

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

### **Introduction**

The following guidance is provided not as an obstacle to communication but to ensure all coaches, officials, players and other 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. A child or young person is anyone under the age of 18. Any questions or concerns about this policy should be directed to either your Club or GCB Safeguarding & Welfare Officer.

### **Standard Practices**

The following practices should be followed for all age groups:

- Informed consent needs to be obtained from parents/carers before group email or texts are used to communicate with U18s.
- Explain to parents/carers and players, the purpose and method for coaches, officials, players and other volunteers to communicate by either text, email or both with the U18.
- Only use group texts or emails and always copy in the parent/carer or the welfare & safeguarding officer to all communications with young people. If there is an U18 in the communication group then a designated Welfare & Safeguarding Officer who is not a member of the coaching team for that age group should be included in the communications group. Parents/carers will be given the option of all communications going via themselves only or being included in the communications group.
- Ensure texts or emails are only in relation to specific cricket related activities e.g. informing young people about changes in match arrangements, training times or venue changes, etc.
- Report to your Club or GCB Safeguarding & Welfare Officer (SWO) any instance(s) where inappropriate communications are received from a young person. The SWO will then agree what action the Club/GCB will take, notifying parents/carers and any other appropriate individuals or agencies.

### **Coaches, officials, players and other volunteers should not:**

- 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 cricket matters. The SWO should be advised of any non-cricket 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**

It is suggested that as a general principle, coaches should avoid using social networking sites as the primary way of communicating with players. However, if it is decided that the most effective way

of communicating to young people is via a social networking site then coaches are to set up an appropriately named account that is explicitly for use by named members, parents and carers solely about cricket matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selection.

At no time should there be any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.

Clubs/GCB 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.

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

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

- Ensure all the privacy settings are locked so that that the page(s) are used explicitly for Club/GCB matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations.
- Nominate a Club/GCB official to monitor the social networking page regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately.
- Ensure everyone within the Club/GCB know who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking areas and how to contact them.
- Gain written parent/carer permission before access is given to U18s.
- Inform the SWO 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 child/young person is a direct relation, coaches, players, volunteers, and officials should not:

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

Further advice on Safeguarding & Welfare Children matters can be obtained from your Club or GCB Officer – see [insert link to list on website]