

WhatsApp Usage Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines the acceptable use, guidelines, and best practices for using WhatsApp in Sissinghurst Scout Group. WhatsApp may be used for communication with parents and older members in the form of instant communication. It should not be used to relay information that should otherwise be in Online Scout Manager (OSM) or used instead of more formal communication methods.

An example of acceptable use of WhatsApp is to inform parents of a later than expected return after an outing.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all member and leaders using WhatsApp for scouting related communications on behalf of Sissinghurst Scout Group

3. Acceptable Use

- WhatsApp should be used for professional communication only, related to Sissinghurst scout groups operations.
- Sissinghurst Scout group WhatsApp accounts should not be used for personal use and should not be used for communication outside of scouting activities.
- Communication should always be respectful, professional, and adhere to the organization's Code of Conduct.
- Sensitive information should never be shared through WhatsApp

4. Privacy and Data Protection

- User data shared through WhatsApp must comply with applicable data protection laws, including GDPR (Members must agree to be part of a WhatsApp group)
- Only members with valid details confirmed in OSM may be part of a Sissinghurst scout group WhatsApp group.
- Conversations and communications on WhatsApp should be treated with confidentiality and should not be shared with unauthorized individuals.

5. Communication Guidelines

- Respond to WhatsApp if it makes sense to do so. However, try not to encourage parents to use WhatsApp rather than getting meeting details from OSM.
- Ensure that the communication tone is professional and respectful.
- Groups which have members (under 18) must have the members parents and at least two leaders (preferably the GLV).
- Avoid sharing confidential information unless necessary, and only with authorized individuals.
- In case of misunderstandings or inappropriate messages, escalate the issue to the group lead volunteer.

7. Monitoring and Compliance

- Sissinghurst Scout Group reserves the right to monitor WhatsApp communication related to scouting operations for compliance with this policy and all official WhatsApp groups are to remain in the Sissinghurst Scout group WhatsApp community
- Any violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including access restrictions to WhatsApp for scouting purposes, or suspension from scouting while an investigation takes place.

8. Termination or Suspension of WhatsApp Access

- Upon leaving the Sissinghurst Scout Group, members must ensure that all group-related conversations and data are deleted from their personal WhatsApp accounts.
- Members must be checked against OSM records on a yearly basis to make sure only relevant people are part of the groups.

9. Policy Review and Updates

- This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its relevance and compliance with legal standards.
- Members will be notified of any updates or changes to this policy.

10. Acknowledgment

By using WhatsApp for Sissinghurst Scout group purposes, you acknowledge that you understand and agree to comply with the guidelines set forth in this policy.