COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

INTERNAL PROCEDURES

Depending on the size of your Club and its functions it is good practice to have a Communication Policy published and accessible to ALL Club Members.

To be effective a Communications Policy should be reviewed regularly to take into account any new Club activity.

• Emails to key personnel within the organization are essential but consider 'cc' or 'bcc' if there is a risk that you won't get an immediate reply when you need one.

• Ensure an effective process is in place for acting upon time sensitive information that may come from numerous third parties (Municipalities, Leagues, District, Province etc.)

• Designate back-up persons to reply to and/or disseminate information in the event of absence of the key contact.

EXTERNAL GUIDELINES

Parents/Guardians are an important part of your Club. They are often the club supporters, willing volunteers, potential coaches and officials. They will also wish to know that their children are safe in your care and getting the most from soccer. Communicating with parents/guardians is important. When a new member registers an interest with your Club it is good practice to let them know about the Club, how it operates and its expectations of them as parents.

Establishing regular communication with parents/guardians also helps to secure their ongoing support. This communication might be done via:

• Club Newsletter or Magazine
• Email Updates
• Website
• Monthly meetings

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

1. Be concise and to the point.

Do not make an e-mail longer than it needs to be. Remember that reading an e-mail is harder than reading printed communications and a long e-mail can be very discouraging to read.

2. Answer all questions and pre-empt further questions.

An email reply must answer all questions and pre-empt further questions – If you do not answer all the questions in the original email, you will receive further e-mails regarding the unanswered questions, which will only waste time.

3. Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation.

This is not only important because improper spelling, grammar and punctuation give a bad impression, it is also important for conveying the message properly. E-mails with no full stops or commas are difficult to read and can sometimes even change the meaning of the text.

4. Answer swiftly.

People send an e-mail because they wish to receive a quick response. If they did not want a quick response, they would send a letter or fax. Therefore, each e-mail should be replied to within at least 24 hours, and preferably within the same working day. If the email is complicated, just send an email back saying that you have received it and that you will get back to them. This will put the customer's mind at rest and usually people will then be very patient!

5. Use proper structure & layout.

Since reading from a screen is more difficult than reading from paper, the structure and lay out is very important for e-mail messages. Use short paragraphs and blank lines between each paragraph. When making points, number them or mark each point as separate to keep the overview

** 6. Do not write in CAPITALS.**

IF YOU WRITE IN CAPITALS IT SEEMS AS IF YOU ARE SHOUTING. This can be highly annoying and might trigger an unwanted response in the form of a flame mail. Therefore, try not to send any email text in capitals.

7. Don't leave out the message thread.

When you reply to an email, you must include the original mail in your reply, in other words click 'Reply', instead of 'New Mail'. Some people say that you must remove the previous message since this has already been sent and is therefore unnecessary. However, I could not agree less. If you receive many emails you obviously cannot remember each individual email. This means that a 'threadless email' will

not provide enough information and you will have to spend a frustratingly long time to find out the context of the email in order to deal with it. Leaving the thread might take a fraction longer in download time, but it will save the recipient much more time and frustration in looking for the related emails in their inbox!

8. Read the email before you send it.

A lot of people don't bother to read an email before they send it out, as can be seen from the many spelling and grammar mistakes contained in emails. Apart from this, reading your email through the eyes of the recipient will help you send a more effective message and avoid misunderstandings and inappropriate comments.

9. Do not overuse Reply to All.

Only use Reply to All if you really need your message to be seen by each person who received the original message.

10. Mailings > use the Bcc: field or do a mail merge.

When sending an email mailing, some people place all the email addresses in the To: field. There are two drawbacks to this practice: (1) the recipient knows that you have sent the same message to a large number of recipients, and (2) you are publicizing someone else's email address without their permission. One way to get around this is to place all addresses in the Bcc: field. However, the recipient will only see the address from the To: field in their email, so if this was empty, the To: field will be blank and this might look like spamming. You could include the mailing list email address in the To: field, or even better, if you have Microsoft Outlook and Word you can do a mail merge and create one message for each recipient. A mail merge also allows you to use fields in the message so that you can for instance address each recipient personally. For more information on how to do a Word mail merge, consult the Help in Word.

11. Do not copy a message or attachment without permission.

Do not copy a message or attachment belonging to another user without permission of the originator. If you do not ask permission first, you might be infringing on copyright laws.

12. Do not use email to discuss confidential information.

Sending an email is like sending a postcard. If you don't want your email to be displayed on a bulletin board, don't send it. Moreover, never make any libelous, sexist or racially discriminating comments in emails, even if they are meant to be a joke.

13. Don't send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks.

By sending or even just forwarding one libelous, or offensive remark in an email, you can face court cases.

14. Use cc: field sparingly.

Try not to use the cc: field unless the recipient in the cc: field knows why they are receiving a copy of the message. Using the cc: field can be confusing since the recipients might not know who is supposed to act on the message. Also, when responding to a cc: message, should you include the other recipient in the cc: field as well? This will depend on the situation. In general, do not include the person in the cc: field unless you have a particular reason for wanting this person to see your response. Again, make sure that this person will know why they are receiving a copy. Include addresses in the To: field for those who you would like a response from.   Always include a brief subject. No subject can get your email flagged as spam.

15. When there is a misunderstanding by email, don't hesitate to pick up the old-fashioned telephone to work things out!

16. When replying to an email with multiple recipients noted in the To: or Cc: fields, remove the addresses of those who your reply does not apply to.

17.   Do not write an email while you are drunk or in a really bad mood. It would reflect on the style of your writing.

18. Never use an old email to hit reply and start typing about an entirely new topic.

19. Always end your email in thank you, sincerely etc.

20. Email is not private. Type unto others as you would have them type unto you. 24-hour rule - with emotionally charged emails, wait 24 hours before clicking send.