



# Communications Policy

This policy is not concerned with use of social media, for which reference is made to England Hockey's "Think before you post" guidance at [www.englishockey.co.uk](http://www.englishockey.co.uk).

This Policy concerns oral or written communications between individuals who are members of the Club or associated with it (including players, coaches, committee members, and parents/carers of players).

Guidance notes are not themselves part of the rules but are included to assist with interpretation and understanding of the rules.

## 1. General Behaviours

- 1.1 *You must not offend, intimidate, humiliate or bully another person.*
- 1.2 *You must not be dishonest (including being intentionally misleading).*
- 1.3 *You must not injure the reputation of another person.*
- 1.4 *You must respect and maintain the privacy of others.*
- 1.5 *Your communications must not bring the Club into disrepute.*
- 1.6 *You must not speak or write in a derogatory or disparaging manner about the Club, its members or the people associated with it.*
- 1.7 *Conduct which fails to comply with the above requirements may well amount to misconduct and be subject to the Club's disciplinary procedures.*

## Guidance

You are perfectly entitled to put forward constructive suggestions for improvements at the Club, so long as you do so in a respectful manner.

You are perfectly entitled to raise, privately and politely, any matters of concern about the operation of the Club.

Open criticism or rudeness about the club or individuals within it will not be tolerated since it is damaging to the friendly, harmonious and supportive atmosphere cherished at HCKP.

## **2. Channels of communication**

- 2.1 *Matters concerning discipline/misconduct should be raised with the disciplinary officer, at [hckp.discipline@gmail.com](mailto:hckp.discipline@gmail.com), in accordance with the Club's disciplinary policy and procedures.*
- 2.2 *Matters concerning welfare/safeguarding should be raised with the Club Welfare Officer(s), at [hckp.welfare@gmail.com](mailto:hckp.welfare@gmail.com), in accordance with the Club's Safeguarding Policy.*
- 2.3 *Matters concerning practical arrangements, such as kit or travel for matches should be raised with team managers where possible.*
- 2.4 *If you have a matter that does not fall into any of the categories above, you may consider raising it with the Club Captain at [hckp.clubcaptain@gmail.com](mailto:hckp.clubcaptain@gmail.com). If the Club Captain considers that the matter can more appropriately or conveniently be addressed by someone else, he may ask that person to do so.*
- 2.5 *Before contacting a coach, consider whether it is absolutely necessary or whether an alternative channel of communication would be available.*

## Guidance

You must be completely free to raise any matters concerning discipline or welfare/safeguarding, and should be properly supported in doing so. The purpose of this rule is to ensure that other matters are properly directed. Before sending an

email, please think carefully about whether it is really needed and to whom it should most appropriately be sent.

The coaches may often be the most visible individuals at the Club and the best known to players, particularly juniors. However they are extremely busy and go far above and beyond what they are called to do. It is in the interests of everyone in the Club that they can devote as much of their time as possible to planning and delivering training.

### **3. Whatsapp groups**

- 3.1 *Official club whatsapp groups will be set up for the parents of each age group, each season. The role of these groups is to disseminate information, usually from the coaching or social teams, but can include any club information. Parents are encouraged to use these groups to discuss hockey stories, for help on hockey arrangements, and to ask for information that would benefit everyone.*
- 3.2 *Whatsapp Groups must not be used for critical or disparaging comments about other individuals or the Club. Any matters of criticism should be raised privately using the channels of communication suggested above, rather than in this public forum.*
- 3.3 *The Club reserves the right to suspend or modify the use of a Whatsapp Group, or an individual's participation in it, if it is not used in the intended spirit.*

#### Guidance

The Club supports the use of Whatsapp Groups for the different age groups. Their intended use is for disseminating helpful information and building team spirit within the group. It will generally be unfair and unhelpful to express criticism in this public forum rather than giving the individual concerned the opportunity to respond in a private email.

### **4. Respecting selection decisions**

- 4.1 Attention is drawn to the Club's Selection Policy at <https://www.hcknolepark.com/policies-guidelines>
- 4.2 Decisions taken by coaches as to selection or as to allocation of playing time in matches must not be challenged or questioned.
- 4.3 In accordance with the Selection Policy, where a player is deselected, they (with their parent if U18) will be spoken to face to face at training or the tournament/series of matches.
- 4.4 Otherwise, coaches are not generally to be expected to communicate or explain to parents/carers any decisions which have been explained to their children.
- 4.5 Coaches should endeavour to be sensitive to the feelings of players in relation to such decisions, particularly in the case of juniors.

### Guidance

Coaches should not be asked to justify decisions on selection or allocation of playing time. They must be enabled to exercise their judgments in respect of such decisions in the best interests of the teams and individual players, free from any pressure or attempted influence.

Although Coaches are not required to justify decisions on selection or allocation of playing time, they are expected to be considerate towards the feelings of players adversely affected by them, particularly younger and/or less confident players. For example if a player has been a regular player in the A Team but is to be moved to the B Team, the coach should, within the constraints of the time available and other responsibilities, try to find an opportunity within the training session or at the match to explain the decision to the player and offer some advice on areas for improvement.

## **5. Coaching feedback**

- 5.1 *Players may ask a coach for feedback during a training session or at a match but the coach is not obliged to give any. Whether or when to give feedback is a matter for the judgment of the coach.*

5.2 *Parents should not request feedback on their child's performance from a coach at any time.*

5.3 *Coaches should not be expected to give written feedback outside of training sessions or matches.*

### Guidance

The Club's general approach, based on experience, is that the most effective time for coaches to give feedback is during training sessions or at matches rather than outside of those occasions, and that feedback is most effectively given to junior players themselves rather than to their parents/carers. Players and parents have to place trust in the coaches to exercise their judgment in determining the manner and frequency of that feedback.

The coaches work extremely hard and should not be expected to give up additional time for delivering feedback outside of the scheduled training/match times. Nor should they be requested to provide feedback to parents, since that potentially poses all sorts of difficulties: it takes up additional time for the coaches; it could be thought to be undermining or calling into question the judgment of the coach; it could give rise to perceptions of favouritism in other players or parents.

Coaches should not generally be expected to give feedback outside of training sessions or matches (as any written feedback would necessarily be) since it cannot practicably be given to all and may therefore create unfairness or the impression of unfairness. They may decide (but are in no way obliged) to give additional feedback during a break in, or at the end of, a season, particularly if they are able to do so for all of the players in that group. So too, additional feedback may be considered appropriate in the case of significant player or team achievements such as selection for representative teams or competition success.

## **6. Response times for written communications**

6.1 *Although no specific response times are set, recipients of emails or other messages should endeavour to respond to them reasonably promptly. Unless the matter is urgent, a reasonable timeframe will generally be up to 7-10 days.*

- 6.2 *As a matter of good practice, if it appears that it is not likely to be possible to provide a substantive response within a reasonable timeframe or a specific timeframe indicated by the sender, the recipient should acknowledge receipt of the email promptly and give an indication of the anticipated time for the substantive response.*
- 6.3 *If there is a fixed deadline for a response for a particular reason (for example where the message concerns arrangements for a match on a particular date) this should be explained, but otherwise you should avoid seeking to impose an arbitrary time frame for a response.*

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