SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Ver 1.2. junior amendments – July 2026

This Online Safety and Social Media policy has been developed with support from England Athletics to inform our Finch Coasters club members about using social media (*Facebook, YouTube, Twitter/X, TikTok, Instagram and all other social networking sites and forums)* so people feel enabled to participate, while being mindful of their responsibilities and obligations. In particular, this policy provides practical guidance allowing all parties to benefit from the use of social media, while minimising potential risks and protecting those involved.

As of March 1st 2024, Finch Coasters has the following social media avenues

- A closed, member-only Facebook GROUP (Name: Finch Coasters Members), made up of Finch Coasters members, moderated by committee members
- Junior Members (under 18s) are not permitted to join, access or participate in the Finch Coasters Members Facebook Group. Requests to join from anyone under 18 will be declined or removed.
- An official public-facing Facebook PAGE (Name: Finchcoasters) where only designated social media volunteers can post
- Official public-facing accounts on X and Instagram (handle: @finch.coasters)

Managing online presence

Our online presence through our website or social media platforms will adhere to the following guidelines:

- All social media accounts and pages will be password-protected, and at least two members of the club will have access to each account and password
- The accounts and pages will be monitored by at least two designated volunteers in-order to provide transparency, who will have been appointed by the Finch Coasters Committee
- The designated volunteers managing our online presence will seek advice from the Finch Coasters designated Welfare Officer and Junior Welfare Officer where the matter concerns a junior member to advise on safeguarding requirements
- Designated volunteers will remove inappropriate posts on groups by club members, explaining why, and informing anyone who may be affected
- Finch Coasters will decline requests from all non-members to become members of our groups

- We will make sure all club members are aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about something that's happened online
- Identifying details such as a club member's home address or telephone number shouldn't be posted on social media platforms
- Any posts or correspondence will be consistent with our aims and tone as a club

Online behaviours

The code of conducts state the expected behavioural standards, this includes behaviour on social media. Here is some specific things to consider before posting on social media:

- Pause and think about what you are saying and the impact it might have
- Be careful, respectful and positive. You are personally responsible for what you post. If in doubt, don't post it.
- Think about your image – 'what do I want people to think about me or Finch Coasters?'
- Consider who you are interacting with – anything external could be read by under 18s. Familiarise yourself with safeguarding regulations in relation to engaging with under 18s. Adult Club members must not initiate, accept or maintain private/direct social-media contact with a Junior Member (under 18) who is not a member of their own family. This includes private messaging, direct messages, friend/follow requests, disappearing-message services and one-to-one contact through any social-media platform.
- Where Club-related communication with a Junior Member is necessary, it must be conducted through their parent or legal guardian, or through an official Club communication channel approved for junior use and capable of appropriate oversight. Junior Members must not contact adult Club members outside their own family through personal social-media accounts or private/direct messaging.
- Respect confidentiality
- Remember many different audiences could see your posts including Club members, potential members, children, member's relatives, and friends.
- Be smart about protecting yourself, your privacy, and confidential information. What you publish is widely accessible and will be around for a long time, so consider the content carefully and your privacy settings.

- Don’t write anything on social media channels that you wouldn’t feel comfortable seeing in a newspaper or hearing on TV. Everything you write is treated as a direct quote i.e. ‘Don’t post what you wouldn’t say to your mum/gran’ or ‘Think before you post or ‘Would I say this face to face with someone?
- Be in the right state of mind when you make a post. Don't post when you're angry, upset, or your judgement is impaired in any way. Be very careful what you say, do and post because once it’s on a social media channel, it can go viral very quickly.
- Don’t engage in online disputes and don’t allow family or friends to argue on your behalf.
- Be professional and respectful. Never use slurs, personal insults or obscenity. Any post which speaks unnecessarily negatively, or is rude in tone, about other club members, competitors, officials or governing bodies will be removed and could be liable to action under the Finch Coasters’ Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.
- Any post that discriminates against individuals or groups on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation will be liable to action under the Finch Coasters’ Grievance and Disciplinary Policy, and also any other applicable laws.

Images and videos

It is assumed as a condition of membership that permission for photographs or videos taken by members at official club-recognised running or social events is granted, subject to the policies of individual social network site itself (for example our Facebook Group). This consent does not apply to Junior Members. Under-18 members must not be photographed or videoed in connection with Finch Coasters activities.

Please ensure:

No Club member, volunteer or person acting on behalf of Finch Coasters may deliberately take, request, publish, upload, share, repost, tag or otherwise distribute a photograph or video in which a Junior Member is identifiable. This applies to Club social media, members’ personal social-media accounts, messaging groups, websites and promotional material.

Reasonable care must be taken when taking photographs or videos at Club activities to ensure Junior Members are not included in the background or in group photographs. If

an under-18 member is inadvertently captured, the image or footage must not be published or shared and should be deleted as soon as reasonably practicable.

- these photos or videos are taken in public (for example during a race or social event)
- they are not invasive in any way
- everyone should always follow the guidelines of this document

At any time, members can withdraw their consent for individual images by contacting our social media volunteers and any images will be removed at the first available opportunity. Such images should not be distributed outside the club without the individual's permission.

What we expect from the Finch Coasters Committee and any other volunteers

- They should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it
- They should seek the advice of the designated Welfare Officer if they have any concerns about the use of the internet or social media
- They should make sure any content posted on public personal accounts is accurate and appropriate as club members may 'follow' them on social media
- emails or messages should maintain the club's tone and be written in a professional manner, e.g. in the same way you would communicate in a professional setting, avoiding kisses (X's) or using slang or inappropriate language
- Committee members, run leaders, hosters and volunteers must not communicate privately with Junior Members through personal social-media accounts or private/direct messaging. Any necessary communication must involve the Junior Member's parent or legal guardian or use an approved, appropriately overseen Club channel.
- They should not delete any messages or communications sent to or from club accounts
- They should undertake all online safety training offered and gain a basic knowledge of the platforms and how to report or remove inappropriate content online
- Any concerns reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as a face-to-face disclosure, according to our safeguarding procedure
- Club members must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene

What we expect of club members

- Members should be aware of this online safety and social media policy and the behaviours set out
- We expect members behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines set out in the code of conducts
- Members should take the necessary steps to protect themselves online
- **Adult members must not add, follow, friend, privately message or otherwise establish personal social-media contact with Junior Members outside their own family.**
- **Junior Members must not add, follow, friend, privately message or otherwise contact adult Finch Coasters members outside their own family through social media. They must not join or participate in the Finch Coasters Members Facebook Group.**
- On official channels such as the Finch Coasters Facebook group, members should keep posts only to running topics and/or Finch Coasters club matters in general

Policy breach

Club members who breach this policy (and other related policies) will face a warning in the first instance. Persistent breaches will be dealt with through the Finch Coasters Grievance and Disciplinary Policy.

Any breaches of a safeguarding nature will be addressed through the Finch Coasters Safeguarding Policy and procedure and where appropriate will be reported to UK Athletics. Any breach involving prohibited adult–junior social-media contact, unauthorised images of a Junior Member, or attempted access by a Junior Member to an adult-only Club social-media group must be reported promptly to the Club Welfare Officer and/or Junior Welfare Officer and handled under the Club's safeguarding procedures.

While the club will try to moderate social media posts, if you do have any concerns or would like to make a complaint please contact the Club Welfare Officer or Junior Welfare Officer or anyone on the Committee.

Useful contacts

- UKA 07920 532552 safeguarding@uka.org.uk
- EA welfare@englandathletics.org
- The UK Safer Internet Centre https://saferinternet.org.uk/
- Anti-Bullying Alliance www.antibullyingalliance.org