



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 and all forms of telephone and mobile phone communication;
 - 3.1.2. "**junior sailors**" means those sailors engaged in RYA Zone/Home Country or RYA UK Junior Squad activity;
 - 3.1.3. "**youth sailors**" means those sailors engaged in RYA UK Youth 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 particular 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 – 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. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 7.1. This Policy will be monitored by the RYA Youth Racing Manager and the RYA Child Protection & Equality Manager.
- 7.2. This Policy will be reviewed annually by the RYA Racing Manager in consultation with the RYA Child Protection & Equality Manager, RYA Child Protection Steering Group, Youth Racing Committee and appropriate RYA Managers.