Social Media Policy

In all their contacts and communications with the members of their organisation/group, leaders must be seen to be open and transparent. This is the case whether communications are by traditional means or by electronic means.

NB: Leaders must not communicate with children or young people via leader's personal social networking profiles, email accounts, or chat rooms.

For an Organisation/Club Using/Publishing a Social Networking the following principles should be applied:

• The page/profile must be password-protected, and the password must be held by at least three leaders of the organisation.

• The site should be monitored by a designated supervisor. This person should have access to the login details of the site. This supervisor will be appointed by the Designated Person/Safeguarding Panel in Charge of Child Protection.

• Any inappropriate posts by children/young people or leaders should be removed by the designated supervisor. Reasons should then be explained to the person who posted the content. Where possible sites should be monitored before content is put up.

• The site should be kept 'Private' i.e. only permitted members or 'friends' can see what is posted on the site.

• The use of personal addresses and telephone numbers etc., should be avoided as, while sites are 'private', there is the potential for items to be copied and shared.

• Content of any postings should be consistent with the aims of the organisation. In cases of doubt leaders should seek advice.

For Leaders Using a Social Networking Site

• Leaders should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people on social media. (Children or young people may 'follow' leaders on social media so leaders should make sure any content they post is appropriate.)

• Messages left to or from children or young people on social network sites should be written on an open page (e.g. A facebook 'Wall') and not in a private message or by using 'chat' [one-on-one].

• Leaders should not network with members of their organisation/group via closed [one-on-one] chats e.g. facebook messenger, WhatsApp, etc,. This should be done only through 'Group Chat.'

• Any events or activities run by the organisation that are organised or publicised on the site should be a closed event so as non-members cannot access the event without suitable permission by the site administrators.

• Any emails sent to children or young people via the site must be sent to at least one other leader. (This can be done by 'bcc' if necessary.)

• Leaders should avoid communicating with children or young people in their organisation/group via email late at night.

• In signing off a post or email leaders should not do so in a way that could be misconstrued or misinterpreted by the recipient, e.g. "Luv X"; "xoxoxo". Simply sign your name.

• Parents /carers should be asked to give their approval for leaders to communicate with their children/young people via social networking sites, or by any other means of internet communications (e.g. email). Parents of U18s involved in senior teams should be members of team group chats.

• Parental and child's permission is required before pictures of videos of children or young people are posted online.

• Any disclosures of abuses reported through a social networking site must be dealt with according to your reporting procedures.