



Social Media and Communications Policy

The club's priority and responsibility is to safeguard children and young people involved in football. Alongside the beneficial aspects of modern communication technologies, we recognise that there are also increased risks to children and young people. These risks must be appropriately managed.

Everyone involved in football must recognise that the responsibility to safeguard exists both on and off the field of play.

It's essential that club officials (committee members, coaches/managers, assistants, first aiders and other volunteers), referees, parents and players make informed decisions about how they use the internet, mobile phone and email communications.

Club officials and those in a position of responsibility at Charnock Ridgeway must ensure they communicate responsibly.

Communicating with players

All communications from Charnock Ridgeway club officials with players should be via the parents/guardians specified as the contact when the player is registered with the club on the membership system for that season.

CLUB OFFICIALS MUST NOT CONTACT PLAYERS DIRECTLY THROUGH ANY FORM OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION (i.e., emails, text, social media such as Facebook, twitter, snapchat, WhatsApp etc).

If a player contacts a club official directly, any replies from the club official must include the parent/guardian and advise that future communications are done through the parent/guardian.

Use of social media

The club's website and social media administrator maintains and monitors a Facebook and Twitter account as a way of getting club messaging across to the widest audience possible. This is used for marketing and raising awareness of relevant events, news and achievements.

Club officials may request to publish social media posts through the club's Facebook and Twitter profile via the club's social media administrator. The administrator will ensure all content complies with this policy.

If any other social media profiles/groups are created by club officials for team specific communications (e.g., WhatsApp or Facebook groups), this must be with the parent/guardian only and not include any players. Communications must be solely about football matters e.g., fixtures, cancellations, and team selection. At no time should there be any personal communications, 'banter' or comments. No results of league games or scorers should be published on social media accounts or websites, up to and including the Under 11 age groups. It is the responsibility of the club official who setup the group to maintain this policy and raise any concerns to the CWO.

The FA have published the below as best practice in relation to social networking:

Do

- ensure all the privacy settings are locked so that that the page(s) are used explicitly for club or league matters and are not used as a place to meet, share personal details or have private conversations
- nominate a club official to monitor the social networking page regularly and remove access for anyone behaving inappropriately
- make sure everyone within your club/team 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/guardian 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.

Don't

Unless a child/young person is a direct relation, the club officials should not:

- accept as a friend, players or referees 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.

Use of images

Any images posted on social media or the club's website must not include named individuals and the club official taking the photo must ensure that consent has been provided by the parent/guardian to use safe images on digital media (this consent is given upon registration in the membership system).

PARENTS ARE REQUESTED TO NOT POST IMAGES OF PLAYERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE PARENTS OF THOSE PLAYERS.

Communicating with referees under 16

As with players, many referees are still minors and must be safeguarded and treated with respect. Some of these referees are as young as 14 years old and are carrying out the activity for the purposes of Duke of Edinburgh awards (DofE) etc.

FOR REFEREES UP TO THE AGE OF 16 (AGED 14 & 15), COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE THROUGH THE PARENT/GUARDIAN AND CLUB OFFICIALS MUST NOT CONTACT REFEREES DIRECTLY THROUGH ANY FORM OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATION.

The club maintains a secure referee list to be used by club officials only and includes the parent/guardian contact details.

Communicating with referees under 18

For referees that are aged 16 and 17, It's important that we recognise they are not 'adults' and as such we have a responsibility to safeguard them as we do any other young person involved in football.

FOR REFEREES UNDER 18 (AGED 16 & 17), COMMUNICATIONS CAN BE DIRECT BUT MUST INCLUDE A COPY TO THE PARENT/GUARDIAN.

Mobile phone and email contact details for referees under the age of 18 should not be hosted on website pages that can be accessed by the general public and must be held securely and displayed within private areas for the purpose of the activities they are undertaking with the written permission of their parent/guardian.

The guidance below is based on FA recommendations for best practice in relation to communication with 16-17 year olds who hold a position of trust and/or responsibility within football:

Parent/guardian consent should be given prior to email, social networking and mobile phone communications with young people holding a position of trust.

Both parties to only communicate for the purpose of organising referees at matches.

Email communications between the club officials and referee should copy in the referee's parent/guardian.

Assistants

On occasion, managers may have U14's to U18's assisting at training sessions or matches for the purposes of DofE etc. Again, these assistants are still minors and the same rules of communication as for players and referees.

Safeguarding Children & Young People

Children and young people must be advised by their coaches, parents/guardians and CWO to always tell an adult they trust about communications that make them feel uncomfortable or where they've been asked not to tell their parent/guardian about the communication.

IF ANY INAPPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION OR CONTENT IS SHARED BETWEEN AN ADULT AND A PLAYER/REFEREE THIS SHOULD BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY TO THE CWO WHO, WHERE NECESSARY, WILL SEEK ADVICE FROM THE COUNTY FA WELFARE OFFICER AND/OR STATUTORY AGENCIES AS APPROPRIATE.

(see the club's full Safeguarding policy)

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