



Social Media and Digital Communications Policy

Approved by: Kingston Kayak Club Committee

Review date: Annually, or sooner if required

Website: www.kkc.org.uk

Social media contact: socialmedia@kkc.org.uk

Welfare contact: welfare@kkc.org.uk

1. Policy Statement

Kingston Kayak Club uses social media and digital communication to promote paddlesport, celebrate the achievements of members, share club news, communicate with members and engage with the wider community.

The Club is committed to ensuring that online communication connected to Kingston Kayak Club reflects the Club's values of safety, respect, inclusion, fairness and good sportsmanship.

This policy sets out the standards expected from anyone using, managing, posting on, commenting on, or otherwise engaging with Kingston Kayak Club online.

2. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- protect children, young people and adults at risk;
- protect the privacy and dignity of members;
- promote respectful and appropriate online behaviour;
- reduce the risk of bullying, harassment or abuse online;
- ensure official club communication is accurate and appropriate;
- protect the reputation of Kingston Kayak Club;
- provide clear guidance on the use of photographs, video and personal information;
- explain how concerns should be reported and managed.

3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all club members;
- junior members;
- parents and carers;
- coaches, leaders and instructors;
- volunteers and helpers;
- committee members and club officers;
- officials and event organisers;
- visitors and spectators;
- anyone representing or referring to Kingston Kayak Club online.

This policy applies to online activity connected to Kingston Kayak Club, including but not limited to:

- the Club website;
- Facebook;
- Instagram;
- YouTube;
- WhatsApp;
- Messenger;
- email;
- online forms;
- livestreaming;
- photographs and video;
- comments and direct messages;
- personal social media accounts where Kingston Kayak Club, club members, club activity or club events are mentioned or identifiable.

4. General Expectations

Everyone engaging with Kingston Kayak Club online must:

- be respectful, polite and constructive;
- avoid abusive, threatening, discriminatory, offensive or defamatory comments;
- avoid bullying, harassment, intimidation or victimisation;
- avoid posting false, misleading or unverified information;
- avoid sharing confidential club information;
- avoid sharing safeguarding or welfare concerns publicly;
- respect the privacy and dignity of others;
- respect requests not to be photographed, filmed or tagged;
- avoid posting content that could bring Kingston Kayak Club into disrepute;
- follow the terms and conditions of each platform.

Online behaviour connected to Kingston Kayak Club may be treated as a club welfare, safeguarding or disciplinary matter where it affects club members, club activity, club volunteers, club events or the reputation of the Club.

5. Official Club Accounts

Only authorised people may post from official Kingston Kayak Club accounts.

Official club accounts include, but are not limited to:

- the Club website;
- official Kingston Kayak Club Facebook pages or groups;
- official Kingston Kayak Club Instagram accounts;
- official Kingston Kayak Club YouTube accounts;
- official email newsletters;
- any other platform approved by the Committee.

Those managing official club accounts must:

- use appropriate language and tone;

- check information is accurate before posting;
- ensure posts reflect the values of the Club;
- avoid posting unnecessary personal information;
- consider safeguarding, welfare and privacy before posting images or video;
- avoid identifying children by full name unless there is a clear reason and appropriate consent;
- remove or hide inappropriate comments where necessary;
- report safeguarding or welfare concerns to the Club Welfare Officers;
- refer serious concerns to the Committee where appropriate.

Official club accounts must not be used for:

- personal arguments;
- political campaigning;
- personal business promotion, unless approved by the Committee;
- content unrelated to the Club's aims;
- abusive, discriminatory or inflammatory comments;
- criticism of individual members, volunteers, officials or other clubs.

6. Personal Social Media Accounts

Members, parents, carers and volunteers are free to use their own social media accounts. However, care must be taken when posting about Kingston Kayak Club, club sessions, events, members, coaches, volunteers or officials.

When using personal accounts, individuals must not post:

- abusive, offensive or discriminatory comments about the Club or its members;
- comments that bully, mock, humiliate or target another person;
- confidential information from club meetings or welfare matters;
- safeguarding concerns or allegations;
- images or videos that compromise someone's safety, privacy or dignity;
- misleading information presented as fact;
- content that could damage the Club's reputation;
- personal disputes involving club members or volunteers.

Constructive feedback should be raised through appropriate club channels rather than through public online arguments.

7. WhatsApp, Messenger and Group Messaging

Club messaging groups should be used for relevant club communication only.

This includes groups used for:

- session information;
- volunteer coordination;
- coaching updates;
- event organisation;
- trips and competitions;
- discipline-specific groups such as slalom, polo or marathon.

Group admins should:

- make clear what the group is for;
- ensure the group remains relevant and respectful;
- challenge inappropriate content;
- remove inappropriate posts where possible;
- prevent arguments or personal disputes from continuing;
- remove people from groups where necessary;
- report safeguarding or welfare concerns to the Club Welfare Officers.

Members must not use club messaging groups to send:

- abusive, offensive or discriminatory content;
- personal attacks;
- rumours or gossip;
- inappropriate jokes or images;
- political arguments;
- spam or unrelated promotional content;
- messages intended to bully, exclude or intimidate others.

Where a group includes children or young people, extra care must be taken to ensure communication is appropriate, transparent and related to club activity.

8. Communication with Children and Young People

Adults must maintain appropriate boundaries when communicating online with children and young people.

Adults must not:

- send inappropriate private messages to children or young people;
- use language that is sexual, intimidating, humiliating, threatening or overly familiar;
- ask children or young people to keep communication secret;
- use social media to form inappropriate personal relationships with children or young people;
- share unnecessary personal contact details;
- send or request inappropriate images;
- contact children or young people late at night unless there is an urgent and appropriate reason;
- use disappearing message services or hidden communication methods for club matters.

Where possible, communication with children and young people should take place through parents/carers or approved club channels.

Any direct communication with a child or young person must be appropriate, necessary, related to club activity and capable of being explained to a parent, carer, Club Welfare Officer or Committee member.

9. Photography and Video

Photography and video are important for celebrating achievements, promoting paddlesport and recording club activity. However, they must be used responsibly.

Kingston Kayak Club will:

- seek appropriate consent for the use of images and videos;
- respect requests not to be photographed or filmed;
- avoid publishing unnecessary personal information about children;
- avoid identifying children by full name unless there is a clear reason and appropriate consent;
- avoid images that could be embarrassing, inappropriate or unsafe;
- avoid images that show children in a state of undress or could compromise their dignity;
- avoid sharing images that reveal sensitive personal information, routines or locations;
- remove images where a reasonable safeguarding, welfare or privacy concern is raised.

Members, parents, carers and visitors must not take or share images or videos in a way that compromises the safety, privacy or dignity of others.

10. Changing Rooms, Toilets and Private Areas

Photography, filming, livestreaming, video calls and the use of camera-enabled devices are not permitted in changing rooms, toilets, showers or other private areas.

This applies to:

- mobile phones;
- cameras;
- tablets;
- smart watches;
- action cameras;
- any other recording device.

Any deliberate photography or filming in changing rooms, toilets or shower areas will be treated as a serious safeguarding concern and may be referred to the Club Welfare Officers, Paddle UK, statutory agencies or the police.

11. Tagging, Naming and Identifying Children

Extra care must be taken when posting about children and young people.

The Club and its members should avoid:

- tagging children in public posts;
- publishing a child's full name unnecessarily;
- linking a child's image with personal information;
- sharing details of a child's home address, school, routine or regular location;
- posting anything that could expose a child to unwanted contact.

Parents and carers should also consider the privacy and safety of other children before posting images from club sessions or events.

12. Livestreaming

Livestreaming club activity should only take place with appropriate permission and consideration of safeguarding, privacy and safety.

Livestreaming must not take place in:

- changing rooms;
- toilets;
- showers;
- first aid areas;
- private conversations;
- situations where people may reasonably expect privacy.

Where children or young people are present, livestreaming should only take place where it is appropriate, supervised and consistent with club guidance.

13. Online Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination

Kingston Kayak Club will not tolerate bullying, harassment, abuse or discrimination online.

This includes:

- racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist or otherwise discriminatory comments;
- personal attacks;
- mocking or humiliating others;
- spreading rumours;
- targeted criticism;
- threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- sharing private information without permission;
- deliberately excluding or isolating people through online platforms;
- repeated unwanted contact;
- unkind messages or posts directed at another person.

It is only “banter” if everyone involved genuinely finds it funny and no one feels hurt, embarrassed, intimidated or excluded.

If someone asks for behaviour to stop, it must stop.

14. Safeguarding and Welfare Concerns Online

Online behaviour may become a safeguarding or welfare concern.

This may include:

- grooming;
- inappropriate contact with children;
- sexualised messages;

- bullying or harassment;
- threats or intimidation;
- sharing images without consent;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- discrimination;
- exploitation;
- concerns about an adult's behaviour around children or adults at risk.

Safeguarding and welfare concerns must not be discussed publicly online.

Concerns should be reported to the Club Welfare Officers:

welfare@kkc.org.uk

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

Where appropriate, concerns may be referred to Paddle UK, statutory agencies or the police.

15. Accuracy and Reputation

Anyone posting about Kingston Kayak Club should take care to ensure information is accurate.

This includes information about:

- session times;
- event dates;
- safety requirements;
- booking arrangements;
- fees;
- results;
- club decisions;
- policies and procedures.

Where inaccurate information is posted, the Club may ask for it to be corrected or removed.

Members must not present personal opinions as official club statements unless they are authorised to speak on behalf of the Club.

16. Use of Club Name, Logo and Branding

The Kingston Kayak Club name, logo and branding must not be used for unofficial accounts, pages, groups, events, fundraising, merchandise or public statements without approval from the Committee or authorised club officers.

Members must not create social media accounts, pages or groups that appear to represent Kingston Kayak Club without permission.

Any approved use of the Club's name, logo or branding must be appropriate and consistent with the Club's values.

17. Sponsorship, Advertising and Commercial Content

Official Kingston Kayak Club channels should not be used for personal business promotion, advertising or commercial content unless approved by the Committee or authorised club officers.

Where sponsorship or partner content is shared, it should be clear, appropriate and relevant to the Club.

18. Moderation

Kingston Kayak Club reserves the right to monitor, moderate, hide, delete or report posts, comments or messages on official club channels.

The Club may also:

- turn off comments;
- remove inappropriate content;
- remove users from groups;
- restrict access to official channels;
- block users;
- report content to the platform;
- report serious concerns to appropriate authorities.

Moderation will be carried out in the interests of safety, welfare, respect, accuracy and the reputation of the Club.

19. Breaches of this Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in action being taken by the Club.

This may include:

- asking for content to be corrected or removed;
- removal of posts or comments;
- removal from online groups;
- restriction from official club channels;
- informal guidance;
- a warning;
- referral to the Club Welfare Officers;
- disciplinary action;
- suspension from club activity;
- termination of membership;
- referral to Paddle UK, statutory agencies or the police where appropriate.

The Club will seek to respond fairly, proportionately and consistently.

20. Reporting Concerns

Concerns about inappropriate social media or digital communication should be reported to:

Safeguarding or welfare matters:

welfare@kkc.org.uk

Concerns may also be raised with a coach, session leader, committee member or Club Welfare Officer.

If someone is in immediate danger, call **999**.

People reporting concerns should provide a clear factual account of what they have seen, received or been told. Screenshots may be helpful where appropriate, but safeguarding matters should not be shared more widely than necessary.

21. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Club Code of Conduct;
- Adult Code of Conduct;
- Children and Young People's Code of Conduct;
- Safeguarding Policy;
- Changing Facilities Policy;
- Disciplinary Procedure;
- Photography and Filming guidance where applicable;
- Paddle UK policies and guidance where applicable.

22. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Kingston Kayak Club Committee, or sooner if required due to changes in guidance, legislation, digital platforms, club activity or following a significant incident.

23. Agreement

By taking part in Kingston Kayak Club activity, engaging with official club channels, joining club messaging groups, or posting online about the Club, members, parents, carers, volunteers, coaches, officials and visitors are expected to follow this policy and support the Club in maintaining a safe, respectful and inclusive online environment.