

Club Guidance – Communicating Safely Online

The purpose of this guidance is to support Clubs in Safeguarding their members whilst they engage with your Club online.

This document aims to:

- Raise awareness of the risks that your members may experience when engaging with the Club online.
- Highlight the impact of online communication on your Club.
- Promote actions you can take to mitigate these risks.
- Explain how Club members can report harmful online communication and behaviours.

Online Spaces in Motorsport

Many Clubs may use social media accounts and websites to promote Club activities, grow your member base and celebrate Club successes. This may include the following:

- Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and X (formerly Twitter)
- Video creation and sharing platforms such as TikTok and YouTube
- Websites and email marketing
- Other messaging services such as WhatsApp, Snapchat, Discord and Telegram

Whilst these are all valuable tools to all Clubs when used safely and responsibly, they can all pose risks to you Club that need to be considered.

Risks when Communicating Online

Online risk has been categorised as the 4 C's by the statutory guidance in England, Keeping Children Safe in Education. Whilst this is guidance was drafted for Education, the same principles can be applied in a motorsport context.

1. Content

- Being exposed to inappropriate content online, including racist, homophobic, misogynistic and antisemitic language.
- Users may share inappropriate images, for example sexual content.

2. Contact

- The risks that are present to Club members when communicating online.
- This could include coercion or grooming of groups or individuals.
- Individuals may contact members of your Club online, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, pressuring them to participate in inappropriate behaviour.

3. Conduct

- This is the way people act towards others online.
- This can manifest as harmful messages or harassment to or from your Club members.
- This could include creating harmful content on social media, or harassing an individual.

4. Commerce

- This can include 'phishing' via emails or social media accounts.
- This behaviour seeks to take advantage of a person or Club's financial position or identity.
- This could happen in motorsport – a wealthy individual or Club may be targeted online.

Experiencing or witnessing harmful behaviour online can be distressing. It can have a negative impact on a person's mental health and well-being, which could also affect their enjoyment in the sport or engagement in your Club.

Motorsport UK want to ensure that our sport remains safe, fun, fair and inclusive for all, including communication online.

Risks to the Club

Although individuals may be targeted online, this can also pose a risk to the Club community. Allegations against a person or club, such as sexism or racism, can have a long-lasting effect on the reputation of a Club. If a Club does not challenge poor behaviour online, it may suggest that these same behaviours are tolerated in other parts of the Club.

Motorsport clubs want to continue attracting new members and growing the sport. With a poor

reputation created by damaging or harmful online content, recruitment of new members may be stunted, and current members may leave the club if they feel unsafe in the environment.

In extreme cases of cyber-bullying or harassment, the Club and Motorsport UK may be required to report this to the Police or other Statutory Agencies for further investigations.

Mitigating Risks

There are some simple steps that Motorsport UK clubs can take to mitigate the risks when communicating online. Fostering best practices and encouraging all members to do the same can ensure that the well-being of club members is protected when using online communication.

- Motorsport UK recommend that every club has a robust commitment to Anti-Bullying. A template commitment can be [found here.](#)
- Ensure that two club committee members are administration on social media pages, group chats and websites. This ensures there are multiple accounts of any issues that may arise.
- If the group chat is predominantly for U18 members, the administrators may qualify for a DBS/PVG check with Motorsport UK.
- When an U18 joins the club, it is vital that consent is gained from the parent/guardian for how to communicate with their child online. Motorsport UK recommend including communication preferences as part of the membership sign-on process.
- Club members, in particular coaches and committee members, should avoid becoming 'friends' or 'following' U18's on social media through their personal accounts. Keep the professional boundaries in place and ensure that communication comes through an official club page.
- Avoid sending club communication online at unsociable hours to reinforce professional boundaries.
- Ensure group chat settings are set to only allow administrators to add new people to the group. This prevents unknown individuals from joining the group an engaging in harmful behaviour.
- Promote the Race with Respect values within your club, both on and off the track. Race with Respect is based on respect, integrity, fair play

and good manners – these standards can be applied to online communication and bad behaviour should have repercussions.

Support for Club Members

If a member of your Club experiences or witnesses harmful behaviour online, there are several ways that the Club can support them:

- Encourage Club members to report any concerning messages or negative online behaviour to the Club Safeguarding Officer.
- Provide education to Club members around best practices for using online communication and social media.
- Make Club members aware of the repercussions for negative online behaviour.
- Issue Race with Respect warnings for Club members acting against it's values.
- Refer any incidents of poor use of online communication or social media to Motorsport UK Safeguarding Team and receive support for handling each case.
- If necessary, refer extreme cases to Statutory Agencies or the Police.

Social Media and Online Communication

Social media and Online Communication can have a hugely positive impact on a Club and if used correctly can help to engage members and promote your Club. The following guidance will help to ensure that communication is safe and positive amongst club members:

- Remember there will be a range of ages using online communication and social media – it is important that communication is age appropriate and child friendly where necessary.
- Use social media as a promotional tool for your Club, remembering that the Club reputation may depend on how the Club is viewed online.
- All contact with U18 members should come from the Clubs official accounts, not a personal account. On group chats where this is not possible, ensure there are multiple administrators in the group and you have consent from the parent/ guardian.
- Ensure all Club members follow Race with respect values and guidelines.
- Use privacy settings to protect personal accounts.

- Avoid becoming 'friends' or 'following' anyone under the age of 18.
- Remember that what you post online is there forever.
- Ensure that any photography or filming shared online is in line with the Club photography and filming guidance.
- Children can be copied into communication if necessary and appropriate.
 - Only communicate Club or motorsport related information.
 - Try to use a team management platform (e.g. Spod) for club communications.
 - Report any inappropriate or concerning behaviour or messages to the Club Safeguarding Officer, or Motorsport UK Safeguarding Team

Contact with Under 18's

- All contact with Under 18s should go through the parent/guardian.