

Social Media, Online Communication and Online Safety Guidance

Social media is a constantly changing landscape providing both benefits and risks to Parkour UK and those involved in the sport.

Social media platforms enable efficient communication between Parkour UK, its members, supporters, and parents/carers. Risks include cyberbullying, inappropriate content being shared on platforms and security issues such as club or personal accounts being hacked.

Codes of Conduct include aspects around social media, and Parkour UK have set expectations around the online behaviour of its staff, members and those associated with the organisation, and we encourage this as good practice.

We always recommend more than one person be made admin of any social media platform that our member clubs use.

Social Media and Online Communication

Social media, when used properly, offers many positive communication opportunities for Parkour UK and its members. There are many different social media platforms which incorporate instant messaging, image and video sharing, live streaming, and gaming. As the number of available apps grows and changes, it is important to follow some simple guidelines to ensure that social media can be safely used as a promotional tool and a means of communication for the user. Remember, parkour is an open-age and open-gender sport.

Recommendations for Clubs/Gyms and Coaches

Social media platforms can be a positive way of promoting parkour in general, as well as being a way to stay in touch with friends, but it is essential to keep these two worlds separate. We recommend staff at all parkour gyms and clubs and independent coaches have a separate professional and personal account.

- All contact with children (under 18's) and parents should be through your professional account and strictly in relation to training, coaching, events, and parkour-related activity. **It is inappropriate for coaches to communicate on a one-to-one basis with participants under the age of 18 years through social media or instant messaging.**
- For coaches, communication with anyone you are in a coaching relationship with should adhere to the expected standards in the [Code of Conduct](#).
- You should adjust the privacy settings for your personal account so that content is only visible to accepted 'friends'. Although younger participants may see you as a friend and may request to be your

'friend' on a social media platform, you should direct them to your club/coaching account page, keeping all contact professional. You should let your Club Safeguarding Officer know about any friend request from a child you are coaching. If you are an independent coach, keep a record of the request and a note of your response.

- Any direct communication or interaction with a child on a social media platform could be misconstrued as overstepping expected professional boundaries.
- Before using social media to post or comment, consider whether you would be happy for those you are coaching or their parents to see your post.
- You should never criticise other parkour businesses, athletes, participants, or their parents online.
- Ensure club/professional social media platforms have more than one admin and keep your account secure by enabling two-factor authentication.
- Add an 'Accept comment' setting. This allows you to approve or pre-moderate a comment from another user, usually a 'friend', before it appears on your webpage/profile. Ensure that all messages are checked before they appear on a club/gym webpage/profile to ensure that any inappropriate messages are blocked and, if necessary, reported to the service provider. This may not be possible with all social networking services. You may wish to contact the prospective service provider to establish if steps could be taken to adjust the privacy and safety settings for your needs.
- Ensure that staff and volunteers, including coaches and participants, are aware of the need to protect their privacy online. Make sure that your staff and coaches (paid and volunteers), sports athletes, or any students and trainees are aware of the need to protect their own privacy online! They should understand the risks of posting and sharing content which may damage their reputation before they link their personal webpage/profile to the club's profile. It is inappropriate for adult coaches to communicate on a one-to-one basis with participants under the age of 18 years through social media or instant messaging. Coaches and staff should not be "friends" with the children they coach, and they should not comment on their status as this can open the adult to allegations. Young people and children within the club should be told not to 'friend' request members of staff as their request will not be accepted as part of club policy.
- Coaches and staff should not follow social media feeds or pages for anyone under the age of 18 without written parental consent. As your role includes a position of trust from a safeguarding standpoint, you should remain acutely aware that even following a child on social media leaves an impression of authority.

It is also important to be mindful of any content you post online via your professional social media page or platform.

Remember that you are representing the club/your coaching brand.

- ✓ All communications should be in line with your safe sport policy.
- ✓ Your post should not cause personal distress or be seen as inappropriate in content. Remember, if you do not put it on your notice board, it does not belong on your social media platforms.






Remember to follow Parkour UK's live streaming policy, and if a child is named (or is otherwise identifiable by, for example, a nickname), avoid using their image alongside the name. If an image is used, avoid naming the child.

Online Contact with Participants Who Are Children






- You should make training, coaching, and other arrangements for children via parents/carers.
- As children approach adulthood, they may become increasingly responsible for making their own training and coaching arrangements. An acceptable exception to this rule for children over 16 is to contact the parent/carer and to copy in the child with the parent's prior consent. This means the parent/carer can monitor communications, but the 16/17-year-old receives the information directly.
- You should not engage in any communication with a child (under 18) without their parent/carer receiving the same messages from you.
- If you receive any responses that appear inappropriate, they should be brought to the attention of the parent/carer and either the Club Safeguarding Officer or Parkour UK Safeguarding Team immediately at safeguarding@parkour.uk.
- All contact with children should be in relation to coaching and parkour related activity only.
- If you received a friend request, you may wish to check a user profile before accepting them. Do not accept friend requests from and report underage users (Many have a minimum age of 13 years, but you should check the age rating of individual apps to make sure) to the service provider and to the young person's parents (perhaps via the Club Welfare Officer). Parkour UK suggests that no adult in a position of trust should 'friend' anyone under the age of 18, nor should they accept 'friend' requests from anyone under age 18 unless it is on a managed team or club page where appropriate safeguarding measures are in place and with the approval and knowledge of the club welfare officer. If such a page is set up, clubs/gyms should obtain signed parental permission for anyone under the age of 18 to be added to or contacted via managed social media and parents should also be added to the page and copied in on any direct messages.
- Clubs/coaches may wish to consider using a platform for team management which allows contact with parents/carers and participants while not revealing their contact details to others on the platform.

Social Media: Do's and Don'ts

Club staff/Coaches and volunteers **DO**

-  Have separate social media accounts for professional and personal use.
-  Keep photos and personal information private.
-  Apply all relevant Codes of Conduct and appropriate professionalism to behaviour online.
-  Obtain consent before posting any personal information online. This includes photographs where an individual can be identified. Remember the picture/no name guidance for children.
-  Make your account(s) secure by enabling two-factor authentication and regularly check your privacy settings for both personal and club accounts.

Club officials, staff, and volunteers **DO NOT**

-  Contact children by any means. Arrangements should be made via a parent/carer. Remember that the Rule of Two applies to all your interactions with children, whether in person or online.
-  Send private messages to children via apps or social media.
-  Invite or accept children to become 'friends' on social media platforms.
-  Respond to a direct message from a child. If this happens, let a parent/carer and the Club Safeguarding Officer know.
-  Send or post inappropriate messages that are offensive, negative or derogatory in any way.

Open Age Training and Events

Please be mindful of who may have access to the material you share via social media.

The open age nature of Parkour can mean that children are training/competing alongside young adults of a similar age who they may have grown up with, be at the same school as, and consider to be friends. Participants over the age of 18 should remember that they are often training/competing with children and should judge their social media interaction accordingly and in line with club/gym Codes of Conduct. Direct contact between an adult player and a child when there is a significant age gap between the two could be misconstrued. The adult should consider if this contact is appropriate.

If your relationship with those in your club/gym changes (e.g. if you are appointed coach), then your online contact with any children in your team will have to change as outlined above. If you have any questions about how to manage this change, please speak with your Club Safeguarding Officer.

Concerns Regarding Social Media

If you suspect someone is using social media in an unsafe or inappropriate manner, you should report their behaviour to the platform as well as to your Club Safeguarding Officer or the Safeguarding Team at Parkour UK safeguarding@parkour.uk

If you stumble across sexual images or videos of someone who could be under 18, you should tell someone you trust and report it to the [Internet Watch Foundation](#) (IWF) or Childline [Report Remove](#) service. Reporting is easy, anonymous, and could help to save a child from ongoing harm.