



Monkstown Hockey Policy on Communicating with Underage Players

1. Policy Statement

Monkstown Hockey Club is committed to ensuring the safety, welfare, and protection of all underage members. This policy outlines best practices for all club officials, coaches, volunteers, and adult members when communicating with players under the age of 18. All communication must be appropriate, transparent, and conducted in a manner that protects both young people and adults.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all forms of communication including, but not limited to:

- Text messaging
- Phone calls
- Email
- Messaging apps (e.g. WhatsApp)
- Social media platforms (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat)
- Team management apps (e.g. Teamer)

It applies to all adult coaches, team managers, volunteers, and members interacting with underage (U18) players in Monkstown Hockey Club, regardless of whether they are playing in the Junior or Senior Section. It also applies to communication with the Strikers.

3. General Principles

- **Communication should always be open, transparent, and appropriate** to the age and stage of development of the player.
 - **Communication with underage players should only occur through official channels** such as email, team WhatsApp groups or designated team communication apps such as Teamer.
 - **Parents/guardians must be informed and included** in all communication involving underage players.
 - Communication should **only be for club-related purposes**, such as match times, training sessions, or travel arrangements.
 - Adults should **never initiate one-to-one communication** with an underage player unless absolutely necessary, and parents/guardians must be copied or notified.
 - All communication must be **professional, respectful, and free of personal content**.
 - Avoid use of slang, sarcasm or informal expressions that could be misunderstood
-

4. Specific Guidelines

4.1. Text and Messaging Apps

- A group message should be used for team communications. Parents should be asked permission before adding underage players and invited to join themselves if they wish.
- Individual messages to underage players are **not permitted**, unless a parent/guardian is copied.
- Coaches should never send late-night messages or engage in ongoing private chats.
- Messages in groups should be **professional, friendly and hockey related** only. It may be beneficial to pin a message in the group to remind all members.

4.2. Social Media

- Coaches and adult members should not be 'friends' or 'followers' of underage players on personal social media accounts.
- The club may use official accounts to share news and updates, but direct messaging underage members is prohibited. Only specified personnel should have access to posting on official social media accounts.
- Photos of underage players will only be posted with written parental consent and in line with the club's photography policy. Names / tags must never be used.

4.3. Phone Calls

- Where possible, calls to underage players should be made to the parent/guardian's phone.
- If a call is required directly to the young person, a parent/guardian should be informed beforehand and included.

4.4. Emails

- Emails should be sent to parents/guardians and underage players simultaneously (if age-appropriate).
- The club recommends using team management platforms that allow for dual communication with parents and players.

5. Responsibility & Enforcement

- All club officials, volunteers, and team coaches are expected to read, understand, and follow this policy.
- Any breaches of this policy should be reported to the **Club Children's Officer**.
- Disciplinary action may be taken against any member found to have breached this policy, in line with the club's disciplinary procedures.

6. Related Policies

- Monkstown HC Child Safeguarding Statement
- Monkstown HC Code of Conduct
- Monkstown HC Code of Ethics, including policy on photography and social media use.