



Communications and Social Media Policy

Taking photographs of players, using web sites to publicise activities, contacting parents and guardians about training and games for underage teams the use of Facebook and other social media networks in addition to the videoing of events, games, training and coaching sessions are normal daily activities within most clubs.

The Code of Best Practice in Youth Sport does not seek in any way to eliminate or curtail these activities but proposes certain safeguards so as to ensure that we minimise the risk or threats that inappropriate use of photographs or the recording of images may pose, particularly for young people.

Communicating with underage players and teams

Coaches and mentors should never place themselves in a compromising position by texting or communicating via social media sites with underage players. All such communications regarding GAA activities should be sent via the parents or guardians of the underage player, unless otherwise agreed with the parents/guardians, in writing.

In general, the following should apply when communicating with underage players:

- Use mobile phones, if deemed appropriate, only via a group text or email system for communicating with the parents/guardians of players. Any exception to this form of group texting can only be proceeded with following permission from parents/guardians. (see Juvenile Membership Application form)
- Do not communicate individually by text/email sites with underage players.
- Do not engage in communications with underage players via social network sites.

Guidelines for Photographic/Recorded Images

It should be noted that having photographic and filming guidelines is not about preventing parents and guardians from taking pictures, but rather to ensure that only those who have a right to take photographs do so.



Communications and Social Media Policy

PIP

Issue No. 1

Issue date:
01/03/2017

Page 2 of 3

These safeguards should still permit and facilitate the recording of relevant and suitable materials, should allow us to photograph the enjoyment gained by participating in our games, should enable coaches to use the latest technology in the delivery of training skills and should also enable clubs to promote their activities in a safe and non-threatening manner.

A common sense approach is required when deciding on what may or may not be appropriate as we do not wish to prohibit the recording of games, coaching sessions or celebrations at club level through the use of photography or by recording on video equipment

The key concerns regarding the use of images and photographs of children/young people relate to:

- The possible identification of children when a photograph is accompanied by personal information and its inappropriate use thereafter
- The inappropriate use, adaptation or copying of images for use in child pornography or illegal website
- The taking of inappropriate photographs or recorded images of children

It should be noted that we have little or no influence on what photographs may be taken and published in local or national newspapers as such photography is covered by a different set of guidelines. Should we ever be unhappy with the publication of such photographs or images we can address this matter with the individual newspaper or the Press Council of Ireland and the Office of the Press Ombudsman.

Photography and the recording of images in a public place do not generally require explicit or prior consent. However, if an event e.g. a game or training session is taking place, involving underage players, in a public, private or local authority park, and if you are in charge of such an event you are entitled to request a person to resist from taking photos if you feel that such action or photography may be inappropriate.

In general, individual children should not be identified with the exception being when they are being publicly acknowledged (e.g. an award or achievement), for which prior consent has been given. Children and young people have a right to privacy and therefore their consent should be sought in relation to the use of personal data including images. Parental consent should also be sought and all clubs should receive signed permission from the player's parents or guardians for the recording of photographic and recorded images etc. as part of the player's registration process. Information should also be provided as to how and for what purpose images will be used.

Be aware that refusal of consent should not in any way limit children or young people's participation in activities



Communications and Social Media Policy

PIP

Issue No. 1

Issue date:
01/03/2017

Page 3 of 3

- Ask for the player's and parental permission to use their image. This consent could be included in the annual registration form.
- All children/young people featured in recordings must be appropriately dressed.
- The photograph or recording should focus on the activity rather than a particular young person
- In general, no personal details relating to the young person should be revealed as accompanying materials to the photograph or recorded image, with the exception being where they are being publicly acknowledged (e.g. an award or personal achievement), for which consent has been given.
- Group and team photographs may be taken but it is not necessary to match a player's name with the position in which they may be standing or seated in the team photograph. This is a precautionary recommendation based on previous examples of misuse of photographs by those who sought to exploit the gathering of young people together in an enjoyable and fun environment.
- Clubs, coaches and volunteers should be permitted to use video equipment as a legitimate coaching aid and as a means of recording special occasions; however, care should be taken in the dissemination, storage and use of such material.