



Newcastle Town Netball Club

AFFILIATED TO ENGLAND NETBALL

www.newcastletonetballclub.co.uk

Social Media and Electronic Communication with club members, including parents, players and officials

Advice, guidance and recommendations for coaches, volunteers, officials, umpires and designated officers.

General Practice

It is inappropriate for adult coaches to communicate on a one to one basis with players under the age of 18 years by:

- Text message
- e-mail
- instant messaging
- social networking sites

All electronic communication by the above methods should include a copy to a third party, e.g. copy to the relevant safeguarding officer and/or the parent.

Coaches should also limit all electronic communication to netball related matters. It is advisable to always send a group message rather than single messages to one player or parent and the same for parents/guardians to coaches.

For U16 players, communication will always go through the parent/guardian. This guideline will form part of the club membership details given at the start of the season.

For U18 players, parents should be informed and aware of the communication between the coach and young person.

All coaches, staff, volunteers, parents and members should always behave responsibly and respectfully when online or instant messaging. They should not post, send or discuss unfavourable comments about the coaches, players, any helper or volunteer, parents or club.

Mobile phones should not be used during a netball session, where possible except in the case where a phone is used as a club contact number or for emergencies.

Text Messages and WhatsApp

Text messages or WhatsApp messages are NOT the preferred method of communication between coaches/parents/players, unless in a group set up by a coach or responsible adult.

Parents/Players/Guardians/Coaches must only use netball group conversations for the purpose of communicating match and training information.

There will be two administrators, per group.

Coaches are not readily available via their personal numbers, outside of a group set up by them.

It is a coach's choice to reply to any form of instant messaging and if they do reply, it will be at a time that is convenient to them. An option for an email or face to face conversation may be offered instead.

Instant messaging systems should not be used by adults to communicate with young players under any circumstances.

Emails

Emails are a positive and simple method of communication between club, coaches and parents. The club email address is newcastletownnetball@hotmail.co.uk

Any questions, concerns or complaints should be raised first through an email to the club and not through personal communication, via phone. The club will respond accordingly, within a 48-hour deadline, where possible.

Face to face communication

Where parents/guardians/players wish to speak in more detail with a coach, a meeting will need to be arranged, via email. A third party will be involved in any more challenging conversations, including those that raise concerns/complaints.

Coaches are available at training or matches for any parent to speak to but time may be limited, due to coaching or game responsibilities. A coach will suggest another time or method of communication that works better, if this is the case.

Communication reminders

Members are asked to be mindful of times they are contacting others within the Club and also be aware of the content that is being raised, avoiding naming other players/officials/parents and only discussing their own child, in an instant messaging form.

Emails are the preferred method of contact for the club, as this allows the volunteers to manage their own time and responses at times that do not intrude on their personal time.

Please be mindful that the club is a volunteer ran organisation and all members have time commitments, outside of the club.

Social Networking

Coaches should NOT have players under the age of 18 as their 'friends' on social networking sites when the primary reason for the relationship is netball and they have a position of trust in relation to that young person.

Should a young person request to become a named friend on your social networking page or request that you become a name friend on their page you should decline if any of the below apply:

- You are in a netball position of responsibility in respect of that child
- You hold a position of trust and responsibility in the netball club
- Your contact with the child is through the netball club and the parent/guardian of the child does not give their consent to such contact

The social network site should never be used as a medium by which to abuse or criticise England Netball members or England Netball clubs and to do so would be in breach of the England Netball Codes of Conduct and therefore subject to disciplinary action.

Coaches are advised to consider carefully what they post as some comments can be seen by friends of friends. This also applies to comments left on other people's pages and the sharing of photographs. Consider your position as a role model in this area.

The publishing of a photograph or video footage on a social networking site is governed by the same requirements as any other media see the England Netball Photograph Policy.

Coaches/officials/volunteers that are aged Under 18

England Netball recognises that social networking sites can be a useful tool for coaches, officials and volunteers within the netball club to share information with other coaches, officials and volunteers. If, however, the coach, official or volunteer is under the age of 18, while they may be a colleague; these requirements must be adhered to. For young people aged 16 or 17 it is the view of England Netball that to restrict the ability to share professional information with them from other coaches, officials or volunteers may be detrimental in their professional development.

Therefore in such cases if the parent of a young person in position of responsibility aged 16/17 and the young person themselves requests to have contact with an adult club coach, official or volunteer for the purposes of sharing professional information relevant to their role:

- The club should gain written consent of the parent/guardian and young person to have such contact naming the individual adult and social networking site concerned.
- The named adult must sign an agreement to keep the contact with the young person to the discussion of matters relevant to the young person's professional role in the club.
- All such communications should be shared with an identified 3rd person (e.g. the young person's parent/guardian or Club Safeguarding Officer).

If the young person or the adult is found to breach the above agreement action must be taken by the club to address the concern and /or the breach referred to England Netball or the statutory agencies if appropriate.

Advice to Young Players

The club reminds young members to set their privacy settings and not accept requests either from people unknown to them or to other adults involved in netball.

Reporting Concerns

In the event of a player/coach/parent showing a coach/official/volunteer a text or instant message, image or email that is considered to be inappropriate the coach/official/volunteer must inform the appropriate Safeguarding Officer, either at the club, county or England Netball national level. If a young person is concerned with anything they have seen on the internet they are advised to speak to the Club Safeguarding Officer.

The information in this guide is consistent with England Netball guidance.