

Reading Hockey Club Social Media and Communication Policies

Objective

This policy supports Reading Hockey Club's core principles and recognises that social media provides an effective platform for discussion and information sharing amongst adult and junior club members. Nevertheless, we also recognise that the use of social media can pose risks to its club members, reputation and compliance with legal obligations. One inappropriate comment can cause distress to one person and impact hundreds of club members. The purpose of this policy is to set out how social media should be used by Reading Hockey Club Members protect club members, minimise risk and ensure our social media is used in a positive, constructive and appropriate manner.

This policy covers all members of Reading Hockey Club and the parents/legal guardians of our junior (under 18) members. Reading Hockey Club also recognises that some of our membership may not have social media accounts. Key news is therefore also posted to our website and the website sends out a weekly email with all the news from the past week.

Scope

Social Media refers broadly to any online media which allows for user participation, interaction, posting, creating and sharing content used by Reading Hockey Club members as part of their membership as well as in a personal capacity where that use may impact members or the reputation of the Club.

Social Media Presence & Other Communication Methods

The Reading Hockey Club website is hosted by Pitchero (<https://www.readinghockeyclub.org.uk/>)

Reading Hockey Club has the following social media presence:

- Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/readinghockeyclub>)
- Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/readinghockey>)
- Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/readinghockeyclub/>)
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/readinghc>)

In addition, the Junior section has:

- Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/readinghccolts/>)
- Twitter (<https://twitter.com/readinghccolts>)
- Tiktok

Board permission is required before any additional social media accounts representing Reading Hockey Club, including teams accounts or bearing its name can be created.

All our social media accounts are connected to club controlled email accounts (admin@readinghockeyclub.org.uk, comms@readinghockeyclub.org.uk or colts@readinghockeyclub.org.uk).

Facebook Page

Our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/readinghockeyclub>) is open to the general public. It is used as a platform for sharing news and events with our broader hockey and local community audience.

Facebook Group

Our Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/readinghockey>) is a 'closed group' for the benefit of Reading Hockey Club members only.

Membership of the group

We have strict controls over membership of that Group. The Group has administrators in place to manage requests for access to the group. The administrators will ensure that those wishing to become part of the group are, or have been, Reading Hockey Club Members or are affiliated to the club in another way (for example regular umpires) or are bona fide supporters of the club known to the Club.

Only over 13s will be allowed to join the group, to comply with the global age restrictions for Facebook.

When applying to join, prospective members are asked to confirm their connection with the club. If unsure, administrators will liaise with relevant club members to ascertain the identity of the person requesting to join. If there is any doubt, membership will be declined.

Purpose of the Group

Group members are encouraged to share match reports, kit for sale, sponsorship requests, social events, hockey questions, hockey news, congratulations, etc in the group.

Admins will also share club news to the group.

Instagram

Our Instagram page (<https://www.instagram.com/readinghockeyclub/>) is used to communicate with club members and the wider hockey community.

Instagram (and Facebook) stories are used to provide match day updates and repost relevant members stories and to celebrate player success.

Instagram is used to communicate key news items to our membership.

Twitter

Twitter (<https://twitter.com/readinghc>) is used to share news items from the website, retweet hockey stories from club members, umpires and opposition clubs, to celebrate player success. Twitter is also used to share match scores directly from Pitchero.

Note - the Twitter audience is typically older than our other social media platforms.

Social Media Administrators

The social media administrators for each platform are restricted to those who need access, while ensuring the teams are big enough to cover the workload.

The Welfare officer is part of the admin team to help moderate posts on Facebook.

For platforms accessed via password, the passwords are updated annually or after a security breach/concern.

Other Communication Methods

In addition to our social media presence we also communicate via email, Pitchero messenger, and WhatsApp.

Email

All members are required to be signed up to Pitchero with their settings set to accept emails.

Emails and Under 18s

All under 18s must be set up on Pitchero with a parent (message coltsadmin@readinghockeyclub.org.uk for help). Children between 13 and 18 can choose to have their own active account, this is encouraged for U18s playing or training with adult teams.

Coaches, captains and squad managers are expected to communicate with young players via Pitchero. This ensures that parents automatically receive a copy of all messages sent to under 18s

Bulk Emails

Bulk emails to the membership are sent via Pitchero.

Typical content includes updates for training, social events, volunteering and EH and South-Central Hockey news.

The Hockey Board and club members (e.g., the fundraising team) can request emails to be sent out. They should provide the email content in good time. Emailing this to comms@readinghockeyclub.org.uk. Emails required approval by two board members and must conform to club communication policies before they are emailed out.

Pitchero Messenger

All club members can message each other via Pitchero Messenger. Pitchero Messenger does not share any personal contact details with other users.

Website

The website should:

- Give prospective new members, the information they need
- Provide a method of contacting board members and volunteers (Pitchero does this in a way that hides the recipients email address). People listed as contact can choose to hide or show their phone number.
- Be the place club members look for important documentation and policy information.
- Keep site visitors up to date with club news.

The website, hosted by Pitchero is used to manage members, games, training, match fees and subs.

Members can provide news articles for publication on the website by emailing them to comms@readinghockeyclub.org.uk. Articles required approval by two board members and must conform to Club communication policies before they are added to the website by the comms team.

The website is also a repository for important club documents:

- The club website has links to important policy documentation.
- AGM reports and other 'members only' documents can be accessed only when members are logged into Pitchero.

Weekly Newsletter

Each Friday morning Pitchero emails any news articles added to the website in the past 7 days to the wider website distribution list.

Noticeboards

Noticeboards are located outdoors on the side of the changing rooms and in the club house. They display relevant and updated information to help club members and visitors.

WhatsApp

Many of our adult teams communicate via WhatsApp. Team captains must ensure:

- All members (of any age) are comfortable being part of a squad WhatsApp group
- For any under 18, that the parents have given consent for the child to be part of the group.
- All parents of under 18s are offered to also be part of the group.

If all these criteria cannot be met, all match day and squad information must be communicated via Pitchero (messenger) and efforts should be taken to ensure no one is allowed to feel excluded.

Club Email Accounts

Members of the board, volunteers and coaches that represent Reading Hockey Club and communicate outside of the club via email may be provided with a club email account. This ensures:

- the club has control of the information; and,
- email history is preserved and can be passed on to the next person taking on the role

All passwords are provided by the Comms Secretary, if a member needs to change the password, it must be a strong password and not one that is used for any other accounts held by that member.

We have 2 types of club email account. Generic (e.g. comms@readinghockeyclub.org.uk) and named (e.g. Judith.Barton@readinghockeyclub.org.uk)

Generic accounts are monitored by more than one person and /or inbound emails are, in the case of the member not being able to monitor the account. The exceptions are [welfare@](mailto:welfare@readinghockeyclub.org.uk) and [finance@](mailto:finance@readinghockeyclub.org.uk).

Communication with Young People

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

<https://www.englandhockey.co.uk/governance/duty-of-care-in-hockey/safeguarding>

Think Before You Post

Posts on Reading Hockey Club's social media (including member responses and member posts that tag Reading Hockey Club), be it photos, comments or links 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.
- Users should not post comments which could be construed as sensitive, objectionable or inflammatory. When using social media, users should respect their audience.
- Don't identify young people (under 18s) in images (i.e. captions to pictures, tagging on Facebook).
- Don't published inappropriate comments about opponents, umpires, officials or other clubs on social media, websites or match reports in the press. In addition to internal disciplinary action, the league may pass on sanctions such as bans and point deductions.
- Communication with young or vulnerable people is covered by England Hockey's Safeguarding & Protection Policy and specific guidance for Clubs.
- Anyone who finds a post inappropriate should email details to the Club Chairman (chairman@readinghockeyclub.org.uk) and the Welfare Officer (welfare@readinghockeyclub.org.uk).
- Do not message members with unnecessary emails and communication. Keep messages coherent and clear.
- Anyone posting should not share confidential or sensitive information about others.
- Personal information, including personal health information, should not be shared without the express permission of the individual involved.

All volunteers and coaches are expected to follow the EH documentation on Think-Before-You post.

Comments that are deemed to flout our guidelines will be removed by the administrators and the person who posted will be informed. Anyone who persistently posts inappropriate content will be investigated & any outcomes will be dealt with by our disciplinary committee, led by the Chairman.