

Online Safety Policy

1. Statement of Policy

The Federation and its members recognise that social media is integrated into the lives of people of all ages, and that it can be a powerful tool to support communication, education and social activity.

This policy covers the use of social media by the Federation and its members to promote work and activities directly related to the continued development of the Amateur Festival sector. In this case social media communication can take place with groups and individuals on a local, regional, national and international level.

We are aware that a wide variety of social networking technologies may be used such as: Facebook, Twitter, Vimeo, Flickr, YouTube, LinkedIn Instagram, and although these can be beneficial, they may also increase risks to children and young people (i.e. up to the age of 18) involved with our Festivals.

The guidance below is designed to help us manage these risks appropriately.

2. Organisation and Responsibilities

For the Federation the overall responsibility for the implementation of this online safety policy rests with the Board of Trustees.

For our member Festivals the overall responsibility for the implementation of this online safety policy rests with a nominated person from the Charity Trustees / Management Committees of the festival.

For our individual professional members (i.e. Adjudicators and Accompanists) each will be responsible for his/her own online safety in accordance with the guidance in this policy when they are providing professional services to our Festivals and the Federation.

3. General Guidance

This applies to all our staff and volunteers, Adjudicators and Accompanists, but particularly those working with children and young people at our Festivals. Consideration should be given to how your online behaviour may affect your own safety and reputation and that of our Festivals and the Federation.

Communication between adults, and between children / young people and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, social networks, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.

When using digital communications, staff and volunteers, Adjudicators and Accompanists, should:

- only make contact with children and young people for professional reasons and in accordance with the policies and professional guidance of our Festivals and the Federation.
- only communicate about topics directly related to the work and activities of our Festivals and the Federation.
- not share any personal information with a child or young person eg should not give their personal contact details to children and young people including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers.
- not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role.
- exercise caution when sharing personal information with other adults.
- be aware of and use the appropriate reporting routes available to them if they suspect any of their personal details have been compromised.
- ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- be careful in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation.
- not post any personal communications, 'banter' or comments between adults and children / young people.

- copy in parents/carers/guardians to any texting or email communication between adults and children / young people.
- ensure all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs is appropriate for all age groups to view.
- ensure that if a Festival uses a social networking site then it should do so in the name of the Festival (not as an individual associated with the Festival).
- not post information online that could bring our Festivals, our Adjudicators / Accompanists or the Federation into disrepute.
- be aware of the sanctions that may be applied for breaches of policy related to professional conduct. (e.g. loss of Federation membership).

Consideration should also be given to how the use of digital communications by staff and volunteers, Adjudicators and Accompanists, in their private lives could have an impact on the reputation of themselves and our Festivals and the Federation.

Everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits of digital technologies. Everyone should, wherever possible, seek to separate their professional online presence from their online social life and take the following into account when using these digital communications:

- careful consideration should be given as to who should be included as friends on social networking profiles and which information/photos are available to those friends.
- privacy settings should be frequently reviewed.
- the amount of personal information visible to those on friends lists should be carefully managed and users should be aware that friends may still reveal or share this information.
- “Digital footprint” – information, including images, posted on the web may remain there forever. Many people subsequently regret posting information that has become embarrassing or harmful to them at some time in the future.

4. Email/Texting Guidance

The following is best practice in relation to using email and texting.

Do:

- get signed consent from parents/carers/guardians before using these as a method of communication with children or young people.

- explain to parents/carers/guardians and Festival / Federation members the purpose for using either text, email or both to communicate with a child or young person.
- only use group texts or emails and always copy in the parent/carer/guardian to all communications with children or young people.
- make sure texts or emails are only in relation to specific activities related to the work of a Festival or the Federation, or to Adjudicators and Accompanists when they are providing professional services to a Festival or to the Federation.

Don't:

- use text or emails for personal conversation, 'banter', sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature.
- respond to emails from young people other than those directly related to the work of a Festival or the Federation, or to Adjudicators and Accompanists when they are providing professional services to a Festival or to the Federation.
- use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.

5. Social Networking Guidance

The following is best practice in relation to social networking.

Do:

- ensure all the privacy settings are locked so that social networking page(s) are used explicitly for Festival/Federation matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations. This also applies to Adjudicators and Accompanists when they are providing professional services to our Festivals or to the Federation.
- nominate a Festival / Federation member to monitor their social networking page(s) regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately.
- make sure everyone within your Festival / the Federation knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking page(s) and how to contact them.
- Exercise caution if you choose to share your personal information with other adults via social networking.

Don't:

- engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments via social networking pages.
- use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.

6. Review

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Board of Trustees of the Federation to ensure that these standards of online safety are maintained for the Federation and its members.

7. Useful sources of Information

If you want to know more about how to keep safe online use the links below:

www.saferinternet.org.uk

www.kidsmart.org.uk

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety

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