

Cambridge Talent Academy (CTA)



Policy on the use of WhatsApp

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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 Talent Academy (CTA) coaches and athletes may use WhatsApp to communicate with team members. CTA 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 CTA WhatsApp groups.

Guidance for the use of WhatsApp by CTA senior hockey teams

CTA has issued the following guidance for the use of WhatsApp as a Team and Athlete Communication Tool by CTA:

- This guidance is aimed at all Coaches & Team Managers, and CTA Officers.
- A CTA Group WhatsApp group should be set up by the Coach or Group Manager only.

- CTA does not currently allow the participation of any athlete who is U18) in a CTA senior team WhatsApp group
- All CTA Coaches and Officers using WhatsApp will be informed what the app is/isn't to be used for
- Each group should agree on how the app is to be used by their group 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 group members who do not use the App are kept informed
- **Don't** use the app to replace formal feedback

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

It may therefore be appropriate to set up a separate WhatsApp group for u18 athletes within a particular group.

Please contact the TA Welfare Officer if you have any queries at cambridgetalentacademy@gmail.com.

Please see the guidance below:

- The WhatsApp group should be set up by and administered by two or more of the following – CTA Coach, CTA Officer or CTA 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 athlete participating must be 16 years old or over
- Inform parents of its intended use
- Tell group members what the app is/isn't to be used for
- Get the team to agree on 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

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 CTA Welfare Officer at cambridgetalentacademy@gmail.com.

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