



Electronic Communication & Social Media Policy

Our Commitment

Electronic communication is essential for sharing North Belfast Harriers (NBH) news and information with members. All Club communication will be timely, appropriate, and related to NBH business.

This policy outlines how the Club communicates internally and externally and sets standards for the use of digital communication platforms and social media, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

The policy aims to:

- Protect the Club's reputation
- Ensure respectful, safe, and effective communication
- Provide clear guidance on the use of the Club's name and logo

Scope

This policy applies to:

- Committee members
- Coaches, managers, volunteers, and officials
- Athletes and parents/guardians (particularly for junior teams)
- Anyone representing or associated with the Club

Official Communication Channels

The Club may use the following official communication channels:

- Email
- Club website
- WhatsApp groups
- Facebook pages/groups
- Instagram accounts
- TikTok accounts

Only authorised Club representatives may create, manage, or post content on official Club communication channels.

Website

The Club website will include up-to-date information on:

- Competitions and events
- Social activities
- Committees
- Policies, constitution, rules, and by-laws

Standards:

- No offensive or inappropriate content or images will be published.
- Parental/guardian consent must be obtained before publishing photos of children, and identifying information will not be included (in line with the Photography Policy).
- Member feedback will be encouraged to help improve website content.

WhatsApp Policy

WhatsApp groups are to be used **only** for training-related and Club-related communication, such as:

- Training times
- Fixtures
- Changes or cancellations
- Reminders
- Links to run reports, Club kit, and race entries

Guidelines:

- Groups must be administered by an approved coach, manager, or committee member.
- Communication must be respectful and appropriate at all times.
- No criticism of athletes, officials, coaches, or other clubs.
- No arguments, disputes, or complaints are to be aired in group chats.
- For junior teams, communication should be directed to parents/guardians rather than directly to children wherever possible.
- No fundraising, selling merchandise, advertising businesses, or offering/selling race entries after transfer deadlines have closed.

Privacy notice:

Members should be aware that WhatsApp groups are social networks where membership may change over time and where all members can view each other's phone numbers. By joining a group, members do so voluntarily. NBH cannot be held responsible if group members share contact details with third parties.

However club Members should allow other members the courtesy of checking whether or not they are happy for their number to be shared

General Social Media Standards

All social media content associated with the Club must:

- Reflect the Club's values of respect, inclusion, and sportsmanship
- Be suitable for a family-friendly audience
- Comply with relevant laws, including child protection and privacy legislation

The following content is **strictly prohibited**:

- Abusive, discriminatory, or offensive language or images
- Harassment, bullying, or personal attacks
- Criticism of referees, officials, or other clubs
- Inappropriate images or videos, particularly involving minors
- Political or controversial content unrelated to the Club

Posting Content

- Only authorised individuals may post on official Club accounts.
- Photos or videos of junior athletes may only be shared with parent/guardian consent.
- Personal social media accounts must not present opinions as official Club views.
- Race results and achievements should be shared positively and respectfully.

Use of Club Name and Logo

The Club name and logo may only be used for official Club purposes.

Written approval from the Committee is required for:

- Merchandise
- Sponsorship materials
- Fundraising activities
- External promotions or media

The Club logo must not be altered, distorted. It must be used in any way that could damage the Club's reputation.

The Club name or logo must not be used on personal social media accounts in a way that implies official Club endorsement without approval.

Personal Social Media Use

Members are encouraged to support and promote the Club positively. When using personal social media:

- Do not post content that could bring the Club into disrepute.
 - Clearly state that opinions are personal and not those of the Club.
 - Do not share confidential or sensitive Club information.
-

Breaches of Policy

Breaches of this policy may result in:

- Removal of posts or content
- Removal from communication groups
- Loss of posting privileges
- Disciplinary action in line with Club procedures

Serious breaches may be escalated to the Committee for review.

Cyber Bullying and Legal Considerations

Members may face disciplinary action for sending inappropriate electronic communications or posting online content that harasses, offends, intimidates, or humiliates another member, in accordance with Club Codes of Conduct.

Cyber bullying carried out through electronic means (including email, messaging apps, or social media) may constitute a criminal offence and can be reported to the police.

Members who publish false or misleading statements about another person in the public domain may also be liable for defamation.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or as required, to ensure it remains current and effective.

Revised: January 2024