



## 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 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 a Club Welfare Officer.

Sylvans, its officials and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that all forms of communication with children and young people and all content hosted on websites, social network platform and any associated message boards or blogs abide by the Rules and Regulations of The Football Association.

### **Standard Practices**

The Committee have agreed that the following practices should be followed for all age groups:

- Written informed consent needs to be obtained from parents/carers before group email or texts are used to communicate with U18s. An appropriate form has been drafted for this purpose.
- Explain to parents/carers and players, the purpose and method for coaches, Sylvans' officials and other volunteers 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 additional designated Sylvans official to all communications with young people. If there is an U18 in the communication group then a designated Sylvans' official who is not a member of the coaching team for that age group should be included in the communications group. All coaches will be required to complete a form specifying who is 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 Sylvans related activities e.g. informing young people about changes in match arrangements, training times or venue changes etc
- Report to the Club Welfare Officer (CWO) any instance(s) where inappropriate communications are received from a young person. The CWO will then agree what action Sylvans will take, notifying parents/carers and any other appropriate individuals or agencies

### **Coaches, officials 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 Sylvans matters. The CWO should be advised of any non-Sylvans 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**

The Committee suggests that as a general principle, coaches should avoid using social networking sites as the primary way of communicating with players. However, if its 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 football matters e.g. fixtures, cancellations and team selection.

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

The Committee 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 CWO 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 Sylvans matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations
- Nominate a Sylvans official to monitor the social networking page regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately
- Ensure everyone within Sylvans knows who is responsible for monitoring the content of the social networking areas and how to contact them
- Provide all users with The FAs best practice guidance on using social networking sites
- Gain written parent/carer permission before access is given to U18s
- Inform the CWO 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, 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 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
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Further advice on Safeguarding Children matters can be obtained from:

- Sylvans S.C. Child Welfare Officer: **Diana Simon**

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E: dsimon@bwcigroup.com

- Sylvans S.C. Child Welfare Officer: **Anna Roberts**

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- Sylvans S.C. Child Welfare Officer: **Sam Simon**

T: 07781 458 594

E: samajsimon@icloud.com

- County Football Association’s Welfare Officer: **Sara Mallett**

E: sara.mallett@randellandloveridge.gg

[www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding](http://www.TheFA.com/football-rules-governance/safeguarding)

- Emailing – [Safeguarding@TheFA.com](mailto:Safeguarding@TheFA.com)
- The FA Safeguarding Children general enquiry line 0845 210 8080