Swim England Social Media Guide for Clubs

Welcome

Welcome to the Swim England Guide to Social Media. There has been a growing awareness of the increased use of social media within clubs and by their members.

This resource has been designed to provide an introduction to using social media, as well as recommendations of best practice to all Swim England club members and parents on the use of social media networking sites.

How this resource will help you

This resource will:
- provide an introduction to the different social media platforms
- give you a basic understanding of how to use social media networking as a tool to promote your club
- suggest hints and tips about how to engage with your audience
- offer advice on the safe use of social media.

It is recommended that this resource is read and understood in conjunction with Wavepower, Swim England's child safeguarding policy for clubs which you can access by the link below. Any club social media use must comply with Wavepower section 2.4: pages 72 to 78 (**swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/**). Good practice guidelines can be found at the end of this resource.

Safe use of social media

While social media can provide exciting opportunities, it's important to understand that there is also a risk of danger and negative consequences if these sites are abused. If not used correctly, there could be a negative impact which could cause risk of harm.

Many social networking sites have age restrictions and to be eligible to sign up, you must be at least 13 years-old. It's recommended that you do not encourage young members to use social networking sites, and do not engage with any young members online, for safeguarding reasons and to ensure your own protection against any potential allegations. Further guidance can be found in Wavepower.

Social media and your club

Social networking is widely used to promote sports activities, campaigns and events. Groups, clubs and other sports organisations also use it to communicate with coaches, officials and participants regarding club news.

Social media platforms can be a powerful tool for marketing your club regardless its size. It can be used to promote the club's activities and achievements and to interact with different stakeholders associated with the club at no cost at all!

Through social media, you can discover new and exciting ways to reach your target audience, and when used correctly, can drive engagement with other parts of your club, such as your website.

The different forms of social media

Social media and social networking sites are accessible, quick and user friendly once you get started, but it's important to consider which social media platform is right for you and your club.

You might want to think about:
· how your club wants to use social media and what you want to achieve
· which social media sites are the most popular with your target audience (e.g. members/parents/sponsors, etc.)
· the resources you need, including who has the skills to manage your club's social media presence
· how safe the social media platform is.

Facebook
facebook.com

Facebook can be a great way for your club to connect with its members and volunteers by sharing photos, videos and text updates. A Facebook Group can be a powerful marketing and communication tool for your club. Facebook groups are a fantastic way to bring all your club members and volunteers together and build a community. It will allow you and other members of the group to share important club information and updates and also ask questions and share experiences, photographs and results. It can help you achieve a variety of goals including:
· helping to build a community around your club
· allowing you to celebrate and share your club's successes
· giving live updates from your events or matches
· signposting people to your website
· building new relationships and strengthening existing ones
· increasing membership or attracting new volunteers
· keeping people up to date with what's new in your club.

How to create a group on Facebook

1 Click on 'create a group' from the drop down arrow on the top right hand side of your personal Facebook profile.

2 Enter your group name, add members and set the groups privacy level. Click create.

3 Personalise it by uploading a cover photo, deciding on the group type, adding a description and completing the tags, location and web/email settings.

4 Encourage members to engage. Post things that will spark interaction among group members.

Privacy Settings tips
Facebook Groups can be public, closed or secret. We would recommend you set up a closed group. This means anyone can ask to join the group but requests have to be accepted by a group administrator before they can see group activity.

Facebook top tips

- Make it easy to find the group. Include club's logo, motto, tagline and club contact details (web address, contact phone numbers, email addresses).
- Use videos and images. Pick your image (to show who you are) and cover photos carefully, to ensure these represent your club. Make sure any images comply with Wavepower and you have obtained consent as appropriate.
- Keep your page vibrant and engage members, why not ask for their views?
- Link with other relevant Facebook Pages and your club website which your audience may be interested in. Don't be afraid to post about an article you have found somewhere else, if your audience finds it interesting they will return for more!
- Post up to date information including training times, fixtures, results and achievements.
- Do not use 'text speak' such as 'LOL' and 'OMG'. Check spelling, grammar and punctuation and only abbreviate if you're sure your audience will understand. While social media can be more informal in tone and language, you're still representing your club, so try to look and sound professional.
- When posting images that you do not own, ensure you have consent from the owner of the image before posting and reference the author to abide by copyright laws.

Twitter
twitter.com

Twitter can be a good way for your club to share your latest updates and stories, making it a great way to connect with individuals, other clubs who share your interests and passions, and Swim England. Twitter is a free social networking service that has changed the way many clubs communicate, interact with their audience and engage with key stakeholders. Each tweet is limited to 280 characters, so you will need to keep things 'to the point'.

Using Twitter enables your club to:
- keep people updated in real time on the latest clubs news and events
- find out what people are saying about your club and start a conversation by responding to their tweets
- give and receive live updates from your competitions or events using a hashtag to group all tweets together and make them easily searchable.

Setting up your Twitter profile

1. First you need to register, using your business/club name rather than your own name. Use a club email address and choose a secure password, combining letters and numbers.
2. Create a relevant and catchy username ('Twitter handle') for your club, limiting characters where possible.
3. Choose a profile picture and header image carefully. Use a logo or photo which represents your club. The dimensions of the picture should be 1500 x 1500 pixels to ensure the image quality is not affected when uploaded, and at a resolution of at least 72dpi. Try not to use too much text and keep it in the top two thirds of the image, as part of the header will be hidden by your profile picture.

Twitter top tips:
- Keep it short and sweet. Remember you only have 280 characters for each tweet. This means you may have to get creative, but not at the expense of good English. Try not to use abbreviations such as 'U' instead of 'you'.
- 'A picture is worth a thousand words', so use images and link to videos to keep things interesting. Make sure any images comply with Wavepower and you have obtained consent as appropriate.
- Use natural, conversational language and tweet like you talk.
- Remember the three P's: be polite, positive and professional, as you are representing your club.
- Time your tweets to coincide with events.
- Make the most of using a hashtag (#) for particular topics to make content visible to a wider audience, but remember not to put spaces in your hashtag, e.g. #SESummerChamps #Swimming #Sheffield. If you have an event in a particular area, hashtag the nearest city or town. Also look to see which hashtags are popular (trending), if topics are relevant, utilise the hashtags to get picked up by a much larger audience.
- Where possible, include other people in your tweets to get more traction and reach more people, e.g. @Swim_England.
- Use Bitly (see later on in this guide) to shorten links and track how many people have followed the content.
- If you are promoting something for a stakeholder, always try to mention their Twitter handle (username).
- When posting images that you do not own, ensure you have consent from the owner of the image before posting and reference the author to abide by copyright laws.

Getting started with Bitly

Bitly is a great tool if you want to include web links in your social media posts. It allows you to shorten your links, for instance: **www.swimming.org/careers/get-involved-in-volunteering/** would become **http://bit.ly/30jerDS** which makes your tweets look tidier and takes up less characters. This tool also allows you to track how many people clicked on any link you have shortened, what social media platform they have clicked through from, and also the date that they clicked on your link.

To set up a Bitly account, just visit **bitly.com**. It is best to register your account with the same club email address that you have for other accounts to keep everything in one place.

Ideas for social media content

Here are some suggestions for how your club can use social media:

- news and announcements
- events
- Swim England news relevant to your club
- Swim England products and services relevant to your club
- 'thank you' to a person or organisation that has gone the extra mile
- competitions
- competition results
- newsletter sign-ups
- seasonal tweets and posts related to Valentine's Day, Christmas, New Year, etc
- retweet athletes and share articles when relevant
- link to articles on the **swimming.org** website.

Swim England social profiles

Keep up to date with all the latest news from Swim England through:

Swim England Twitter account: **@Swim_England**
Swim England Facebook account: **facebook.com/SwimEngland/**
Swim England Instagram account: **@swimengland**
Swim England YouTube account: **youtube.com/channel/UCbdK9FG_t6ENQRhds_NNtXQ**
Swim England Club Development: **@Sw_EngClubs**
Swim England Volunteering: **@Sw_EngVolunteer**

Content is also uploaded daily to our website **swimming.org/swimengland/swim-england-news/**. Make sure to check it out for the latest news features and details about upcoming events.

Good Practice Guidelines

Swim England recognises that the use of social networking sites is a rapidly growing phenomenon and is increasingly being used as the communication tool of choice by individuals.

While social networking can provide exciting opportunities for helping your club engage with members and the public, it can also present a number of dangers and negative consequences if not used correctly, such as:
- cyber bullying, through posts which are upsetting to people and often inaccurate
- causing offence to individuals, or other clubs and organisations
- exposure to inappropriate content, or offensive comments or pictures.

It is important to note that misuse/abuse conducted on social media may result in a criminal investigation and members are encouraged to directly refer criminal activity to the police.

Swim England has produced detailed guidance on the use of social networking, which can be found in Wavepower.
This guidance offers advice to coaches, parents, teachers and officials, as well as other officers in a position of trust and responsibility in respect of children in a Swim England club, this can be found here:
swimming.org/swimengland/wavepower-child-safeguarding-for-clubs/

It's important that clubs have a good understanding of Wavepower's guidance, but for the purpose of this guide, key points to note are:
1. Swim England members in a position of trust and/or responsibility should not be in direct contact with children through social networking sites.
2. Should a child in your club request to become a 'friend' on your social networking site, or request that you become a 'friend' on their own social networking site, you should decline if:
   a. you are in a position of responsibility in respect of that child
   b. you hold a position of trust and responsibility in your club
   c. your contact with the child is through a Swim England club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact.
3. The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise Swim England members, Swim England clubs, or any member of the public or other organisation and to do so may be in breach of Swim England Rules and Regulations.
4. The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as those contained in the Swim England Photography Policy. Always make sure that you take safeguarding precautions. All images of children under the age of 18 must be:
   a. above the waist; or
   b. in full clothing, not swim suits.
   You can see the full guidelines in the Swim England Photography Policy.
5. Be wary of publishing any identifying information about yourself or others, either in your profile or in your posts. Remember not to include personal details, such as phone numbers, workplaces, school names, addresses or birthdays.

Summary

We hope you have found this guide informative. We wish you a great experience as a volunteer and thank you once again for all the time and commitment you are giving to the sport.

Further Information

Swim England accepts no liability for any errors or omissions in this resource. Further, while it is hoped that volunteers will find this resource useful, no liability arising out of its use can be accepted by Swim England or the club.

This resource is not a contract of employment and the role you undertake as a volunteer will not create an employment relationship between you and the club or Swim England.

Swim England Volunteering

Did you know that Swim England has a section of the website dedicated to volunteers? To access this site, go to **swimming.org/careers/volunteering/**.

Contact us:

01509 640136

volunteering@swimming.org
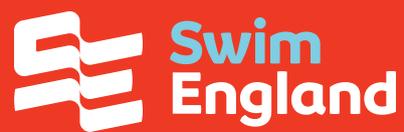
@Sw_EngVolunteer

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Useful Links

NSPCC Net Aware
net-aware.org.uk/

Bitly
bitly.com

TweetDeck
tweetdeck.twitter.com/

Swim England

SPORT ENGLAND | TYR