

## **WOBURN YOUTH SOCCER PLAYER/COACH ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION POLICY**

**Purpose and Introduction:** The purpose of this policy is to enhance the safety of the children in the Woburn Youth Soccer program, by minimizing and/or eliminating private communication between children and adults other than the parents and legal guardians of the children. *The policy also serves as a way to protect coaches from false accusations from children and parents.*

**Definitions:** This policy applies expressly with regards to all children in the Woburn Youth Soccer program, and especially to all players from U14 and younger.

**E-mail:** Coaches should make sure that all e-mail contact with players must go through the parents. The following steps should be made to ensure this:

1. Make sure that the primary e-mail address (addresses) used to communicate with the team or individual players is the e-mail address of a parent, and not that of the child.
2. If a parent requests that his/her child's e-mail address be added to the e-mail distribution for the team, get the request in writing (paper or e-mail), and save it.
3. If a child requests that his/her e-mail address be added to the distribution list, contact the parents, and get their consent in writing.
4. Coaches should not under any circumstance send an e-mail to any individual child in the Woburn Youth Soccer program. E-mails to children can only be part of a "distribution e-mail" to the entire team, and each child in the distribution thread **MUST** also have that child's parents on the list as well.
5. If a child initiates any e-mail to a coach, and the coach responds to that e-mail, the coach **MUST** include the child's parent by "carbon-copying" the reply to the parent, or by simply sending the reply to the parent and have them forward the reply to the child.
6. There can be absolutely no private e-mail communication between adults and children with the Woburn Youth Soccer program.

**Text Messages:** Since text messages are more difficult to save and/or copy to the parents of children, text messaging between adults and children is very strongly discouraged in the Woburn Youth Soccer program.

1. An example of a legitimate exception would be if a practice gets moved from a planned venue to an unplanned venue at the last minute, and a player has difficulty finding his team or coach. It would be more safe for a child that has been dropped off at the field to text his/her coach to find the practice venue than to wander around alone looking for the venue.

**Social Websites:** Some coaches and players use social web pages such as Facebook or Myspace. It is not encouraged for coaches to have their players be included on their "friends" list, however it is understood that many coaches have their own children on their team, and sometimes they have friends of their children on the team as well. Every parent should be monitoring their own children's activity on these social pages, and because of that, they will in some cases subsequently have their children's friends on their pages also.

1. If a child is to be included on the friends list of a coach, the child's parent **MUST** also be included on the friends list of the coach...**NO EXCEPTIONS**. If the parent doesn't have a facebook page, the child can not be a facebook friend of the coach.
2. All coaches that have children or parents on their friends list on any social website, must maintain their web pages with only appropriate content.