



Respect



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
- 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