



Online Safety and Social Media policy

**Formally approved by the Board of Trustees on
9th December 2019**

North East Young Dads and Lads Project

C/o Dunston Drop-In
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Introduction -

This policy provides guidance on how the North East Young Dads & Lads Project (NEYDL) uses the internet and social media and the procedures for doing so. It also outlines our expectations of how staff, trustees, volunteers, young people and external visitors involved in the organisation behave online.

Aims -

The aims of our online safety and social media policy are:

- To protect all young people involved in the charity that make use of technology (including mobile phones, internet enabled games consoles and the internet) whilst in our care.
- To provide our staff, trustees, volunteers and external visitors with policy and procedural information regarding online safety and inform them how to respond to incidents.
- To ensure that the charity operates in line with its core values and within the law regarding how we behave online.

Understanding the online world -

As part of using the internet and social media our charity will:

- Understand the safety aspects, including what is acceptable behaviour for staff, trustees, volunteers, young people and external visitors when using websites, social media, apps and other forms of digital communication.
- Be aware that the same safety aspects apply regardless of the type of device being used (e.g. tablet, mobile phone, pc).
- Ensure that we adhere to relevant legislation and good practice guidelines when using social media platforms (including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram).
- Review our existing safeguarding policies and procedures annually to ensure that online safeguarding issues are fully integrated, including:
 - Ensure concerns or disclosures of abuse which take place online are written into our reporting procedures.
 - Incorporate online / cyber bullying into our anti-bullying policy.
- Provide training for the person / person's responsible for managing the charities online presence prior to embarking on this role and every 3 years thereafter.
- Ensure that all staff, trustees, volunteers, young people and external visitors have read, understood and committed to following this policy at the point of entry.

Managing our online presence -

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

- All social media accounts will be password protected and at least 3 people (staff and nominated trustees) will have access to each account and password at all times.
- A designated person approved by the charities board will monitor all accounts.
- The designated person managing the charities online presence will seek advice from our designated safeguarding lead on safeguarding requirements.

- The designated person will remove any inappropriate posts identified as quickly as possible informing anyone affected - including young people, and their parents (if aged under 18).
- All account, page and event settings will be set to 'private' to ensure that only approved members known to the project can view their content.
- No identifying features (e.g. names, addresses, dates of birth, telephone numbers, school uniforms) will be posted on social media platforms.
- All online posts will be consistent with the charities aims.
- We will ensure that all young people involved in the charity are made aware of who manages our social media accounts and who to contact if they have any concerns about the running of these accounts.
- Written permission will be sought from the young people, and their parents (if aged under 18) in order to communicate directly with the young person via social media or any other means of communication.
- Written permission will be sought from the young person, and their parents (if aged under 18) prior to posting photographs or videos of the young person online.
- When working with young fathers in the company of their own children, written permission will be sought from parents / legal guardians prior to taking and posting photographs or videos online. Consistent with best practice, we will ensure that the child's facial features are hidden (e.g. photographs displaying the back of the child's head).
- All of the charities accounts and email addresses will be appropriate and fit for purpose.

What we expect of staff, trustees and volunteers -

- All parties (including staff, trustees and volunteers) should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- All parties should seek timely advice from the designated safeguarding lead if they have any concerns about the use of internet or social media.
- Trustees and volunteers should not communicate with young people online or via social media.
- All staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children and young people to the designated person responsible for the organisation's online presence.
- All parties should not 'friend' or 'follow' young people from personal accounts on social media.
- All parties should ensure that any content posted is accurate and appropriate.
- All parties should not communicate with young people via personal accounts or private messages.
- Where a young person is aged under 18, rather than communicating with parents through personal social media accounts, all staff should choose a formal means of communication such as face-to-face, email, letter, or use an organisational account, profile or website.
- At least one other member of staff should be copied into any emails sent to young people.
- Staff should avoid communicating with young people via email outside of normal working hours.
- Emails should be signed off in a professional manner, avoiding the use of emojis or symbols including 'kisses'.

- Any disclosure of abuse reported through social media should be dealt with in the same way as face-to-face disclosures.
- Smartphone users should respect the private lives of others and not take or distribute pictures of others if it could invade their privacy.
- All parties (including young people) must not engage in 'sexting' or send pictures to anyone that are obscene, indecent or menacing.

What we expect of external parties visiting the charity -

- When visiting the charity, interacting with young people representing / or supported by the charity or referencing the charity elsewhere (e.g. via social media) external parties should be aware of this policy and behave in accordance with it.
- In both a personal and professional capacity, external visitors should not communicate with individual young people representing / or supported by the charity via any means without the prior written approval of the charity.
- Smartphones, digital and all other recording equipment should be turned off and out of reach at all times when visiting the charity and / or interacting with young people representing the charity.
- External visitors must be accompanied by project staff at all times when visiting the charity and / or interacting with young people representing or supported by the charity.
- External visitors must not duplicate, edit / manipulate or make use of any online or social media content released by the charity without the charities prior written approval.

What we expect of young people -

- All young people should be made aware of this online safety and social media policy and agree to it's terms.
- We expect young people's behaviour online to be consistent with the guidelines surrounding online use and behaviour set out in this policy.
- Young people should follow the guidelines surrounding online use and behaviour set out in this policy on all digital devices (including smart phones, tablets and gaming consoles). In the event that a young person's online behaviour is so severe as to threaten the safety and wellbeing of another person(s), we reserve the right to take appropriate and immediate action including exclusion.

Using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate -

When using mobile phones or other digital technology to communicate via voice, video or text (including texting, email and instant messaging), we'll take the following precautions to ensure young people's safety:

- Unless young people are aged over 18, staff will avoid having young people's personal mobile phone numbers and will instead seek contact via a parent or guardian.
- All staff will seek young people's permission (and parental permission where the young person is aged under 18) in order to contact the young person directly.
- All staff will have a separate phone from their personal one for any contact with parents and young people.

- Texts will be used for communicating information to young people and not to engage in conversation.
- If a young person tries to engage a member of staff in conversation via texts, the member of staff will:
 - End the conversation or stop replying.
 - Schedule a face-to-face visit to continue the conversation if needed.
 - If concerned about the young persons welfare, follow the charities safeguarding policies and procedures.

Using mobile phones during social and educational activities, excursions or outings -

So that all young people can actively take part in excursions or outings we will discourage the use of mobile phones during such activities. As part of this policy we will:

- Make young people aware of how and who to contact in case of emergency.
- Inform young people well in advance of 'free time' periods when communication with family and friends is supported.

Use of other digital devices and programmes -

The principles in this policy apply to all current or future technology - including computers, laptops, tablets web-enabled games consoles and smart TV's - and whether an app, programme or website is used.

If any digital devices are used as part of activities within the organisation:

- We expect young people to adhere to the guidelines surrounding online use and behaviour set out in this policy.
- We'll establish appropriate restrictions more commonly known as 'parental controls' on any device provided to prevent misuse or harm.

As a charity, we commit to implementing this policy and addressing any concerns quickly and within these guidelines.

