

# **SOCIAL MEDIA & ONLINE COMMUNICATION POLICY**

Version 1.0 | Updated 2025

Approved by: Club Director – Kristina Ondon Tukilush

## **1. PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY**

London Sport Academy (LSA) recognises that the use of social media, messaging applications and online communication is a normal part of daily life. While these platforms can support communication and connection, they also present risks to safeguarding, privacy, and the reputation of the club.

This policy sets clear expectations to:

- protect gymnasts, parents, coaches and staff
- maintain professional boundaries
- prevent safeguarding concerns
- prevent online bullying, harassment or inappropriate communication
- protect the reputation and integrity of London Sport Academy

This policy applies to all gymnasts, parents/guardians, coaches, staff, volunteers and helpers. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action and termination of membership.

## **2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- Safety, professionalism and respect must guide all online communication.
- Once content is shared online, it cannot be fully controlled or removed.
- Online behaviour must reflect the values and conduct expectations of LSA.
- The relationship between coaches and gymnasts must remain professional at all times.
- No one may post content that harms, embarrasses, disrespects or endangers another person or the club.

This policy must be read alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Parent Communication & Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Inclusion & Equality Policy
- Complaints & Grievance Procedure

## **3. RULES FOR GYMNASTS (UNDER 18)**

Gymnasts must not:

- post comments, photos, videos or messages that are derogatory, offensive, untrue, hurtful or harmful
- post or share content involving other gymnasts without consent

- post any material that mentions or identifies London Sport Academy in a negative way
- post content that indirectly brings the club, its staff, gymnasts or parents into disrepute
- add or message coaches on social media or private messaging platforms
- share rumours, bullying content, or screenshots intended to embarrass others
- misuse photos or videos taken during training or events

Gymnasts must:

- report any online concerns immediately to a trusted adult or the Welfare Officer
- think carefully before posting – once shared, it is no longer in your control
- behave respectfully both online and offline

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#### **4. RULES FOR COACHES / OFFICIALS / VOLUNTEERS**

Coaches and staff are in positions of trust and therefore must:

- never accept friend requests from gymnasts under 18
- never privately message gymnasts under 18
- never use personal phones or personal accounts to contact gymnasts
- never post photos or videos of gymnasts on personal or work social media accounts
- avoid online communication that may be misinterpreted
- communicate with gymnasts only through parents/guardians
- maintain professional boundaries at all times

Coaches must keep all online communication:

- factual
- professional
- safeguarding-compliant

#### **5. RULES FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS**

Parents must not:

- post negative, disrespectful or harmful comments about the club, staff, gymnasts or other parents
- discuss club decisions or policies publicly or in WhatsApp/social media groups
- share screenshots, rumours or accusations
- upload images or videos of other children without consent
- tag the club in posts containing criticism or disputes
- add coaches on social media
- contact gymnasts who are not their own children via social media

Parents must:

- use official communication channels only
- raise concerns through the Complaints & Grievance Procedure
- be role models for respectful communication
- understand that online harassment may result in disciplinary action

## IMPORTANT:

Social media is not an acceptable place to raise concerns, complaints, accusations or grievances. Doing so violates this policy and the Parent Communication & Behaviour Policy.

## 6. WHAT IS PROHIBITED ONLINE

The following are strictly prohibited:

- bullying, harassment or intimidation
- discrimination, racist or xenophobic comments
- derogatory or defamatory comments about the club or individuals
- “indirects” or passive-aggressive posts
- sharing misinformation or assumptions about training decisions
- sharing screenshots of club communication without permission
- attacking staff decisions publicly
- posting content that suggests discrimination or favouritism
- creating online groups to discuss club matters without permission


These behaviours will be treated as misconduct and handled under the Conduct & Discipline Policy.


## 7. HOW TO REPORT A CONCERN

Anyone who sees something harmful online must report it immediately:

*Welfare Officer*

Halina Yarashevich

 [info.east.lsa@gmail.com](mailto:info.east.lsa@gmail.com)

 07591826431

If the concern involves safeguarding risk, LSA may contact:

- British Gymnastics Safeguarding Team
- Police
- CEOP
- NSPCC
- Local Authority Safeguarding Team

External contacts listed at the end of this policy may also be used.

## 8. CONSEQUENCES OF MISUSE

Breaching this policy may result in:

- verbal or written warning
- communication restrictions
- removal from WhatsApp groups
- temporary suspension
- disciplinary review
- termination of membership

Severe or repeated misuse may be escalated to:

- British Gymnastics
- social services
- police (in cases of harassment, threats or exploitation)


## **9. HELPLINES & RESOURCES**


- CEOP: [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)
- Childline: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- UK Safer Internet Centre: [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- ThinkUKnow: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

## **10. CONTACT INFORMATION**

*Welfare Officer:*

Halina Yarashevich

 [info.east.lsa@gmail.com](mailto:info.east.lsa@gmail.com)

 07591826431

*British Gymnastics:*

[www.british-gymnastics.org](http://www.british-gymnastics.org)

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