**JPCHC – POLICY ON ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS WITH UNDER 18s

Introduction**New forms of electronic communication have radically altered the way people of all ages communicate, but especially young people (by which we mean under 18s). Mobile phones, e-mailing, and social networking sites are some of the most popular forms of communication today. They are also hugely helpful tools for older members of the club. However, such tools may present club members with potential problems. The appropriate use of these means of communication is critical to ensuring that, as a club, we take our responsibilities for our young members seriously. Young people do not necessarily respect relational boundaries, so club members need to ensure that appropriate boundaries are in place.

Club members must be above reproach at all times. Perception is often as important as reality. It's not enough just that we behave appropriately - It must also be clear to others that we are behaving appropriately. Club members should operate a policy of transparency at all times. The guiding rule is to only communicate what the young persons’ parents would be happy to read.

**E-mailing**

* Club members should “cc” (carbon copy) another club member into all e-mail communication with young people (under 18s)If the option is available, club members could E-Mail young people (under 18s) via their parents E-Mail address. In this case, a carbon copy is not required.
* Club members should not pass on e-mail addresses of young people without their consent.

**Social Networking**

* Club members should not request that young people become their friends on social networking sites. However, if young people invite them to be friends with them then they may accept the invitation.
* Club members should not communicate with young people through one to one chats (eg. MSN chat or Facebook Chat).
* Instead club members should only converse with young people through wall posts or messaging. When sending a personal message club members should keep the conversation transparent by including another team member in the conversation.
* Club members should avoid ambiguous phraseology and acronyms (e.g. “lol” could mean “laugh out loud” or “lots of love”).

**Mobile Phone Calls and Texting**

* Club members should not ring or text a young person’s mobile unless they have specifically checked with their parents that they are happy for them to be contacted by that means.
* When texting young people it should only be to communicate details, conversation should not be engaged in via text. If the young person in question is engaging in conversation you can continue this via E-Mail (with the mentioned measures in place) or Facebook (again with the mentioned measures in place).
* When texting young people, club members should send their text to a fellow club member to ensure accountability.
* Club members should avoid ambiguous phraseology and acronyms in their texts.
* Club members should not pass on mobile numbers of children and young people without their consent.

**Taking Pictures/Videos of Children and Young People**

* The “Taking and Use of Photographic and Recorded Images of Young People” policy should be used as a first point of reference and is available on the club website
* Where the guidelines have been adhered to, images should be erased from members’ mobile phones/memory cards as soon as is practicable.
* If you intend to share photos on social networking sites e.g. on Facebook, Instagram, Flickr etc, you should obtain the consent of those in the photo.
* Don’t tag a young person in a picture unless permission obtained from parents. Many young people especially teenagers can choose to tag themselves or may upload photos/videos themselves. You should not expose their identity if they have not consented to this.