



Liverpool Archdiocesan
Lourdes Pilgrimage
Association

Hospitalité WhatsApp Usage Policy

Name of originator/author:	Policy Review Group
Date issued:	May 2026
Date Reviewed:	-
Date next review due:	May 2028

Purpose of WhatsApp Groups

WhatsApp groups are used by the Hospitalité to support clear, timely and practical communication between team members.

Groups exist to:

- Share essential information related to roles, rotas, meetings, events and pilgrimages
- Communicate updates, reminders and logistical details
- Support coordination between volunteers and leaders

WhatsApp groups are not intended for social media-style interaction or private conversations.

Membership of WhatsApp Groups

1. Each team or functional area may have one official WhatsApp group.
2. Membership is limited to:
 - Active Hospitalité members directly involved in that team or role
 - Designated leaders or coordinators
 - Safeguarding or senior representatives where appropriate
3. Members should only be added by a designated group administrator.
4. Former members must be removed promptly when they:
 - Step down from their role
 - Complete their period of service
 - Request removal
5. WhatsApp groups must not include:
 - Members of the public
 - Friends or family not actively involved in the Hospitalité
 - Under-18s (unless a separate policy, consent process and safeguarding approval applies)

Acceptable Use – What *Can* Be Shared

Members may use the group to share:

- Official Hospitalité announcements or updates
- Practical arrangements (times, meeting points, travel details)
- Role-related questions or clarifications
- Information that helps members carry out their duties safely and effectively

Content should always be:

- Relevant to the purpose of the group
- Clear, factual and respectful
- Appropriate for a professional and volunteer setting

Unacceptable Use – What *Must Not* Be Shared

The following must not be shared in any Hospitalité WhatsApp group:

- Confidential or sensitive information, including:
 - Personal details of pilgrims, volunteers, clergy or staff
 - Medical, pastoral or safeguarding information
- Photos, videos or voice notes of individuals without appropriate consent
- Offensive, discriminatory, political or inflammatory content
- Foul, abusive or derogatory language
- Gossip, speculation or complaints about individuals
- Chain messages, jokes, memes or unrelated content
- Anything that could bring the Hospitalité or Church into disrepute

All members should remember that WhatsApp messages can be screenshotted, forwarded and stored.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Content shared within WhatsApp groups should be treated as confidential to the group.

Messages, images or information must not be forwarded outside the group without permission from a group administrator.

WhatsApp should not be used in place of more secure or appropriate channels where confidentiality is required.

Members are responsible for ensuring their phone is protected (e.g. passcode or biometric lock).

Safeguarding and Conduct

All communication must reflect the Hospitalité's values of respect, dignity and care.

Any safeguarding concerns, inappropriate content or behaviour must be reported immediately to:

- The relevant Hospitalité leader, or
- The Diocesan Safeguarding Team

WhatsApp groups will be moderated, and administrators may remove messages or members if needed.

Group Administration

Each group must have at least two administrators, one of whom should be a leader or coordinator.

Administrators are responsible for:

- Adding and removing members appropriately
- Moderating content and addressing issues promptly
- Reminding members of this policy where necessary

Persistent misuse of a WhatsApp group may result in:

- Removal from the group
- Further discussion with leaders
- Possible impact on volunteering role

Leaving a Group and Withdrawal of Consent

Members may leave the group at any time.

If a member leaves the Hospitalité or changes role, their number will be removed.

Consent to be part of a WhatsApp group can be withdrawn at any point by contacting the group administrator.

Acknowledgement

All members of Hospitalité WhatsApp groups are expected to:

- Read and adhere to this policy
- Communicate responsibly and respectfully
- Support a safe, professional and welcoming environment for all