



Policy on the use of WhatsApp by Cambridge City Hockey Club (CCHC) Teams

Introduction

WhatsApp is a popular instant messaging app, which lets you send messages, images and videos to friends. You can have 1-1 conversations as well as group chats.

The age limit for the use of Whatsapp is now 16 in order to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Cambridge City Hockey Club (CCHC) teams use WhatsApp to communicate with team members. CCHC recognises that whilst these technologies provide positive and effective opportunities, they are accompanied by risks if abused by users; these include cyber bullying, grooming young people, and exposure to inappropriate content. In particular, WhatsApp gives every group member access to the telephone number of every other group member. In some environments this may allow individuals to contact each other in a negative way e.g. bullying in a performance environment. This is a particular concern when considering the policy with respect to U18 players participating in CCHC WhatsApp groups.

1. Guidance for the use of WhatsApp by CCHC senior hockey teams

CCHC has issued the following Guidance for the use of WhatsApp as a Team Communication Tool by CCHC senior hockey teams:

- This guidance is aimed at all Team Captains, Coaches & Team Managers, and Club Members.
- A 'team WhatsApp group' should be set up by the Team Captain, Coach, or Team Manager only.
- CCHC does not currently allow the participation of any junior player (any player who is U18) in a CCHC senior team WhatsApp group
- All Club Members using WhatsApp will be informed what the app is/isn't to be used for
- Each team should agree how the app is to be used by their team i.e. only hockey orientated content
- Keep language appropriate
- Think before you post – is content appropriate?
- **Don't** assume everyone is on WhatsApp – ensure those team members who do not use the App are kept informed
- **Don't** use the app to replace formal feedback

2. Guidance for the use of WhatsApp to create specific Junior WhatsApp user groups

- CCHC recognises that it is important that junior players do not feel that they are 'missing out' by not participating in the senior hockey team WhatsApp groups.
- It may therefore be appropriate to set up a separate WhatsApp group for junior players within a particular team (this is currently limited to the 1st teams within the club).
- Please contact the Club Welfare Officer if you have any queries at welfare@cambridgecityhc.org.
- Please see guidance below.
 - The WhatsApp group should be set up by and administered by 2 or more of the following – Team Captain, Team Coach, Team Manager and Club Welfare Officer
 - All junior WhatsApp group administrators should be DBS checked, and have completed as a minimum, the [England Hockey Online Safeguarding & Protecting Young People in Hockey Course](#).
 - Any junior player participating must be 16 years old or over
 - Inform parents of its intended use
 - Tell team members what the app is/isn't to be used for
 - Get the team to agree how the app is to be used i.e. only hockey orientated content
 - Think before you post – is content appropriate?
 - Administrators can share appropriate content from the relevant senior team WhatsApp group
 - Administrators must review content regularly
 - **Don't** use the App for private messaging
 - **Don't** assume everyone is on WhatsApp – ensure those junior team members who do not use the App are kept informed
 - **Don't** use the app to replace formal feedback

3. Reporting Concerns

Any concerns arising as a result of posts on WhatsApp should be reported in line with England Hockey procedures, available from the England Hockey website (www.englishockey.co.uk/safe).

As a first step, contact the CCHC Club Welfare Officer at welfare@cambridgecityhc.org.

Where a child or young person may be in immediate danger, always dial 999 for police assistance.