



RYA British Youth Sailing Communication Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. It is the Policy of the RYA to safeguard children taking part in boating and windsurfing from physical, sexual and emotional harm. The RYA takes child protection seriously.
- 1.2. This document sets out the recommended means of communicating with sailors at each level of the RYA programmes.
- 1.3. Once a sailor reaches the age of 18, all communication is then directed solely to the sailor and not the parent.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1. The objective of this Policy is to recommend and share appropriate means of communicating with young sailors within the RYA programmes in order to minimise the risk of the young sailors being exposed to actual or potential abuse via the means of communication used.
- 2.2. This Policy takes into account the need to develop non-dependence in young sailors, so that they develop relevant skills to enable them to go on to perform at the highest levels in international sport and best maximise the positive impact of sport on young people's lives.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1. For the purpose of this Policy the following terms shall have the meanings stated below:
 - 3.1.1. "**communication**" means sending and receiving of information via either written or spoken word, through any medium, including letter, websites, email, social media and all forms of telephone and mobile phone communication;
 - 3.1.2. "**junior sailors**" means those sailors engaged in RYA Regional Training Groups/Home Country activity;
 - 3.1.3. "**youth sailors**" means those sailors engaged in RYA UK Youth Performance and Transitional Squad activities;
 - 3.1.4. "**closed user group**" means a predefined group of web users falling within the categories determined by the administrator of a restricted access website usually consisting of squad sailors, their parents, coaches, RYA support staff and class association representatives (where relevant).
- 3.2. For clarity the RYA believes that where a sailor is capable of being selected to a training group or squad at a young age, we should communicate with them at a level consistent with their performance, not chronological peers.

4. PROCEDURES FOR JUNIOR SAILORS

The following procedures shall apply to communications from RYA coaches and support staff to junior sailors:

- 4.1. Protocols – the preferred method of communicating with young sailors within a class will be shared and discussed with parents at the land based introductory camp or first squad camp, whichever event occurs first. Principally, particularly regarding camp organisation and logistics, the RYA communicates by e-mail. We will communicate using the designated e-mail addresses supplied to us via the squad application systems.
- 4.2. Websites
 - 4.2.1. Public pages to be used only for general information of a non-personal nature. General information includes information regarding squad composition and programmes, results, grants and coaching groups.
 - 4.2.2. Restricted access pages may be used at junior level, see section 6.
- 4.3. Selection matters – selection letters will be addressed to sailors, which will include a paragraph reminding sailors to share the information with their parents.

- 4.4. Information letters – will normally be sent to the sailors (unless a parent specifically asks to receive copies).
- 4.5. Information emails – will normally be sent to sailors, copied to parents.
- 4.6. Telephone calls – are deemed appropriate exceptionally for information and coaching advice; depending on who answers the phone the call should be positioned with the parents or the sailor asked to relay the purpose of the call.
- 4.7. Texting – not appropriate for junior sailors.
- 4.8. Social networking sites may not be used for communicating at junior level. These sites include, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
- 4.9. Disciplinary matters – to be discussed with parents, in person where possible; any additional written correspondence to be addressed to parents.

5. PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH SAILORS

The following procedures shall apply to communications from RYA coaches and support staff to youth sailors:

- 5.1. Protocols – parents and sailors will be informed that the RYA will normally communicate directly with sailors, in order to develop non-dependence and to coach and encourage sailors to take responsibility for their own sailing activities. Principally, particularly regarding camp organisation and logistics, the RYA communicates by e-mail. We will communicate using the designated e-mail addresses supplied to us via the squad application systems.
- 5.2. Websites
 - 5.2.1. Public pages to be used only for general information of a non-personal nature. This includes information regarding squad composition, results, grants and coaching groups.
 - 5.2.2. Restricted access pages may be used at youth level, see section 6.
- 5.3. Selection matters – selection letters will be addressed to sailors, copied to the parents, with a paragraph included reminding sailors to share the information with their parents.
- 5.4. Information letters – sent to sailors, copied to parents.
- 5.5. Information emails – sent to sailors, copied to parents
- 5.6. Telephone calls – appropriate for information and coaching advice; sailors should be reminded to relay the purpose of the call to parents.
- 5.7. Texting (including WhatsApp) – at youth level may be used for information dissemination only (i.e. briefing times and venues at International regattas) – not for social purposes.
- 5.8. Social networking sites may not be used for communicating at youth level. These sites include, Facebook and Twitter.
- 5.9. Disciplinary matters – to be discussed with parents, in person where possible; if the parents are not present or available, then discussion should take place in the presence of another responsible adult, ideally the one named in loco parentis for that activity. Additional, subsequent correspondence to be addressed to parents (unless sailor is over 18).

6. RESTRICTED ACCESS WEBSITES

- 6.1. Restricted access websites may be used at junior and youth level provided there is a closed user group.
 - 6.1.1. Where a junior or youth sailor is a member of a closed used group their parents should also be able to access the group.
- 6.2. Content posted by website administrators must be visible to all members of the closed user group.
 - 6.2.1. Content may be in the form of video, photos and text for the purposes of communicating information or coaching advice relevant to the group or individuals.

- 6.2.2. Content may only be published by website administrators which may consist of coaches and RYA support staff. Only adults may become website administrators.
- 6.2.3. All website administrators must be familiar with the RYA Youth and Junior Communication Policy, RYA British Youth Sailing Anti-Bullying Policy and RYA Child Protection Guidelines.
- 6.2.4. Website administrators are responsible for content they post and must not post any inappropriate content which could harm an individual or group either directly or indirectly. Care should be taken by coaches and RYA staff to critique performance responsibly and respectfully in the public domain, with consideration to the need to set and maintain high standards of performance through constructive coaching practices.
- 6.3. All links to other sites or pages should have the content checked thoroughly, both for child protection reasons, and to ensure the content poses no risk to the organisation's reputation. Once a link is created the content should be checked periodically. It is not appropriate to use sites like YouTube where external links cannot be controlled and it is easy to navigate away from pages to external content which may place a child at risk.
- 6.4. Restricted access websites may be used to request information from individual members of the closed user group, e.g. squad feedback. When information is requested from individual members of the closed user group, the relevant administrator should make it clear who will be able to access the information provided and the purpose for which it is intended. The information requested may consist of feedback forms, sailor profiles, questionnaires, reports or online coaching (e-learning).
- 6.5. The restricted access website shall clearly state how to report misuse or concerns regarding the website to the relevant RYA programme administrator.

7. REMOTE LEARNING VIA DIGITAL PLATFORMS

When face to face coaching is not possible and the squad session is moved to a digital or virtual platform the RYA would like to assure parents the correct measures have been put in place to ensure online safety. Parents will be required to give written consent for their child to participate in virtual/digital sessions.

- All formal activity initiated by the RYA will be via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Hive, if the sailor is under the age of 13 parents will have to create the account, sailors over the age of 13 can create their own account but we recommend parental involvement in all digital learning.
- The coach will start the 'meeting' approximately 10 minutes before it is due to start to make sure everyone familiarises themselves with the setting and then the session can start on time.
- When you sign into the meeting you will be held in a waiting room and will only be let in by the coach.
- All coaches and support staff will introduce themselves on the call before the session starts.
- Sailors/parents will not be able to share screen.
- Sailors/parents will not be able to send each other private messages via the platform.
- Video content, this will be shared by the coach and not by the sailors/parents.
- Breaks – we recognise that staring at a screen for long periods of time is hard work, therefore 15-minute breaks will be taken every 45 minutes.
- Please remain muted during the session and raise your hand if you have a question.
- Please ensure you dress appropriately when video function is enabled.
- Sessions will not be recorded for monitoring purposes.
- The Welfare Officer's contact details will be made available if anyone experiences any concerns.

8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 8.1. This Policy will be monitored by the RYA Youth Racing Manager and the RYA Safeguarding & Equality Manager.
- 8.2. This Policy will be reviewed annually by the RYA Racing Manager in consultation with the RYA Safeguarding & Equality Manager, RYA Safeguarding Steering Group, Youth Racing Committee and appropriate RYA Managers.

Document Data:

Version and Amendment History:			
No.	Date Author	Pages	Remarks
1.0	05 February 2008 Simon Wergan	1 A4	Initial Draft
1.1	11 February 2008 Simon Wergan	1 A4	Minor revisions
1.2	16 February 2008	2 A4	Suggested minor revisions & comments
1.3	9 June 2008	4 x A4	Sections included regarding use of websites, plus minor revisions
1.31	19 June 2008	4 x A4	Final authorisation
1.5	28 September 2010	5 x A4	Provision made for restricted access websites
1.6	14 October 2010	5 x A4	Minor amendments to wording
1.7	3 August 2016	4 x A4	Minor amendments to wording
2.0	16 November 2020		
2.1	27 November 2020		Microsoft Teams added to list of digital platforms

Distribution List:		
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Mark Nicholls	RYA Youth Racing Manager	Nov 2020
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Richard Aspland	RYA Racing Communications Officer	Nov 2020
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Related Documentation:	
Document	Version
RYA Youth Racing Safety Policy	August 2016