limit the content of messages to relevant information only, for example, directly related to the sport or activity, such as schedule changes or event details.

Maintain boundaries on social media

Do not add, like, friend, or follow children, young people or adults at risk on social media platforms or messaging apps.

Avoid sharing personal details that could identify children, young people and adults at risk, such as their home or school address, or club affiliations.

Educate and encourage children, young people and adults at risk to keep their personal details and location settings on their devices private, and not to share others' personal details, including images.

Get consent first

Obtain consent from parents or caregivers before copying or sharing images of their children, young people and adults at risk.

More information

Safer online communication – sportintegrity.nz

Taking and sharing images – sportintegrity.nz

Contact us

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