

## Online Communication and Social Media Policy

Communication is a vital part of creating and maintaining a safe, efficient and enjoyable environment for hockey.

How we interact with players, parents, our Club Officials and the wider hockey community will affect how well the organisation functions and how satisfying hockey can be for everyone concerned.

In this day and age, it is more important than ever to maintain a high-quality level of communication that is efficient, safe, and fit for purpose. It is particularly important when the volume of information circulating can be daunting, when it is communicated by many methods and the receiver can become overwhelmed particularly if regular action is required.

We must always remember that we play hockey for enjoyment and that our club is run solely by volunteers.

All communication will abide by Data Protection Acts 1988, 2003 and as amended by GDPR 2018.

Waterford Hockey Club will, on a regular basis, communicate its business through the following forms, i.e., word of mouth, text, website, WhatsApp, Facebook, phone, email, Twitter and other electronic means and also by post.

We aim to improve the way we communicate our business by following the procedures set out below:

- The communication should reach each person to whom it is applicable and this may mean that different methods are used in order to reach all our members.
- Members must now give us written permission for us to communicate with them. This is done at the beginning of the season on the Membership Application Form or by text, WhatsApp or email during the season. A phone call will not suffice.
- A member, may, at any time, withdraw this consent for us to communicate with them and they will have the option to 'Stop' or 'Unsubscribe'.
- The club, or officials within the club, should not over communicate with members.
- Communication should only take place in an open environment where children are concerned and in an appropriate setting in which the children are comfortable.
- The information must be said and/or written in clear and 'Plain English' taking into consideration the age or profile of the group to which it is being communicated. It must be remembered that in hockey the age differences on an adult team can vary widely and that players under 18 years are likely to be part of the team.
- Using 'Plain English' means adapting your language, tone and layout to make it easy for your target audiences to read, skim or scan and to get your messages quickly and effortlessly.
- Remember there are age restrictions for children with regard to the use of social media and extra precaution should be taken by children using social media. Age 16 is the generally the accepted age. Adult teams should use WhatsApp or other communications tools for team notifications only. A parent of a 16 to 18-year-old can request to be included but must consent in writing for their child to be added to this group.
- No under 18 members should be allowed join social communication groups under the club's name. The administrators of each group are responsible for implementing these guidelines.
- If a child member (under 18) is to be directly communicated with on-line it must be done so through a parent/guardian and by the appointed communicator, e.g., Coach or Captain.

- If you suspect or see 'unknown numbers' please report so that the number in the group can be identified by name and that they are a legitimate member of the group/team/club involved.
- Administrators should 'block' an 'unknown number' or an illegitimate member if one is found in the group.
- Members should not share any private information or photos of other members on any social media without their prior consent.
- Any phones/devices with an integrated camera should not be used at inappropriate times or in changing rooms.
- Adults and children who have phones/devices that are capable of connecting to the internet have an obligation to only interact with reputable sites online when representing the club.
- Misuse of a phone/device, including while on away trips will be taken very seriously and disciplinary action may be taken. If this occurs it must be reported to a representative of the club's management committee.
- If inappropriate material is communicated to you, please inform your parent or guardian if you are under 18 years of age. Parents or guardians can then inform the Club Secretary or Children's Officer. If you are an adult, please inform your Coach, Captain or the Club Secretary or the Children's Officer if it concerns communication with a child.
- Good communication within the Committee is vital for our club to function well. With particular attention to email, Committee members are asked to fill in the 'Subject' section. If possible, keep one thread per train of thought and ensure that all Committee members have been included. If you receive correspondence, please respond to it in a timely manner if you are required to do so.
- All members and parents are requested to please respond in a timely manner if you are requested to do so regarding RSVPs to matches and training.