

Madeley White Star FC

DIGITAL COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (U18s)



Children in football (anyone under 18) today are well-versed in online communications. But many adults are not. These guidance notes are intended to provide some best-practice suggestions for adults when communicating with under-18-year-olds, whatever their football role – player, referee etc. Whatever your adult role in football, we hope you'll find them useful.

Madeley White Star Football Club do not permit digital communication with U18s unless this is within their team group chat, where parents/carers are also a member. If you do decide to include your players in your team chat group, then you must adhere to the following -

THE DO'S & DON'T'S FOR CLUBS AND LEAGUES:

DO:

- Get signed consent from parents/ carers by completing a club consent form before communicating digitally with children;
- Explain to parents/carers the purpose and method for coaches/managers, referee mentors, club officials etc. to communicate digitally with their child;
- Only use group texts, emails or messenger apps and always copy in the parent/carer or the designated member of the club to all communications with children;
- Make sure digital communications are only in relation to specific club related activities e.g. changes in travel arrangements, training times or venue changes.

DON'T:

- Use digital communications for personal conversation, sending pictures, jokes or other items of a personal nature;
- Respond to digital communications from children other than those directly related to club matters;
- Use language that is directly (or could be misinterpreted as being) racist, sexist, derogatory, threatening, abusive or sexualised in tone.

Unless a child or young person is a direct relation, you should not:

Accept as a friend, players or referees under the age of 18 on social networking sites of which they are members;

- Share their own personal social networking sites with children or young people involved in youth football;
- Make contact with children or young people known through football outside of the football context on social networking sites;
- Use internet or web-based communications to send personal messages of a non-football nature to a child or young person;
- Engage in any personal communications, 'banter' or comments.

THE GUIDANCE FOR COMMUNICATING WITH 16-17-YEAR-OLDS IN FOOTBALL WHO HOLD A POSITION OF TRUST AND/OR RESPONSIBILITY WITHIN FOOTBALL:

The FA recommends the following as best practice when communicating with 16/17 year olds who hold a position of trust and/or responsibility within football:

- Signed parental/carer consent should be given prior to email, social networking and mobile phone communications with young people holding a position of trust. Ideally the adult(s) who will be communicating in this way should be named. The purpose for the communication should be made clear;
- Both parties to only communicate for the purpose of the identified professional role(s);
- Email and/or social media (e.g. WhatsApp) communications between the parties should copy in either the parent/carer or Welfare Officer, or both;
- Leagues appointing young referees to games must copy in another league official or parent/carer to their communications;
- If any inappropriate communication or content is shared between an adult and an under-18-year-old, this must be reported immediately to the Welfare Officer who will seek advice from the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and/or statutory agencies as appropriate.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you need any further advice or information please contact our Club Welfare Officer, **Jo Ingram mobile: 07736 041462 / email: jo.ingrammws@gmail.co.uk** who will deal with reported concerns.

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If at any time our Club Welfare Officer is not available, or the matter is clearly serious, all our members should be aware that they can:

- Contact the County FA Designated Safeguarding Officer directly;
Jan Scott – telephone: 01785 256994 /
mobile: 07969 294023 /
email: jan.scott@staffordshirefa.com
- Contact The FA’s Safeguarding Team on **0800 169 1863** or **Safeguarding@TheFA.com**;
- Contact the Police or Children’s Social Care; and/or
- Call the NSPCC 24-hour Helpline for advice on **0808 800 5000** or text **88858** or email **help@nspcc.org.uk**.

Madeley White Star FC Executive Committee understands and accepts our collective responsibility to adhere to our digital communication policy and procedures.

We commit to ensuring our members are aware of and have access to our policies.

Signed:

| Role | Name | Signature | Date |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Chairperson | Rob Woodward | <i>Rob Woodward</i> | 27/11/2020 |
| Secretary | Charlotte Bailey | <i>Charlotte Bailey</i> | 27/11/2020 |
| Treasurer | John Bailey | <i>John Bailey</i> | 27/11/2020 |
| Welfare Officer | Joanne Ingram | <i>Joanne Ingram</i> | 27/11/2020 |