

## **Introduction**

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter are an increasingly popular medium to communicate with a whole network of other people. This good practice guide aims to show the opportunities these sites can offer, the potential risks and some good practice guidelines for the safe use of social media. The guide has been designed for the use of The British Horse Society; elements will be useful for BHS Approved Centres, BRC Affiliated Riding Clubs, Accredited Professional Coaches, volunteers and committees.

## **Opportunities and risks**

Organisations have an opportunity to use this media to communicate with their users, clients and volunteers on an instant and low cost basis. Many of the sites allow the user to set up a bespoke profile where they can actively interact with others in their network.

Care must be taken to make sure users are protected from harm while on social media sites and it is the organisation who has created their own page/profile responsibility to make sure appropriate safeguards are in place when users are linked to their network.

There are various risks for young people who are using social media sites and the internet in general: cyber bullying, grooming and potential abuse, identity theft and exposure to inappropriate content. Most young people use the internet in a positive manor but they may sometimes behave in a way that puts them at risk.

## **Understand the safety aspects of the social networking site**

Familiarise yourself with the social networking site that you would like to use. Look at how the privacy tools work and if there is a code of behaviour for the site. The site will also have a reporting function for concerns or complaints.

## **Legislation**

Make sure you operate within the law when using social networking sites. Do not target your profile to children under the age of 13. You may also need to consider the data protection act with regard to the retention of personal information.

## **Managing the site**

A moderator should be assigned to check and maintain content. This person should be trained to recognise bullying or grooming behaviour (see end of this document) and should also have a criminal record check. The Communications Department at the BHS will be responsible for monitoring BHS social media sites.

## **Reporting procedures**

Users should be made aware of how they can report an incident or concern that they may have online, most social media sites have a reporting function but this should be via the BHS e-safety reporting procedure (available at [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)) or directly to the appropriate government agency e.g. [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

## **Security and Privacy**

An organisation email address should be used as the contact for the site instead of a personal email account. Log in details for the social media site need to be kept confidential and only those with training and adequate checks should have access to them.

Carefully consider what privacy setting is appropriate. For sites where young people may interact, care must be taken to ensure they are protected from those who may wish them harm.

Monitor and control comments and photo uploads and remove any that have adult content or may cause distress or offence to other users. If your social networking site allows it, make sure no material can be published without the moderator checking it first.

Do not ask for personal contact details from users especially young people, this also includes their location and school or other information that may put them at risk.

### **Raise awareness**

Make sure users including employees, volunteers and members especially young people, know how to protect their privacy online. Guidance documents for these groups are available from [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk)  
Promote links to safety websites such as [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

### **Potential indicators of online grooming and sexual exploitation of children and young people**

The use of social media may increase the potential for online grooming and exploitation of children. Exploitation of children can include exposure to harmful content, including adult pornography, and illegal child abuse images.

There have been a number of cases of online grooming through social media sites, techniques include:

- Gathering personal details e.g. name, age, school, photographs
- Promising meetings with celebrities or tickets to events
- Offering material gifts e.g. mobile phone, computer
- Paying young people to appear naked and perform sexual acts
- Bulling or intimidating behaviour such as threatening to tell a child's parents
- Asking to meet young people offline
- Using a fake identity to appear as a peer or similar age
- Using sites to gather information about likes and dislikes

### **Useful Information**

Available from [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk):

- e-safety Guidance for Young People
- e-safety Guidance for volunteers, employees and freelance people
- Guidelines on Use of Photographic and Filming Equipment at Events for Children or Vulnerable Adults
- Parental Consent Form - Images
- Reporting an e-safety incident – online, text messages or photographic images

Child Exploitation and Online Protection centre – [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

Think u Know – [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) – advice site for young people and parents

NSPCC – Childline 0800 1111 – [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Child Protection in Sport Unit - [http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/cpsu/cpsu\\_wda57648.html](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/cpsu/cpsu_wda57648.html)

Childnet international – [www.childnet.int.org](http://www.childnet.int.org) – a charity that is helping make the internet a safer place for children

Data Protection and Information Commission Office – [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)

Internet Watch Foundation – [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk) – website to report illegal content

BHS Lead Safeguarding Officer – [cpleadofficer@bhs.org.uk](mailto:cpleadofficer@bhs.org.uk) – 02476 840746