

INTERNET SAFETY & SOCIAL WEBSITE POLICY

1. Introduction

Here at Warton Typhoons JFC (WTJFC), safeguarding the welfare of players at the club is our primary concern. That is why we have adopted a number of policies and codes of conduct from the Football Association (FA), designed specifically for this purpose. The information contained within this 'Internet Safety & Social Website policy is no different, with much of the advice offered being taken directly from the FA website (www.thefa.com). This internal policy sets out advice for club officials, parents/carers, coaches and players, which if followed correctly, will increase the safety of players while 'surfing' the net.

2. Why is Internet Safety so important?

Millions of children and adults across the UK have access to the internet; it is now central to how they stay in touch with their friends and family, particularly using the increasingly popular social networking sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and Bebo (often more than one). These are basically websites with applications which help connect people using different tools like blogs, profiles, internal email systems and photos.

However the internet is also a **public place** and while it brings many benefits and opportunities, it also opens up new **risks and challenges** for all those who use it including children and adults alike.

3. What does this have to do with football?

Football uses the internet to communicate to coaches, referees, medics, welfare officers, young leaders, players, parents, fans, scouts and agents. For example, coaches, players and parents can post information about each other, can upload pictures and videos etc. It is important that all these parties (especially club officials are mindful of what they are saying, how they are saying it and ensure they are adhering to The FA's Safeguarding Children Policy on maintaining appropriate relationships with U18's in football.

4. So what are the risks?

There are a number of risks with using the Internet, in particular social networking sites and chat rooms. These come about by individuals, who are not your friends, being able to see things that you either post (messages) or upload to the site (e.g. videos, pictures). Some of the key risks are:

Cyber-bullying – this takes place in the virtual world and can be 24/7 and is the term used when people use the internet to send nasty and upsetting messages to others. It can also be done by people using mobile phones, by sending messages and making nasty phone calls.

Child Trafficking – this is the movement of a young person for the purpose of exploitation and includes a young person being bought and sold for money; being tricked into leaving home; being given away by their family who need the money; being made to leave home because of war; who chooses to leave home because they think they will get a better life. Sometimes an adult will lie to a child and promise them a better life but instead treat them badly.

Sexual abuse (including sexting). Sexting (sending a sexual photo of yourself or someone else via text) is against the law as whoever has that picture on their phone is technically in possession of an

indecent image of a child. If the people involved in sexting are under 18, this is illegal (even if the person is your boyfriend or girlfriend). This means you can be prosecuted under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Hacking and viruses; harrassment

Remember that you don't know who your friends' friends are! And you don't know what they will do with your picture or your phone number or details of training if you give it out by mistake. Once your picture is out there, it will be out there forever and you won't be able to get it back!

5. Help and Support

The FA has teamed up with the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) centre, which is part of the UK Police, set up to tackle the sexual exploitation of children. The CEOP Centre aims to educate children, young people, their parents, carers and clubs to understand the risks they may face online and what they can do to empower themselves to stay safe.

We all need to understand how to make use of this technology appropriately and working with the CEOP Centres education programme, 'Thinkuknow' (www.thinkuknow.co.uk) will provide support by helping:

- **Children** need to understand the risks they may face in an environment they may otherwise think of as being completely safe
- **Welfare officers, coaches, referees** and **medics** need to understand how this technology can impact on their roles
- **Parents** need to understand how they can help to keep their children safer online.

(See Appendix for details on 'Thinkuknow')

6. The DOs and DON'Ts

Coaches/Volunteers

1. DO NOT post pictures on the Internet of the team especially ALONGSIDE player names. If you are using the club website, ensure you have parental permission to use any photos of players
2. DO NOT post derogatory remarks about any official, parent or player from WTJFC or any other clubs (including the League).
3. DO NOT use sarcasm or innuendo - it's important that coaches, assistant coaches, referees and other volunteers remember they are in a position of trust and need to be responsible role models.
4. DO NOT post details of the whereabouts of training, matches or pick up points for players.
5. Avoid using player profiles – do not provide personal contact details of players
6. Avoid placing the full name of players who feature in photographs
7. If a child in your club is concerned about the way someone has communicated with them online, report this to your Club Welfare Officer
8. If you use the internet to communicate with players be aware of what you say and how you say it
9. Best practice would be to avoid engaging in one to one conversations with players via chat rooms
10. If you are concerned about the way a player is attempting to contact you via the internet e.g. using a social networking site or a chat area, speak to your Club Welfare Officer immediately

Players

1. Test yourself – would I want my teacher, mum/dad, stranger on the train to see this – if the answer is 'no', don't post it!
2. DO NOT tell strangers where you live, your phone number or where you go to school or any other personal information e.g. hobbies, favourite band, favourite football club etc.
3. DO NOT send pictures to people you don't know and do not use a webcam with people you don't know in the 'real world'
4. DO use a nickname rather than your real name but always use your real age
5. Use your privacy settings so only your friends can instant message you – ask a parent for help

6. Tell a grown up if you feel scared or unhappy about anything on the internet – if this is not possible, call 'Childline' free on 0800 1111 to talk to someone who can help. Remember to save any information that may have upset you. If anyone says anything nasty to you, **it is not your fault.**

Parents

1. Help your children to understand that they should never give out personal details to online friends they do not know offline.
2. Explain to your children what information about them is personal: i.e. email address, mobile number, school name, sports club, arrangements for meeting up with friends and any pictures or videos of themselves, their family or friends. Small pieces of information can easily be pieced together to form a comprehensive insight in to their lives and daily activities
3. Make your children aware that they need to think carefully about the information and pictures they post on their profiles. Inform them that once published online, anyone can change or share these images of them.
4. It can be easy to forget that the internet is not a private space, and as result sometimes young people engage in risky behaviour online. Advise your children not to post any pictures, videos or information on their profiles, or in chat rooms, that they would not want a parent or carer to see.
5. If your child receives spam or junk email and texts, remind them never to believe their contents, reply to them or use them.
6. It's not a good idea for your child to open files that are from people they don't know. They won't know what they contain—it could be a virus, or worse - an inappropriate image or film.
7. Help your child to understand that some people lie online and that therefore it's better to keep online mates online. They should never meet up with any strangers without an adult they trust.
8. Always keep communication open for a child to know that it's never too late to tell someone if something makes them feel uncomfortable.

7. Sanctions for Breaches of the Policy

Where individuals do not follow the guidelines set out, thereby putting themselves or potentially others at risk, sanctions will be imposed.

For players, the age of criminal responsibility is 10 years old. Once a child reaches this age, people expect you to take responsibility for your actions.....this includes getting punished for them!

APPENDIX 1 – The FA ‘Thinkuknow’

'Thinkuknow' is an excellent education programme developed by the CEOP Centre.

It delivers online safety messages to young people, their parents and the public.

The '[Thinkuknow](#)' programme uses innovative materials, aimed at empowering young people and their parents, to make the right choices when using the internet. The materials include films, leaflets, posters and a website, which focus on three key themes:

1. how to have fun online;
2. how to stay in control ; and
3. how to report.

The FA is proud to have some of '[Thinkuknow](#)' films included in its own safeguarding children education programme and both the Welfare Officers Workshop and Online Safeguarding Children Recertification course highlight the importance of internet safety, making use of CEOPs essential guidance.

The '[Thinkuknow](#)' education programme has an impressive [website](#) which gives simple clear messages for children – why not encourage your players/children to have a look for themselves?

Simply click on any of the above links to check it out. The messages work because they have been developed with children and the information is aimed specifically for:

- 5-7 years
- 8-10 years
- 11-16 years.