



Respect



1. Social networking, websites, mobile phone and email communications

Summary of Best Practice Guidance

The FA's intention and responsibility is to safeguard children and young people involved in football. As with other leading world brands The FA uses Facebook, YouTube and Twitter as a way of getting messaging across to the widest audience possible.

Alongside the very beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies we have to recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. These risks must be appropriately managed.

Everyone involved in football must recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play.

This guidance has been developed in response to requests for advice. It's essential that clubs, parents, members and players make informed decisions about how they use the internet, mobile phone and email communications.

Clubs and leagues that set up websites have a responsibility to ensure safeguards are in place. Coaches, officials, referee mentors and those in a position of responsibility in clubs and leagues must ensure they communicate responsibly.

The FA recommends that texting is not used as the primary method of communication between adults and child/young people in football.

If it's decided that the most effective way of communicating to young people is via a social networking site then the club/league is strongly advised to set up an account in the name of the club/league and explicitly for use by named members, parents and carers solely about football matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selection. At no time should there be any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.

Leagues and clubs are responsible for ensuring all content hosted on their websites, social network areas and any associated message boards or blogs abide by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association.

Clubs and leagues should appoint appropriate adults to monitor the content of their websites. Social networking is a cost effective way to communicate and easy to set up, but labour intensive to run.

Children and young people should be advised by their coaches, parents/carers and CWO to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/carer about the communication.

The FA has developed a series of guidance to encourage best practice when communicating with and about children and young people; the following range of best practice guidance is available to you via the downloads area of www.TheFA.com/footballsafes

- 1 **Social networking, websites, mobile phones, and email communications**
- 2 Running a website - Do's and Don'ts
- 3 Responsible use of Social Networking sites
- 4 Communicating responsibly with Young Leaders, Coaches and Referees Under 18
- 5 Using Texts and Emails with U18s – Do's and Don'ts
- 6 Guidance for parents/carers - Responsible use of text, email and social networking sites
- 7 Guidance for U18s using: Club WebPages, Social Networks, Email and Texts

Acknowledgements

The FA would like to acknowledge that the development of this guidance has been assisted by guidance written by the Amateur Swimming Association, England and Wales Cricket Board, Child Protection in Sport Unit and Child Exploitation Online Protection centre.



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5. Using Texts and Emails with U18s - Do's and Don'ts

Guidance for Clubs and Leagues

The following guidance is provided not as an obstacle but to support clubs and leagues to manage their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. It aims to ensure children, young people, coaches, referees and adults in a position of trust are not subjected to improper communications or improper allegations. Written informed consent needs to be obtained from parents/carers before group email or texts are used to communicate with U18s.

Do:

- get signed consent from parents/carers before using either of these methods of communication with children or young people
- explain to parents/carers and club members the purpose and method for coaches, team managers, referee mentors, club officials etc to communicate by either text, email or both with their son/daughter
- only use group texts or emails and always copy in the parent/carer or the designated member of the club to all communications with young people
- make sure texts or emails 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 you have received any inappropriate communications 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

Don't

- use text or emails for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature
- respond to emails from young people other than those directly related to club matters. Advise your club welfare officer of any non club related emails you receive
- use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone

Further FA guidance is available on the following areas:

- 1 Social networking, websites, mobile phones, and email communications
- 2 Running a website - Do's and Don'ts
- 3 Responsible use of Social Networking sites
- 4 Communicating responsibly with Young Leaders, Coaches and Referees Under 18
- 5 **Using Texts and Emails with U18s – Do's and Don'ts**
- 6 Guidance for parents/carers - Responsible use of text, email and social networking sites
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7. Guidance for U18s

Using club webpage's, social networks, email and texts.

Mobile technology is a key part of everyday life including how and where you can find information about football. Whether it's about professional teams you follow or your own team or club it's a great way to get and share information.

Within football we want you to use social networks, the internet, texts and email safely to get the information you need. We have produced the guidance below to keep us all safe and to ensure that we respect each other:

- **Tell an adult you trust about any communications that make you feel uncomfortable or that asks you not to tell your parent/carer**
- Know **who** from your club should be contacting you and **how** they should be contacting you
- You can talk to your club's welfare officer if you are unhappy about anything sent to you or said about you over the internet, social networking sites, text messages or via email
- Don't post, host, text or email things that are hurtful, insulting, offensive, abusive, threatening, or racist as this would go against football rules and could also be against the law
- Don't give out personal details including mobile numbers, email addresses or social networking account access to people you don't know well offline
- Facebook has different 'set up' guidelines for U18s to help to keep you safe – use them
- Even if you get on with your coach, manager, club officials, adult referees or mentors, don't invite them to become your friends online, they have been asked not to accept such invitations
- Tell an adult you trust if an adult involved at your club or within refereeing asks you to become their friend online and inform your club welfare officer

- If you receive an image or message which you find offensive, threatening or upsetting tell an adult you trust. Make sure you copy and save the image/message elsewhere or print it off before you remove and destroy it because this may be needed as evidence
- You can also report concerns directly to the police by clicking on this Button or by using the link below

www.clickCEOP.net



If you want to know more about how to keep safe online follow the links below

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>



<http://clickcleverclicksafe.direct.gov.uk/index.html/>



<http://www.thefa.com/TheFA/WhatWeDo/FootballSafe/2010BeOnTheBall>

Be on the ball... info 4 U18s



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