



## **Communications & Social Media Policy**

**1<sup>st</sup> February 2024**

**Status:** Version 1.0 approved by Committee

This policy applies to team captains, coaches, managers, all club members and parents/guardians of junior club members (Under 18s).

Wilmslow Hockey Club ("WHC" or "Club") recognises that social media provides an effective platform for discussion and information sharing amongst adult and junior club members. Nevertheless, the Club also recognises that the use of social media can pose risks to its members and to the Club's reputation and compliance with safeguarding or legal obligations (such as GDPR). The purpose of this policy is to set out the Club's official communication methods and to ensure that the Club's social media is used appropriately to minimise risks for Club members and the Club.

### **1/ Teamo is the Club's primary communication platform**

The primary method of intra-club communication is Teamo (email, chat and website). Teamo is the source of all club information, news and everything to do with training/matches/events (e.g. player availability, selection, fixtures, results, social events, news etc). The Teamo App or Website should be the first place for members to look for Club information, events and communications.

Teamo offers:

- Single source of controlled information about the club, available on web and via the app
- Squad chats automatically updated when players are added/removed - so squad list, email distribution and chat lists never get out of sync. Teamo Chat will replace WhatsApp chat groups.
- Fixture chat for all selected players for a particular fixture - saving non-selected players from hearing the noise of fixture-specific communications e.g. location of pitch, I'm going to be late etc.
- Meets our safeguarding policy - any message to a junior is automatically visible to parent/guardian as well; inappropriate content can be reported in Teamo and removed.
- Email, notification and photo opt-out controls for members, consistent with GDPR regulations
- Protection of the privacy of member's phone numbers - meeting GDPR and safeguarding requirements.
- Controlled access to member personal data by a small number of Club officers, based on the principle of "least privileged access".
- Controlled access to emergency contact details and medical information for captains/managers/coaches.

### **2/ Personal use of WhatsApp by Club members is at their own risk**

The Club recognises that WhatsApp has been used by teams, groups and individuals to communicate amongst Club members, non-members and friends.

However, WhatsApp is not suitable as a Club platform, particularly where this involves children as the Club has a safeguarding responsibility which includes member's data. The issues with WhatsApp are:

- End-to-end encryption used in WhatsApp means that data is only stored on sending and receiving devices. The users of these devices become responsible for managing this data, beyond the control of the Club and therefore not compliant with the Club's GDPR obligations.
- WhatsApp has no central record of communication. The Club would have to have the ability to review a full record of communications at any time for safeguarding compliance.
- WhatsApp shares phone numbers with all group members, which is beyond the control of the Club and not compliant with the Club's GDPR obligations. The direct access to any member's phone number can also be a risk to user welfare, privacy and safeguarding.

Teamo addresses all these needs and risks and is therefore used by the Club for official member communications. WhatsApp is not a Club communication platform.

Members are welcome to be part of WhatsApp groups with other members of the Club if they wish, but they should be aware that:

- this is not an official Club method of communication, members who use WhatsApp do so at their own risk
- such groups are personal groups, set up by individual members, and are not controlled by the Club
- the Club is not responsible for the control, content, privacy or for processing members' name/phone numbers
- the privacy and safeguarding risks inherent in WhatsApp are borne by the individual user and not the Club
- no adult member should communicate with a junior member on WhatsApp whether this is in a group chat or individual chat - to keep both the junior and the adult safe.
- no junior member should belong to such WhatsApp groups, whether with the permission of parents/guardians or not. This is because of the safeguarding risk to the junior member themselves but also to adults in the group such as teachers.

The Club advises individuals to follow the "Use of Social Media" guidance below, which is based upon England Hockey good practice guidance.

### **3/ Use of Social Media by Members**

The Key Message is: Think before you post!

Posts on the Club's social media or media linked to the Club's social media, be it photos, comments or links on any platform should not be inappropriate. Users must not engage in activities or transmit content that is harassing, discriminatory, menacing, threatening, obscene, defamatory, or in any way objectionable or offensive. Users are personally responsible for what they communicate in social media and should remember that what they publish may be available to a wide audience over a lengthy period of time. When using social media, users should respect their audience.

Don't identify young people in images (i.e. captions to pictures, tagging on Facebook).

Communication with young or vulnerable people is covered by England Hockey's Safeguarding & Protection Policy and specific guidance for Clubs.

Remember, the term 'young person' means those under 18 years old.

Anyone who finds a post inappropriate should email details to the Club Welfare Officer and the Secretary.

### **Sanctions**

Inappropriate posts or content will be removed by the administrators and the person who posted will be informed. Anyone who persistently posts inappropriate content will be referred to the Club's Disciplinary Committee.

The Club Committee will be informed of any matters relating to young or vulnerable people and deal with the post as appropriate.

Issues relating to adults and the reputation of the Club will be referred to the Chair and Disciplinary Committee. England Hockey and North West Hockey have made it very clear that any published inappropriate comments about opponents, umpires, officials or other clubs on social media, websites or match reports in the press will be dealt with by them through sanctions such as bans and point deductions.

## **4/ Controls over Club Specific Social Media**

### **Twitter, Facebook, Instagram**

The Club uses all three social media platforms to promote the club and our sponsors to current and potential new members. Material published on this channel is controlled by Club administrators.

### **Facebook Group**

The Club does not currently support or control a Facebook Group or its membership.

### **WhatsApp**

As explained above, the Club does not control the usage or in anyway process or control the data shared by individuals within WhatsApp groups.

## **5/ GDPR**

For information on GDPR from England Hockey, please see

<https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/governance/rules-and-regulations/gdpr>