



Cornwall Cricket Board Ltd



ELECTRONIC INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS POLICY

Guidance for Staff dealing with children and young people

- 1.1 The information in this management guide is taken from information supplied by the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) and aims to provide information, advice and guidance on using electronic information and communication systems. These guidelines will help to ensure that effective safeguarding measures are put in place to protect children and young people and to minimise risk.
- 1.2 This document should be read in conjunction with the Electronic Information and Communication Policy.

TEXT AND EMAIL MESSAGING – BENEFITS AND RISKS TO CHILDREN AND ADULTS

- 1.3 Text messaging is an ideal method of informing people about our programmes. This may be by helping to remind young people about the sport and activity sessions that they have signed up to, or promoting additional activities. The significant benefit of text messaging is that it is not only cheap, but it is one of the most direct forms of communication as most young people have mobile phones with them at all times.
- 1.4 It is therefore hoped that text messages will help to:
 - attract more young people to the sessions, activities and clubs
 - improve retention rates
 - effectively signpost young people to other activities at the end of particular programmes.
- 1.5 For children and young people the safeguarding risks associated with texting include:
 - inappropriate access to, use or sharing of personal details (e.g. names, mobile phone numbers)
 - unwanted contact with children/young people by adults with poor intent; text bullying by peers

- being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate materials
- grooming for sexual abuse
- direct contact and actual abuse

1.6 For adults involved risks include:

- misinterpretation of their communication with young people
- potential investigations (internal or by statutory agencies)
- potential disciplinary action

BULK OR BUNDLED TEXT MESSAGES

1.7 These guidelines primarily relate to the use of bulk (or bundled) texts i.e. the same text message being sent to several young people involved with a particular activity or programme. Bulk (or bundled) texting presents fewer opportunities for misuse and abuse than personal, one-to-one texting arrangements between coaches/volunteers and children which should be strongly discouraged.

GUIDELINES FOR USING BULK (OR BUNDLED) TEXT MESSAGING

- Only staff that have been through relevant safeguarding checks (e.g. enhanced level DBS checks) and references) should use and have access to the text messaging system. Ideally these staff should also have undertaken recognised safeguarding training (e.g. sports coach UK 'Safeguarding & Protecting Children' workshop or an equivalent).
- The numbers of staff with access to the system, particularly data relating to young people, should be kept to a practical minimum, and their details recorded and maintained by the organisation's Safeguarding Lead. A record should be made of the mobile phone number/s which will be used to send the texts – ideally this should be a single number used consistently.
- Consent must be obtained prior to sending the young people text messages. Parental consent is required for young people aged 15 or under. Parents of younger children should be offered the option to be copied into any texts their child will be sent. Although parental consent is not required for young people aged 16 and over, written consent must be obtained from these individuals themselves. Please note that for the over 16's (who are children as defined by the Children Act 1989) it is still recommended that their parents

are also informed of the intention to send their children text messages; the reason for this; and that the organisation has taken steps to ensure their child's safety in this respect.

- Young people's mobile phone numbers should be stored in either a locked secure cabinet, or on an electronic system which is password protected, with access only available to the staff identified in point 1 above. The mobile phone numbers should not be shared with anyone else, and should only be used for the texting young people.
- All text messages must be sent via a bundle to a group of young people i.e. the same standard text message being sent to every member of the group.
- All text messages must make it clear to the recipient who the text message is from, including the name of the organisation, rather than simply giving the mobile phone number used to send the message.
- Young people should not be given the opportunity to text back to the system. It should only be used as a one-way communication channel.
- The text messages which are sent must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language.
- When this guidance is being provided in relation to an CCB programme, all of the text messages sent must be direct related to the programmes/sessions. The text messaging system may be used to signpost young people already on our programme to another programme; however, the text messaging system and mobile phone numbers must never be used for any other reason or in any other way.
- All of the text messages sent should include a sentence at the bottom which provides the young people with the opportunity to unsubscribe from receiving any further text messages.
- All text messages sent to young people should also be sent to an external moderator – (e.g. Parent(s)/Guardian(s)) Hence, it is essential that the moderator's mobile phone number is included in every 'communication group' that is set up, and in every text messaging bundle that is sent out. The moderator's role will be to ensure that the text system is being used appropriately, and to respond to any concerns arising.

- Consideration will be given to initiating the organisation's child protection and disciplinary procedures should any breaches of this protocol arise, including consultation with or referral to statutory agencies if indications of illegal activity (e.g. grooming for abuse) come to light.

GUIDELINES FOR TEXTING INDIVIDUAL YOUNG PEOPLE

- 1.8 The use of text messaging to communicate with individual young participants increases the vulnerability of both the young person and (typically) the coach - see 'benefits and risks' above. However, there may be exceptional circumstances in which it is justified, subject to appropriate safeguarding considerations. For example the coach of an elite athlete who is not part of a group of participants may need to pass on information about practical training arrangements or feedback on competition results.
- 1.9 In these circumstances the following guidelines will apply:
- The coach should have been through relevant safeguarding checks (e.g. enhanced level DBS checks and references), and have undertaken a recognised safeguarding training (e.g. sports coach UK 'Safeguarding & Protecting Children' workshop or an equivalent).
 - The decision to use text messaging should not be made by a coach in isolation, and should be discussed and agreed with the organisation's designated safeguarding officer. This will ensure that the organisation's safeguarding expectations and requirements can be clarified, and an undertaking given by the coach to comply with them.
 - In circumstances where this guidance is being developed and applied retrospectively, clubs/organisations should take steps to identify where texting is already being used by staff to communicate with young athletes, and to ensure that these guidelines are both effectively communicated to and agreed with all parties.
 - The details of coaches using text messaging should be recorded and maintained by the organisation's Safeguarding Lead. A record should be made of the mobile phone number/s which will be used to send the texts – ideally this should be a single number used consistently.
 - Consent must be obtained prior to sending the young people text messages. Parental consent is required for young people aged 15 or under. Parents should be offered the option to be copied into any texts their child will be sent.

- Although parental consent is not required for young people aged 16 and over, written consent must be obtained from these individuals themselves. Please note that for the over 16's (who are children as defined by the Children Act 1989) it is still recommended that their parents are also informed of the intention to send their children text messages, the reason for this, and that the organisation has taken steps to ensure their child's safety in this respect.
- Information to young athletes and parents should include details of how any concerns arising from the use of text messaging can be reported in line with the organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The young people's mobile phone numbers should be stored in either a locked secure cabinet, or on an electronic system which is password protected, with access only available to the staff identified in point 1 above. The mobile phone numbers should not be shared with anyone else, and should only be used for the purposes of the specific sports programme.
- The content should relate solely to sports activity. Messages should reflect the professional relationship between coach and athlete, and the coach's position of trust. Text messages and mobile phones must never be used for any other reason or in any other way.
- The text messages which are sent must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language, and care must be taken to avoid over-familiarity or language that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued.
- All text messages sent to young people should also be sent either to a parent or to an external moderator – preferably someone with designated safeguarding responsibility in the organisation. The moderator's role will be to ensure that text messaging is being used appropriately in line with the organisation's procedures, and to respond to any concerns arising.
- Consideration will be given to initiating the organisation's child protection and disciplinary procedures should any breaches of this protocol arise, including consultation with or referral to statutory agencies if indications of illegal activity (e.g. grooming for abuse) come to light.

- Young people should not be encouraged to text back; ideally it should only be used as a one-way communication channel. Young people should be made aware that if or when they choose or need to text the coach (for example to confirm attendance or advise on a travel delay), they should ensure that the content of the message relates only to matters relevant to the sports activity, and that they are (like the coach) are required to copy in either a parent or the identified moderator to all communications.
- All young people and parents should be given the opportunity to withdraw from receiving any further text messages.

EMAIL MESSAGING – BENEFITS AND RISKS TO CHILDREN AND ADULTS

- 1.10 Email messaging is an ideal method of informing people about our programmes. This may be by helping to remind young people about the sport and activity sessions that they have signed up to, or promoting additional activities. The significant benefit of Email is that it is not only cheap, but it is one of the most direct forms of communication as most young people can pick up their emails on their mobile phones; however there are risks associated with sending emails to young people.
- 1.11 For children and young people the safeguarding risks associated with email include:
- inappropriate access to, use or sharing of personal details (e.g. names, email addresses);
 - unwanted contact with children/young people by adults with bad intent;
 - being sent offensive or otherwise inappropriate material
 - online bullying by peers;
 - grooming for sexual abuse;
 - direct contact and abuse.
- 1.12 For adults involved risks include:
- misinterpretation of their communication with young people
 - potential investigation (internal or by statutory agencies)
 - potential disciplinary action
- 1.13 These guidelines are based on the principle that the same email is sent to several young people involved with a particular activity or programme – as this presents fewer

opportunities for misuse and abuse than personal, one-to-one email arrangements between coaches/volunteers and children.

EMAIL GUIDELINES

- Only staff that have been through relevant safeguarding checks (e.g. enhanced DBS checks and references) should use and have access to the email messaging system. Ideally these staff should also have undertaken a recognised safeguarding training (e.g. sports coach UK Safeguarding and Protecting Children workshop or an equivalent).
- The numbers of staff with access to the system, particularly data relating to young people, should be kept to a practical minimum, and their details recorded and maintained by the organisation's lead child protection officer. A record should be made of the staff member responsible for sending out the emails, and of the computer which will be used – ideally this should be a single, secure, organisational (rather than a private) computer used consistently.
- The young people's details should be stored in either a locked secure cabinet, or on an electronic system which is password protected, with access only available to the staff identified in point 1 above. The names and email addresses should not be shared with anyone else, and should only be used for the purposes of the communication system as part of the CCB or other specified programme.
- Consent must be obtained prior to sending the young people email messages. Parental consent is required for young people aged 15 or under. Parents of all children should be offered the option to be copied into any messages their child will be sent. Although parental consent is not required for young people aged 16 and over, written consent must be obtained from these individual young people themselves. Please note that for the over 16's it is still recommended that their parents are also informed of the intention to send their children emails, the reason for this, and what steps the organisation has taken to ensure their child's safety in this respect.
- All emails must be sent to a group of young people i.e. the same standard email message being sent to every member of the group.
- All emails sent must make it clear to the recipient which organisation the email is from, rather than simply giving the issuing email address or name of an individual.
- Young people should not be encouraged or given the opportunity to email back to the system. It should only be used as a one-way communication channel.
- The emails must never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language.

- When this guidance is being provided in relation to CCB programme, all of the emails sent must be direct related to our programmes/sessions. Emails may be used to signpost young people to alternative sport and physical activity opportunities; however, the email system must never be used for any other reason or in any other way.
- All of the emails should include a sentence at the bottom which provides the young people with the opportunity to unsubscribe from receiving any further messages and signpost to how any concerns arising can be reported.
- All emails sent to young people must also be sent to an external moderator – preferably someone with designated safeguarding responsibility in the organisation. Hence, it is essential that the moderator’s email address is included in every ‘communication group’ that is set up, and in every message that is sent out. The moderator’s role will be to ensure that the email system is being used appropriately, and to respond to any concerns arising.
- Consideration will be given to initiating the organisation’s child protection and disciplinary procedures should any breaches of this protocol arise, including consultation with or referral to statutory agencies if indications of illegal activity (e.g. grooming for abuse) come to light.
- Consider whether the content of the email should be encrypted or password protected. The IT team should be able to assist you with encryption.
- Remember that when you start to type in the name of the recipient, some email software will suggest similar addresses you have used before. If you have previously emailed several people whose name or address starts the same way – e.g. “Rob” - the auto-complete function may bring up several “Rob’s”. Make sure you choose the right address before you click send.
- If you want to send an email to a recipient without revealing their address to other recipients, make sure you use blind carbon copy (bcc), not carbon copy (cc). When you use cc every recipient of the message will be able to see the address it was sent to.
- Be careful when using a group email address. Check who is in the group and make sure you really want to send your message to everyone.
- If you send a sensitive email from a secure server to an insecure recipient, security will be threatened. You may need to check that the recipient’s arrangements are secure enough before sending your message.