



# GUILDFORD ATHLETIC CLUB

Building players, families, and community since 1965  
guildfordac.com • Surrey, BC

## COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL FOR COACHES TO PARENTS

### Purpose

This protocol provides a structured, professional approach for soccer coaches to address concerns raised by parents. The goal is to maintain respect, transparency, and a positive environment for player development while minimizing conflict.

### Guiding Principles

- **Player-Centered Focus:** All discussions should prioritize the athlete's development, well-being, and enjoyment of the game.
- **Respect and Professionalism:** Maintain calm, respectful communication at all times, regardless of tone from the parent.
- **Clarity and Consistency:** Apply team policies evenly and communicate them clearly.
- **Boundaries:** Coaches are not required to engage in conversations at inappropriate times or under hostile conditions.

### Pre-Season Preventative Measures

To reduce misunderstandings, coaches should:

- Provide a **parent orientation** outlining:
  - Team philosophy
  - Playing time expectations
  - Communication rules
- Share a **48-hour rule**:
  - Parents must wait 48 hours after games before raising concerns.
- Define **appropriate communication channels**:
  - Email or scheduled meetings (not sideline or post-game confrontations)

### When a Complaint Arises

#### **Step 1: Pause and Assess**

- Do not respond immediately if emotions are high.
- Acknowledge receipt of the concern (if via message) and propose a time to talk.

#### **Example response:**

"Thanks for reaching out. I'd be happy to discuss this, let's schedule a time to talk tomorrow."

#### **Step 2: Choose the Right Setting**

- Private, neutral environment
- No discussions during:
  - Games



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### Step 3: Listen Actively

- Allow the parent to speak without interruption
- Show understanding without necessarily agreeing

#### Techniques:

- Paraphrasing: “So your concern is about playing time, correct?”
- Acknowledging emotions: “I understand why that feels frustrating.”

### Step 4: Respond with Facts and Philosophy

- Refer back to team policies and goals
- Be honest, but constructive

#### Focus on:

- Effort
- Attitude
- Development areas (not comparisons to other players)

### Step 5: Set Boundaries if Needed

If behavior becomes aggressive or inappropriate:

- Stay calm and do not escalate
- Clearly state expectations

#### Example:

“I want to have a productive conversation, but I can’t continue if the tone remains disrespectful.”

**If necessary, end the conversation and escalate to club leadership.**

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## Topics That Require Extra Care

### Playing Time

- Emphasize development over equal distribution (if applicable)
- Avoid guarantees unless policy states otherwise

### Team Selection / Positions

- Explain decisions in terms of team needs and player growth

### Coaching Decisions

- Do not justify every tactical choice; maintain authority



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If the issue cannot be resolved:

1. Suggest involvement of **Club Technical Director or assistant Technical Director**
2. Document the interaction:
  - o Date, time, summary of discussion
3. Follow club-specific grievance procedures

### Documentation

Keep records of:

- Complaints received
- Meeting summaries
- Agreements or action steps

This protects both the coach and the organization.

### Do's and Don't

**Do:**

- Stay calm and professional
- Listen fully before responding
- Keep the focus on the player's development
- Follow established policies

**Don't:**

- Argue or become defensive
- Discuss other players
- Engage in public or emotional confrontations
- Make promises you can't keep

### Sample Communication Template

**Initial Response to Parent Email:**

"Hi [Parent Name],

Thank you for reaching out and sharing your concerns. I want to make sure we address this properly, so I'd be happy to set up a time to talk. Please let me know your availability over the next couple of days.

Best regards,

[Coach Name]"