



# NORTHERN IRELAND PRIVATE GREENS BOWLING LEAGUE

## Social Networking Policy

The Northern Ireland Private Greens League (NIPGL) 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, Instagram, MySpace and Twitter, etc.

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

This Policy has been designed to give everyone associated with the NIPGL (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 specific guidelines exist to a particular situation, Officers, Club Members and Bowlers should use their own judgement and take the most prudent action possible based on the principles outlined in this guidance.

### 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 the NIPGL.

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 your privacy setting on their profile so that only people you have accepted as friends can see your 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 PGL
- Ensure that information published on social media sites complies with the NIPGL Code of Conduct, the NIPGL Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and the and Data Protection Act 1998.
- Breach of the PGL Code of Conduct, the NIPGL 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 NIPGL.
- Everyone associated with the NIPGL must ensure that they are respectful toward:
  - the NIPGL
  - 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 the NIPGL.
- Beware of your actions being captured via images, posts or comments online as these will reflect on the sport of Bowling, your Club and the NIPGL.
- 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

The NIPGL 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 NIPGL website must comply with the NIPGL Code of Conduct, the NIPGL 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 and the consent of their parents/carers. 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 NIPGL Code of Conduct, the NIPGL Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Data Protection Act 1998 should make the, the NIPGL Honorary Secretary aware of this with immediate effect. If the issue is safeguarding related then the NIPGL Designated Safeguarding Officer must be informed.

## Principles

- If you are representing bowling in an official capacity, it is important that your posts convey the same positive, spirit that bowling instils in all of its communications. Be respectful of all individuals, races, religions and cultures. How you conduct yourself online not only reflects on you – it also reflects directly on the sport of bowling.
- When disagreeing with the opinions of others online, keep it appropriate and polite. If you find yourself in a situation that might become antagonistic, do not get defensive or disengage from the conversation abruptly. It is also important not to respond in the heat of the moment, in a way you may regret later. Feel free to seek advice or disengage from the dialogue in a polite manner that reflects well on our sport.

### Be honest

- Stick to your area of expertise and feel free to provide your unique perspective on non-confidential activities of bowling.
- Keep in mind that you won't always know all the answers. Don't be afraid to seek help and advice from others who may be better informed than you.

### Use of Imagery

- Internet postings should not include Association logos or trademarks without permission.
- Please respect brand, trademark, and copyrighted information and imagery.
- Do not post pictures of others without their permission.

Everyone associated with NIPGL must adhere to all of the above Policy and principles guidance; IBA 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 on a social media site may also put themselves at risk of legal proceedings.

An NIPGL 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