

E Technology Guidelines for Coaches and other staff/volunteers.

The use of mobile phones by coaches during, training sessions or at competitions, for the purposes of either making or receiving calls, is not good practice. The primary responsibility of staff is the supervision and safety of children and young people. Anything that comprises the adults' ability to maintain a safe environment and give their full attention to the supervision and coaching of children and young people should be actively discouraged. There are situations where access to a mobile phone will make a positive contribution to the safety and welfare of children and young people, particularly when an emergency occurs. Therefore, there should not be a blanket ban on the use of mobile phones by adults. Ideally the phone should be on silent alert.

Staff making contact with children and young people by phone, text or email should **never be undertaken without parental knowledge or consent**. Ideally, contact by coaches would be primarily on a face-to-face basis. Additional communication relating to events, training and other information should be directed to the child or young person's parents. While staff should not be emailing children and young people directly as individuals, they may do so as part of a **disclosed list** (having received prior permission from parents to disclose in a group email) where they are disseminating information in relation to training or competitions. Clubs may also wish to use disclosed lists for sending club information via a designated and suitably trained adult (because of his/her position, this person should also have been subject to appropriate selection and vetting processes). Group emails should also give individuals the opportunity to have their contact details removed from the list by including a statement such as: 'if you wish to be removed from this email list, please contact the administrator'.

Staff should not engage with participants via social networking sites, e.g. Facebook, myspace, twitter. Coaches should not add athletes/players as "friends" or contact them through these websites via online messages.

Staff should be aware of the increasing practice of **cyberbullying**, which includes posting upsetting or defamatory remarks about and individual online and name calling or harassment using mobile

phones. These may be general insults or prejudice-based bullying. Cyber-bullies use their mobile phones or emails to send sexist, homophobic or racist messages or they attack other kinds of differences, such as physical or mental disability, cultural or religious background, appearance or socio-economic circumstances. In other circumstances, bullies may physically assault other children or young people and post images of the bullying or fights online or send recordings via text messages to other people.

Other Considerations

The same principles apply to mobile camera phones as to normal cameras (including the taking of video). Parental consent must be obtained to take photographs and they must only be used for the purpose for which that consent was given. They must be destroyed within 3 years or if the holder of the images has been notified of a change of circumstances. The holder must therefore provide people with the opportunity to notify them should circumstances change.

Reporting

Any concerns must be reported to the welfare officer/safeguarding lead. Cyber bullying should be treated as seriously as any bullying and reported in the same way.