

The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association In the Republic of Ireland

Technology Policy

Taking photographs of activities, using web sites to publicise The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association Republic of Ireland (the BB) and its activities, contacting parents and guardians about activities, the use of Facebook and other social media networks, in addition to the videoing of displays and competitions have become normal activities within The BB. The Child Safeguarding Policy and the Technology Policy does not seek in any way to eliminate or curtail these activities but proposes certain safeguards so as to ensure that they are used in a responsible manner and that we minimise the risk or threats to our members and leaders when utilising these social and digital media.

PHOTOGRAPHIC / RECORDED IMAGE GUIDELINES

It should be noted that having photographic and recorded image guidelines is not about preventing anyone from taking images but rather to ensure that it is done in a responsible manner. These safeguards should:

- Still permit and facilitate the recording of relevant and suitable materials;
- Allow the enjoyment gained by participating in our activities to be recorded;
- Enable leaders to use recording as a learning and development tool;
- Enable the organisation and companies to promote their activities in a safe and non-threatening manner.

However, it is necessary for The BB to use these images responsibly in order to protect the young person, the organisation and the use of the images. This is true of photographs/images in their own right and in published form (electronic or otherwise).

The key concerns regarding the use of images and photographs of children relate to:

- The possible identification of children when a photograph/image is accompanied by personal information;
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use on child pornography websites and/or for grooming purposes;
- The taking of inappropriate photographs/images of children;
- The inappropriate distribution of photographs/images of children via mobile phone, email or other electronic media.

Guidelines for Recording Images

- Ask for parental permission to take and use the image. This is included in the Annual Parental Consent form completed by parents/guardians for each member;
- All children featured in recordings must be fully dressed with outer clothing garments covering their torso;
- Children in swimwear should not be photographed;
- The photograph/image should ideally focus on the activity. Where possible images of children should be recorded in small groups rather than individuals;
- Appropriate photographs/images should be used at all times;
- Employees and leaders should still be allowed to use photographic and digital equipment (including mobile phones) as a training tool. However, children and their

- parents/guardians should be aware and give consent for this is part of the work programme. Care should be taken in storing such photographs/images.
- Parents should be still allowed to use photographic and digital equipment at competitions and displays but an announcement should be made at the beginning of the event requesting that they only record images of their own child's team or group.

Guidelines for Publishing/Reproducing Images

- Children's names should never be attached or captioned to photographs/images. It is acceptable to publish the name of the company;
- Personal details of children such as email address, home address and telephone numbers should never be revealed;
- Do not provide additional information that can assist someone in locating a child/young person or which could be used as grooming tools (hobbies/interests, likes/dislikes, etc.);
- When using external/professional photographers ensure that the company or the organisation has the complete contact details of any photographer that is used. Clearly outline to professional photographers that all images taken will remain the property of the organisation, and cannot be used or sold for any other purpose. Clearly outline that all negatives / proofs etc. need to be given to the organisation;
- Separate parental consent should be sought from parents/guardians if companies wish to post videos of BB company activities on YouTube or other such sites. Parents' and children's wishes must be respected at all time. Remember to comply with all copyright law in relation to music and that material uploaded to such sites as YouTube can be viewed by millions of people around the world and can be downloaded by others for their own purposes.

Storing digital photographs

Any leaders storing digital photographs of children on their computer should ensure that picture files are held securely and the computer is password protected. In addition to this, leaders are advised that photos are not to be sent to any person or website outside the BB without the consent of the subject or their parents/guardians.

GUIDELINES FOR USING MOBILE PHONES AND EMAILS

There are situations when access to a mobile phone will make a positive contribution to the safety and welfare of children and leaders, particularly when an emergency occurs. However, there are clear good practice and child protection issues in relation to the appropriate use of mobile phones and other electronic forms of communication.

- All communications regarding BB activities should be sent via the parents or guardians of the members;
- Parental consent for communications to go to Company Section and Seniors directly as well as their parents should be sought via the Annual Parental Consent Form. Leaders should not be communicating directly with members in Juniors or Anchors;
- Be aware that refusal of consent for communicating directly with Company Section and Seniors should not in any way limit children's participation in activities;
- Where possible leaders should use a BB phone to send text messages rather than their own personal one;

- Group text should always be used. Communication should be limited to the exchange of information about programmes or activities related to the company;
- Leaders should use appropriate language and only text at appropriate times during the day (not during school hours or late at night);
- Companies should utilise a separate email account for the company. Leaders should not email Company Section and Seniors directly as individuals, but may do so as part of a group list (having received permission). Again communication should be limited to information in relation to the activities of the company;
- Group emails should also give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement e.g: *“If you wish to be removed from this e-mail list please contact the administrator”*;
- Emails should use clear, appropriate language and should always be copied to another leader and save copies of all emails sent;
- Never use the company email account to forward chain emails;
- Finally, one of the primary responsibilities of an employee or leader must be the supervision and safety of the children that they are supporting through the provision of a structured, quality experience. Anything which compromises the employee/leaders’ ability to maintain a safe environment and give their full attention to the supervision of children is discouraged. Making/taking phone calls or sending and receiving text during a session is discouraged for these reasons.

WEB USAGE GUIDELINES

The world of social and digital media is an enjoyable and engaging place and is in itself a useful tool in promoting our organisation and our activities at company level within the membership and to a wider audience. As a vibrant organisation we should never shy away from using all forms of social media. But, we must be aware that while these communication tools can be used to our advantage vigilance is also required to ensure that our use of such communication methods must at all time be appropriate.

A number of basic guidelines should be put in place when developing company web sites and social network sites e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc. These guidelines should be adhered to at all times.

General Web Usage Guidance:

- The website along with all other BB activities throughout the organisation, must comply with The BB Child Safeguarding Policy;
- Agree to review the overall maintenance and upkeep of the web site at regular intervals;
- Appoint a leader or leaders to be in charge of a company website. These leaders must be Garda vetted;
- Decide at the outset what purpose your web site serves and include this in your content policy;
- All decisions on the appropriate use of photographic images and other similar content should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images (see above);
- The web site or social network pages should at all times reflect the ethos of The BB. Neither are platforms for personal opinion. They are a public representation of our organisation and should at all times be factual and follow the parameters of good behaviour;

- Any complaints or concerns that may be raised about the content of your web site or social network page should be dealt with using The BB Complaints Procedures.

Web Contents Guidance:

- The Company Website and its operator must make all reasonable attempts to insure that web pages are in keeping with the ethos of The BB and do not contain any links to questionable material. Links to external websites are meant for convenience purposes only. No endorsement of any third party products or services should be expressed or implied by any information, material or content referred to or included on, or linked from the Company website;
- Think carefully about the content. Write short snappy text that will grab the reader's attention. Remember you are promoting a Christian Youth Organisation. Our vision is to value, nurture and equip our members for life. Keep it simple – the use of flash and other technical features is tempting but can make a site difficult to navigate, slow to load and side-track the users too much;
- Content published on web site or social network page should at all times be factual and follow the parameters of good behaviour;
- Individual company websites must not use the term The BB in their headers or individual pages, but rather use their company name and number (optional), then the Boys' Brigade e.g. 50th Galway Boys' Brigade Company. The home page of the company website should include that the company is 'an officially affiliated company of The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association in the Republic of Ireland' in the script, or in any about us section on the website;
- All decisions on the appropriate use of photographic images and other similar content should be in accordance with the Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images (see above);
- Respect the privacy of your leaders – get permission before publishing personal contact information. Where possible utilise alias emails e.g. captain@galwayBB.ie rather than individual personal emails;
- Company website utilising approved logos should obtain the original files from Headquarters and store them on your host server. It is strictly forbidden to copy logos directly from The BB official website as this is hot linking and uses up The BB bandwidth;
- Companies should not copy any graphic elements, designs and images from The BB website. These are the copyright of The BB web designer. Text may be copied within reason for common elements such as about us, beliefs and principles, aims, vision etc;
- All company websites and social networking sites should contain a link to the official website of The BB – www.boysbrigade.ie;
- Text, images, sound, or other presentations not suitable for people of all ages, or links to or other promotion of businesses whose products or services are not suitable for people of all ages should not be used;
- Content that may be considered not to maintain the dignity and decorum appropriate for The BB should not be used.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITE GUIDELINES

For Leaders Personal Profile:

- Don't use your personal profile to communicate with members of the company;

- Leaders are free to have their own personal profile on social networking sites. However, they should not accept friend requests from members of the company on these profiles unless they are friends outside of the company;
- Leaders should not post any content on their personal profile which it would be inappropriate for members to know or see. Ideally leaders should use the privacy settings on their personal profile to ensure that this content is not accessible to children;
- Leaders should ensure that the GPS locator on their personal profile is turned off so that members cannot locate them outside of company activities.

For Company Account:

- The social networking site along with all other BB activities throughout the organisation, must comply with The BB Child Safeguarding Policy;
- Use the company page or a group set up on the company page to communicate with members but ensure that written parental consent to use this form of communication is received beforehand and should only be used with age appropriate groups;
- Have a minimum of two leaders designated as administrators of the company page and monitor regularly each day. Choose appropriate posting settings so that inappropriate content cannot be placed on the page. Provide an email address for user to contact the administrators of the company page;
- Anyone attempting to post an inappropriate comment, video or photograph should be permanently blocked from the site;
- Do not provide personal details about children on the company page;
- Do not provide exact details of future events in posts, only a brief outline should be posted;
- Avoid mentioning the location and times of weekly meetings on the social media sites;
- Always ensure that the company has parental permission to use any photographs of members on the company page. Only use appropriate photographs, the sort you would be happy to put on a public notice board. Never tag photos;
- Do not use the company page to communicate with members during school hours or after a set time at night to maintain safe boundaries;
- Follow the social networking site's terms and conditions in relation to the age profile allowed to set up accounts (e.g. Facebook's terms and conditions set the age profile at 13+ - therefore we should not encourage under 13s to join Facebook). Do not encourage members under that age to join the social networking site that the company page is on.

For the BB Facebook page:

- The Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association in the Republic of Ireland shall have at least two employees or leaders registered as administrators for the BB Facebook page;
- The BB Facebook along with all other BB activities throughout the organisation, must comply with The BB Child Safeguarding Policy;
- Ensure that good security measures are in place. In particular, make sure that every message is checked and unsuitable messages are removed immediately;
- Each company should check that parental consent has been given prior to sending photos or videos of their members to Headquarters for publishing on the BB Facebook page. Administrators shall only use photos which have been provided for the purpose of publication on the Facebook page. Administrators shall not repost photos from company social media sites as some of these may be closed groups

and whilst parents may have provided permission for photos to be published on closed groups the BB Facebook page is not a closed group. Photos should never be tagged on the BB Facebook page;

- The administrators shall ensure that no posts might be construed as threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory or disparaging toward any employee, leader, or member of the Boys' Brigade or their family is posted to the BB Facebook page;
- Any individual attempting to post inappropriate comments, videos or photographs shall have their post removed and be permanently blocked from the site;
- Do not provide exact details of future events in posts, only a brief outline should be posted with means to contact Headquarters to gain additional information.
- Administrators should always ensure that the content of the message they wish to post is appropriate.

General

- The use of instant chat on social networking sites is inadvisable as it is effectively the same as going into a private room with a member and closing the door, there is no record of the conversation;
- Leaders should conduct themselves in an appropriate way, as you would face to face – be aware of what you say and how you say it;
- It is advisable not to use abbreviations when communicating with members as these can often be misinterpreted by parents.

ACCESS TO ELECTRONIC DEVICES

In order to ensure children's cyber safety it is necessary to have in place rules in relation to children's access to electronic devices during activities. This includes the access children have to their own mobile phones and electronic devices as well as leaders' devices and in relation to any electronic devices that are being used as part of the company activities.

As most children from 5th class upwards now seem to have mobile phones, it is good practice to have a rule within each company in relation to the use of mobile phones/electronic devices during activities. Leaders should determine whether to allow children to bring their mobile phones/electronic devices to activities and whether it is appropriate for them to have them during activities or whether to place them all in a box until going home time. This allows children to focus on the activity being undertaken, it avoids the problem of children showing each other inappropriate content, it avoids a situation where cyberbullying can take place at activities and where a child is suffering from cyberbullying it provides them a break from their device and the bullying.

Leaders should also be conscious of their mobile phones/electronic devices during activities and provide the children with a good example by not using or checking their mobile phones during activities. Leaders should ensure that their mobile phones/electronic devices are password protected so that children cannot use them if they are left lying around.

In the technological world in which we now live, leaders may from time to time wish to utilise electronic devices as part of their activities to engage the children where they are at. It is essential that where children will have access to electronic devices as part of the activity that a number of additional safety measures will be undertaken:

- Clear boundaries be laid down to the children being given access to the electronic devices as to what they can be used for and access limitations and the consequences for not abiding by these boundaries.

- The electronic devices should have appropriate Parental Control Software installed to ensure that children do not gain access to inappropriate sites.
- Leaders should supervise the access to the electronic devices closely to ensure that they are not inappropriately used.
- Leaders should ensure that whatever activity is planned using electronic devices will not, even inadvertently, expose children to inappropriate material.