



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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