

Northern Ireland Provincial Bowling Association



Social Networking Policy

Northern Ireland Provincial Bowling Association (NIPBA) realises that social media and networking websites have become a regular part of everyday life and that many people enjoy membership of social networking sites such as Facebook, You Tube, Bebo, MySpace and Twitter, etc.

However, NIPBA is also aware that these sites can become a negative forum for complaining or gossiping and care must be taken **not** to breach the NIPBA Code of Conduct, the NIPBA Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and the Data Protection Act 1998.

This Policy has been designed to give everyone associated with the NIPBA (Officers, Club Members and Bowlers) clear guidelines as to what the Association expects of them when accessing these sites. The absence of, or lack of, explicit reference to a specific website or service does not limit the extent of the application of this Policy. Where no Policy or guidelines exist to a particular situation, Officers, Club Members and Bowlers should use their own judgement and take the most prudent action possible.

Policy Guidance

If someone has their own personal profile on a social media website, they should make sure that others cannot access any contents, media or information from that profile that:

- a) they are not happy for others to have access to; and/or
- b) which would undermine their position as an Officer, Club Member or Bowler of NIPBA.

As a basic rule, if you are not happy with others seeing particular comments, media or information then simply **do not post these onto a public forum site**. When using social media sites. The following should be considered:

- Changing the privacy setting on their profile so that only people they have accepted as friends can see their comments.
- Review who is on your 'friends list' on your personal profile. In most situations you should **not** accept 'friends requests' if you do not actually know the person(s) concerned.
- Ensuring personal blogs have clear disclaimers that the views expressed are personal and not representative of a particular Club of NIPBA.
- Ensure that information published on social media sites complies with the NIPBA Code of Conduct, the NIPBA Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and the and Data Protection Act 1998.
- Breach of the NIPBA Code of Conduct, the NIPBA Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Data Protection Act 1998 may result in Officials, Club Members and Bowlers being disciplined and further action as directed by the NIPBA.
- Everyone associated with the NIPBA must ensure that they are respectful toward:
 - the NIPBA and young people
 - fellow Officers, Club Members and Bowlers
 - Parents and families of Officers, Club Members and Bowlers
 - Other Sporting Organisations and Sporting Agencies

- Officers, Club Members and Bowlers should be aware that any disrespectful comments to any of the above might be seen as libellous and could result in disciplinary action by NIPBA.
- Beware of your actions being captured via images, posts or comments online as these will reflect on the sport of Bowling, your Club and NIPBA.
- Respond to online bullying - what is said online should be treated as if said in real time.
- Do not comment on individual players.

Use of Official Social Media Sites

NIPBA operates an official website for the promotion of activities and events, as well as a communication method. The following outlines the limits of its use:

- All information published on the official NIPBA official website must comply with the NIPBA Code of Conduct, the NIPBA Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Data Protection Act 1998.
- Bowlers, and especially junior Bowlers should not be referenced on-line without their consent. This includes all photos, videos and media material.
- **Individuals**- Should lock down their page to non-friends.
- Copyright laws must be respected at all times.
- Anyone who becomes aware of any social networking activity that would be deemed distasteful or in breach of the NIPBA Code of Conduct, the NIPBA Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Data Protection Act 1998 should make the, the NIPBA Honorary Secretary and/or the NIPBA Safeguarding Officer aware of this with immediate effect.

Everyone associated with NIPBA must adhere to all of the above Policy guidelines; NIPBA reserves the right to discipline anyone who is in breach of this Social Networking Policy.

Please note – an Officer, Club Member or Bowler making extreme slanderous, derogatory or inflammatory remarks may also put themselves at risk of legal proceedings.

An NIPBA Officer, Club Member or Bowler can be prosecuted under the following three pieces of Criminal Law relating to cyber bullying:

- Protection from Harassment (Northern Ireland) Order 1997
- Malicious Communications (Northern Ireland) Order 1988
- The Communications Act 2003

The Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI) also aims to provide children, young people, vulnerable adults, parents and carers with the appropriate support where any form of bully occurs. It is important to also report incidents where children are victims of cyber bullying to the PSNI to ensure that the matter is addressed appropriately and the cyber bullying ceases.