Naomh FinnÉin C.L.G.

Established 1943

**Policy when communicating with Under-Age Players**

**& Use of Mobile Phones**

St. Finians GAA Club endorses as policy what is contained in [**Our Games – Our Code**](http://gaa.ie/content/documents/publications/child_welfare/Our-Games-Our-Code-Dec-2012.pdf) and in our [**Code of Behaviour when working with underage players**](http://gaa.ie/content/documents/publications/child_welfare/Our%20Games%20Our%20Code%20brochure_v4.pdf) when communicating with all under-age players in the care of the club and in the use of mobile phones. The following guidelines are contained therein.

**What is the GAA policy re texting/emailing information to underage players?**The GAA policy states that when we pass on information regarding games, training or other activities for the attention of our under age players that we do so via group texts and that these group texts should be sent to the parents/guardians of underage players. The same good practice guidance applies when using emails or social media sites. The relevant team Coach, Club Registrar or the Club Secretary should obtain these relevant contact numbers/emails when an underage player is being registered on an annual basis. This recommendation only applies to underage players i.e. under 18 year of age.

**Are there any exceptions to the proposal on texting?**If, for whatever reason, a parent/guardian insists or requests that the information is sent directly by the club to their child and gives this request in writing, the Club may, if they so wish, accede to this request. However, if the Club accedes to the request the information can only be sent as part of a group text and cannot be communicated individually to the underage player. A parental/guardian request to have such information sent directly to their child may be refused by the Club Executive in the interest of good practice.

The GAA would regard the individual texting of an underage player by their coach or mentor as being inappropriate and unacceptable and a breach of the above Code.

**How do we interpret an underage player?**An underage player is a person who is eligible to play in a game or event for persons under 18 years of age or a player who is under 18 years of age and playing above his age group. Legislation in Ireland also defines a child as any person under 18 years of age and parents/guardians therefore have a particular level of responsibility for their child’s welfare while they remain under 18 years of age. (We use the terms child and young person frequently when we refer to underage players.)

**What if an underage player is involved with any of the Club’s adult panels?**The same recommendations apply and parental/guardian permission must be sought if the club wishes to directly communicate with the young person as part of a group text scheme.

**What is acceptable behaviour when using mobile phones when supervising / coaching under-age players?**

It is recommended that the use of mobile phones by supervising volunteers or coaches be limited to an “open” environment only, i.e., in view of others. It is deemed unsuitable to use a mobile phone when in a dressing room, using any form of transport or during coaching or match situations.