

## **Advice on good practice for communications**

**Staff/volunteers must consider whether it is necessary to communicate with children via text and email. The general principle is that all communications with children should be open, transparent and appropriate.**

Good practice would include agreeing with children and parents/carers what kind of information will be communicated directly to children by text message and should be sent in a group communication. This information should only be “need to know” information such as the last minute cancellation of a training session.

In the first instance parent/carer consent must be obtained for all children under 16 years. Contact should always be made at the phone number/email address the parent has provided on the child’s behalf. Parents/carers should be offered the option to be copied in to any messages their child will be sent. Although consent is not legally required for young people aged between 16 and 18 it is still recommended that parents are informed of the intention to send their child(ren) emails or texts. It is also good practice to obtain the consent of the 16 to 18 year-old.

**The following good practice is also required:**

- All phone numbers/email addresses of children and young people should be recorded and kept securely in a locked cabinet or password-protected electronic file or database
- The number of people with access to children and young people’s details should be kept to a practical minimum. A record should be kept of their numbers/ addresses, namely by the Squad Manager
- Messages should never contain any offensive, abusive or inappropriate language. They should not be open to misinterpretation
- The organisation should be clear that messages should be sent only to communicate rowing related matters: details of meeting points, training, event details, competition results etc. The same message should be sent to every member of the group/squad
- Communication by text/email between coaches/ volunteer and children/young people should include a copy to a third party e.g. copy to relevant CPO and/or parent