



YOUTH Communication Policy

Old Colfeians RFC (The Club) sets out below how we will contact our YOUTH under 18 year old players and all coaches, managers and volunteers must follow this policy.

The Club adopts the RFU Guidance and Recommendations, and recognises that:

- 1) Club Officials, Managers and Coaches should not communicate with individual children by text, or on-line at any time, on any matter, unless there is an immediate risk to the welfare of that child which can be lessened by such contact.
- 2) Phone communication - If communication by phone is needed, where possible, Club Officials and Coaches should speak to the both the parent and the player at the same time. Club Officials and Coaches may speak to individual children on mobile phones provided they have prior written consent from the child's parent, and from the child if old enough to understand.
- 3) Email communication - If the Club needs to communicate Club-related information to Youth players by email (such as training or match details), it should use email groups consisting of email addresses given by the parent during the GMS Player Registration process. Emails should only be sent from designated individuals e.g. Team Managers and Head Coaches.

Communication by email should **NOT** be on a one-to-one basis with a child; if replying to an email from a child **the parent should be copied into the response.**

- 4) Volunteers should not communicate with children through social networking sites such as Facebook. Coaches should not be "friends" with the children they coach
- 5) Whats App - In Accordance with UK WhatsApp terms and conditions - the minimum age for use is 16 years old. Therefore OCRFC only permit our COLTS Section (U17 & U18 squads) to use a WhatsApp group between players and their team admin (Coaches/Team Manager) purely for the purpose of game/training/match related info.

In accordance with the RFU Social Media Guidance -

<https://www.englandrugby.com/governance/club-support/promoting-your-club/social-media-for-clubs/> Coaches/Team Managers need to ensure that each player and their parents have provided consent to appear on the group as their mobile phone number will be visible.



As is expected with such an app, general banter and chat becomes common.

With this in mind Team Admin must be mindful that:

- language used by any Adults on the group is age appropriate
- That Adults settings are amended to prevent images/photos from being saved to their gallery
- Any misuse of the WhatsApp group by any participant must be dealt with promptly.

It is also more than likely that children in our club, particularly those old enough to be active on social media and online messaging apps, will set up groups of their own where they can message each other in privacy.

Group chats are often set up using WhatsApp, or other social media apps such as Facebook messenger, Instagram, Snap cChat etc.. While we do not want to prohibit children communicating with their peers, it is important that The Club and Parents educate children about how to do this safely.

Common tips for communicating on social media are:

- Never share anything online that you would not want released into the public. Once an image is put online, whether via social media posts or shared in a group chat, it is very hard to retrieve it. Images can end up in a user's personal photo library
- Never engage in abusive or bullying behaviour towards another person in or out of the group chat
- Never Share images of a sexual nature, whether of themselves or others
- Never use of the platform to bully or make inappropriate comments towards another individual who is either on or off the group.

The following info may also be of use for Parents/Guardians:

<https://parentinfo.org/article/whatsapp-a-guide-for-parents-and-carers>

OCRFC make it clear that if children are engaging in group chats while being part of the club, that these group chats are not an extension or representation of the club.

