

ONLINE SAFETY AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose and scope of this policy statement

This policy provides guidance on how ESF Events expects staff, volunteers and those working on behalf of the organisation to behave online. It applies to all use of digital technologies, including websites, social media platforms, messaging services, apps and other forms of online communication. This policy incorporates the provisions of the Online Safety Act 2023 and reflects ESF Events' commitment to fostering a safe, responsible and respectful digital environment for children, young people and adults involved in our activities.

Aims of the policy

The aims of this policy are to ensure that staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities in relation to online safety, are aware of acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour, and know how to respond appropriately to online safety concerns or incidents.

The policy also aims to ensure that ESF Events staff and volunteers operate in line with organisational values, safeguarding responsibilities and the law, including compliance with the Online Safety Act 2023.

Understanding the online world

ESF Events recognises that the online world offers significant benefits and opportunities for communication, learning and engagement. However, it also presents risks that must be managed effectively to protect children, young people and adults from harm.

As part of our approach to online safety, ESF Events will ensure that staff and volunteers understand the safety aspects of online activity, including what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour when using websites, social media platforms, apps and digital communication tools.

ESF Events will adhere to relevant legislation and good-practice guidance when using social media platforms, including but not limited to Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram, Discord and BeReal. Online safeguarding considerations will be fully integrated into existing safeguarding policies and procedures, including ensuring that disclosures or concerns arising online are addressed through established reporting processes.

Our safeguarding responsibilities online

ESF Events recognises that all children, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all forms of harm or abuse, including online harm.

We acknowledge our duty to protect children, young people and adults involved in our events from potential online risks and to work in partnership with parents, carers, clubs, National Governing Bodies and statutory agencies to promote online safety and responsible digital behaviour.

How we keep children and young people safe online

ESF Events will seek to keep children and young people safe online by appointing a Designated Safeguarding Lead, providing clear guidance to staff and volunteers on appropriate online behaviour, and aligning organisational practice with the Online Safety Act 2023.

We will support and encourage parents and carers to take steps to keep children safe online, develop clear procedures for responding to incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, and ensure that staff and volunteers are confident in managing and reporting concerns.

ESF Events will regularly review and update the security of its information systems and ensure that personal information relating to children, young people and adults is stored securely and shared only where appropriate and lawful.

Images of children, young people and families will only be used in line with the ESF Photography and Filming Policy. Social media platforms and new technologies will be assessed for risk before being adopted for organisational use.

Responding to online abuse and concerns

Where online abuse or inappropriate online behaviour occurs, ESF Events will respond in line with its safeguarding procedures. This includes responding to concerns relating to bullying and cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and the sharing of harmful or inappropriate content.

Support and guidance will be provided to staff and volunteers, and responses will take account of the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and the wider organisation. Actions taken will be reviewed to ensure concerns are addressed effectively and sustainably.

Reporting concerns and useful contacts

Any online safety or social media concerns must be reported promptly using ESF Events' safeguarding procedures.

- ESF Events Safeguarding phone line: 07947 313302 (*for the duration of the festival*)
- Concerns may also be reported to:
- The appropriate National Governing Body (FA, SYFA, England Netball, RFU, RFL)
- Police or Children's Social Care
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 | help@nspcc.org.uk
- Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU): cpsu@nspcc.org.uk
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP): www.ceop.police.uk
- UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk