

YST social media guidelines for staff and volunteers

1. Introduction

Social media is a fact of life for most of us today, especially young people. Research shows that among 16-to-25-year olds in the UK, as many as 99% use social media every day. Children aged 12 and under are below the age limit for opening a social media account, but despite this research has found that 75% of them have one.

The Youth Sport Trust has an active social media following. On a typical day there will be dozens of individuals and organisations sharing details of their work with us on social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and LinkedIn. We believe that, used positively, this can play an important part in enhancing our impact and building support for our charitable mission.

Many of YST's staff and networks are active on social media and use this as a way to promote and discuss our work.

However, it is well documented that the advance of social media has had negative side effects among young people. These can include stress and addiction, sedentary behaviour and opportunities for bullying and harassment. Used in the wrong way, information inappropriately shared on social media can pose a threat to young people's safety.

Research by the NSPCC in 2017 found that four out of five children feel social media companies aren't doing enough to protect them. It is therefore vital that organisations like YST take a proactive approach to ensure that our use of social media does not put young people at risk of harm.

2. Purpose

These guidelines are intended to help ensure that social media and other forms of electronic communication are being used positively at YST, with precautions taken to ensure that it does not inadvertently put young people's safety or wellbeing at risk.

They apply to all trustees, employees, volunteers, ambassadors and self-employed contractors who work for or with the Trust, and who post on social media about YST's work, whether from an individual social media account or through one of YST's corporate accounts.

This document sits alongside the wider YST safeguarding policy and safeguarding procedures and guidelines, which is required reading for all staff. You can find a copy of the YST safeguarding policy and safeguarding procedures and guidelines under the safeguarding section on the website.

If you are going to be posting from one of YST's corporate accounts, you should also familiarise yourself with the YST Social Media Tone of Voice guidelines for tips on ensuring that content is 'on brand' and in keeping with YST style. If you fail to comply with these

guidelines it may result in disciplinary action if you are an employee of YST or jeopardise your future involvement with YST if you are a volunteer, ambassador or contractor.

3. Access to YST corporate accounts

YST has active accounts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat. The Corporate Communications team is responsible for managing these accounts and posting content. Occasionally, other members of YST staff or volunteers may be given access to the accounts on a temporary basis to share content from an event if a member of the Corporate Communications is unable to attend. In these instances, temporary login details will be shared with a limited number of individuals who will receive a briefing from the Corporate Communications teams on safe use of social media.

Any posts shared from YST's corporate accounts should be in keeping with our organisational tone of voice (see social media tone of voice document).

Where possible content should be planned and scheduled in advance so that it can be signed off by a member of the Corporate Communications team ahead of publication.

4. YST social media principles

Across all of our social media channels, we commit to ensuring that we:

- Are positive and encouraging in tone
- Take an inclusive approach which recognises and celebrates diversity
- Protect the privacy and safety of young people
- Adhere to the YST safeguarding policies.
- Live up to YST's values and mission

5. Individual accounts

It is important to remember that we are all held to the same standards online as we are offline. Regardless of whether you use your social media account for professional purposes, you should take care not to post anything which could undermine the integrity of YST, bring the organisation into disrepute or break the law – for example by breaching copyright or data protection rules, breaking confidentiality or publishing anything discriminatory.

While anyone can comment on YST's work, only a small number of staff can comment on behalf of YST. It is good practice to include a line in your biography which makes clear that any views you share do not necessarily reflect those of YST. Any personal social media accounts you have will either be open or closed. For the purpose of applying these guidelines it is important that you understand which type of account you have.

- Open: This is where anyone can see what you post **and** you do not have to give permission for people to follow your updates. Examples include Twitter and Instagram accounts which are not protected.
- Closed: This is where only your contacts can see what you post, and you have had to give permission for them to be part of your network. Examples include Instagram private accounts, Twitter protected accounts, most Facebook account, Snapchat and Whatsapp groups

If you have an open account (an account which can be viewed by anyone) you have a responsibility to ensure that anything you post or share is appropriate for young people and YST stakeholders.

If you have a closed personal account (where only followers and friends can see content you share) you should not accept follower and friend requests from young people who you work with in a professional capacity through YST.

6. Engaging with young people online

Engagement with young people online must adhere to the spirit of YST's safeguarding policy and our social media principles. Any engagement with individual young people through social media or other forms of electronic communication should be in a public forum and reactive (i.e. conversation initiated by a young person).

Children aged 12 and under are below the age limit for opening a social media account. We should therefore not engage with any posts from accounts where a young person is thought to be younger than 13.

Following and befriending

Following is defined as when one social user 'subscribes' to another social media user's feed. This is the model for Twitter and Instagram. If you have an open account on one of these platforms, people can follow you without you needing to give permission.

Befriending is defined as being where one social media user has to send a friend request to be able to follow another users feed. If the friend request is accepted, both users now follow each other.

If you have an open social media account, this means that young people will be able to follow it.

You should not:

- Accept any friend or follow requests from young beneficiaries of YST if you have a closed account
- Send friend requests to young people

- Send follower requests to young people if their account is closed.

Young people are, however, able to follow and befriend YST's corporate social media accounts.

Commenting, liking and sharing

Where a young person has posted about their involvement with the work of YST from a public account, it is acceptable to comment, like or share the post in a manner in keeping with YST's values and social media principles. If in any doubt, speak to the Corporate Communications team.

We should not engage with posts from young YST beneficiaries which have no connection to YST's work, values or mission.

Tagging in posts

You should not tag young people's social media handles in anything you post proactively unless permission has been obtained. Young people who have a locked account should never be tagged.

Where possible, it is better to tag social media handles from school social media accounts.

Private conversations

Many social media platforms include the functionality for private messaging – posts which can only be viewed by the selected individual(s) they are sent to.

As a representative of YST you should not be involved in any private conversations with any of the young people you come into contact with through your work with the Trust. This includes through other forms of electronic media.

If you do receive any private correspondence from young people, these must be shared in full with the YST safeguarding lead.

This is both for your safety and the safety of the young people YST supports.

Engagement examples

Examples of **acceptable** engagement with young people include:

- ✓ Liking or sharing a positive post from a young person about their engagement with YST
- ✓ Posting a supportive comment - in keeping with YST's tone of voice - in response to a post about a young person about their engagement with YST
- ✓ Sharing a young person case study produced and published by YST

Examples of **unacceptable** engagement with young people would include:

- X Accepting a follower or friend request from a young person known through YST if your account is closed.

- X Any form of private conversation (eg personal and direct messaging) which cannot be seen publicly
- X Liking, sharing or commenting on posts which have no connection with the young person's work with YST.
- X Commenting on a young person's appearance, or anything which falls outside our social media principles.

7. Images

In line with the wider YST safeguarding policy, written permission must be obtained ahead of any photography or videography involving young people.

If you are intending to capture any form of imagery from a YST event, you must make the event safeguarding lead aware.

If any young people can be identified in visual imagery, it is your responsibility to ensure that appropriate permission has been sought for this to be published.

In line with the YST social media principles, images and video shared should be celebratory, positive and encouraging in tone. They must not compromise the safety or integrity of an individual or put them at risk of bullying.

The Corporate Communications Team is responsible for keeping and maintaining YST's image library. Once you have posted and/or shared images with the Corporate Communication team, you must delete them from your device.

8. Gathering content involving young people

Ensure a designated responsible adult is present at all times. If conducting an interview with a young person, the designated adult needs to be close enough to hear and intervene if necessary.

Ensure that the young people involved are relaxed and not distracted or uncomfortable being filmed or having photos taken. This may mean spending time around children until they stop focusing on what you are doing to gather content.

Explain the purpose of any content gathering you are doing and the way it will be used.

Questions should be clear and straightforward and should not lead the child. At first ask open questions (so the child is not pressured to respond in any particular way) and then use closed questions to narrow down on facts that you have to check.

The interviewer should sit or stand at the same height as the child and not 'talk down', while adopting a calm, friendly and neutral voice.

9. Monitoring social media activity

The YST Corporate Communications team has responsibility for monitoring social media mentions of YST and its work and escalating any safeguarding concerns and issues.

It is your responsibility to monitor responses and interactions with anything you post in relation to your work with YST. Where a post you have shared attracts any negative comments which could cause upset to the young people involved, you should report this to the YST Corporate Communications team.

10. Contact

Where issues arise and further clarification is needed, contact the event or programme safeguarding lead or:

- Simon Ward, YST Head of Corporate Communications:
simon.ward@youthsporttrust.org 07825 065179
- Helen Shuttleworth, YST Head of HR and safeguarding lead:
helen.shuttleworth@youthsporttrust.org 07921 684817

11. Further information

Recommended resources and contacts for further information about safe use of social media:

- The UK Safer Internet Centre provides free resources for young people, parents, carers, teachers and other professionals: <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>
- www.ceop.police.uk is the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). This is the Government body dedicated to eradicating abuse of children. Concerns about inappropriate contacts between a child and an adult, including online, can be reported directly to CEOP.
- Childline (0800 1111 or www.childline.org.uk) is an NSPCC support service where children can talk confidentially to NSPCC advisors about any issues or problems they may be experiencing, either over the phone or online using an instant messenger service.
- The NSPCC and O2 have a free online safety hotline for any parents with questions about parental controls or concerns about their child's use of social media: 0808 800 5002.