



## Communications & Social Media Policy - Children & Young People

Adapted from Guernsey FA recommended guidance

### **Introduction**

The following guidance is provided to ensure that all Guernsey FC directors, coaches and volunteers manage their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. It aims to ensure children, young people and adults in a position of trust are not subjected to improper communications or improper allegations.

### **Recommended Practices**

- Written informed consent needs to be obtained from parents/carers before group email, texts or messages are used to communicate with U18s.
- Explain to parents/carers and colleagues, the purpose and method for coaches, team managers, officials etc to communicate by either text, email or both with their son.
- Only use group email, texts or messages and always copy in the parent/carer or the additional designated member of the club to all communications with young people.
- Ensure texts, emails or messages are only in relation to specific club related activities e.g informing young people about changes in travel arrangements, training times or venue changes etc.
- Report to the Club Welfare Officer any instance(s) where inappropriate communications are received from a young person. The Club Welfare Officer will then agree what action the club will take, notifying parents/carers and any other appropriate individuals or agencies.

### **The Club, its directors, coaches and volunteers should not;**

- Use texts, emails or messaging for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature.
- Respond to emails from young people other than this directly related to Club matters, The Club Welfare Officer should be advised of any non-club related emails that are received.
- Use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.

### **Social Networking**

The FA would suggest that as a general principle, coaches, managers etc should avoid using social networking sites as the primary way of communicating with players. However, if its decided

that the most effective way of communicating to young people is via social networking then the Club, its directors, coaches and volunteers are to set up an appropriately named account that is explicitly for use by named members, parents and carers solely about football matters e.g fixtures, cancellations, travel arrangements and team selection.

- At no time should there be any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.
- The Club will appoint appropriate colleagues to monitor the content of the social networking site and provide the person with primary responsibility with adequate support and safeguards.
- Young people should be advised by their coach, parents/carers and Club Welfare Officer to always advise an adult they trust about any communication that makes them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked to not tell their parent/carer about the communication.

### **Responsible use of social networking sites**

- Ensure all the privacy settings are locked so that the page(s) are used explicitly for Club matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations.
- Nominate a Club official to monitor the social networking page regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately.
- Ensure everyone within the Club knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking areas and how to contact them.
- Provide all users with The FA's best practices guidance on using social networking sites.
- Gain written parent/carer permission before access is given to U18s.
- Inform the Club Welfare Officer if you have received inappropriate communications online, keeping a record of any inappropriate, threatening or offensive material as this may be needed as evidence.

Unless a young person is a direct relation, the Club directors, coaches, volunteers and officials should not:

- Accept as a friend, players aged U18 on social networking sites they are members or, share their own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved in youth football.
- Make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites.
- Use internet or web based communications to send personal messages of non-football nature to a child or young person.
- Engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.

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