Crystal Palace Fun Runners
WhatsApp & Social Media Guidance Policy

Version 1.1
Approved: 27.10.2026
Review Date: Autumn 2027

Purpose

Our WhatsApp groups are an important way we communicate, organise runs and build our running community. This guidance aims to ensure all members feel welcome, respected and safe while maintaining the friendly, supportive and inclusive atmosphere that makes Crystal Palace Fun Runners a great club.

This policy supports the values of England Athletics and should be read alongside the Club's Inclusion Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Privacy Notice and Club Rules. In addition, club members are expected to abide by any applicable England Athletics Code of Conduct (https://www.englandathletics.org/clubhub/resource/codes-of-conduct/).

Our Principles

Our WhatsApp groups exist to support running, friendship and community. We encourage sharing, encouragement and conversation, but always in a way that is respectful, inclusive and considerate of others.

Everyone shares responsibility for creating an environment where members feel welcome and able to participate.

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1. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All members of Crystal Palace Fun Runners.
- Coaches, Run Leaders and Committee members.
- Any WhatsApp group or social media platform established or administered on behalf of the Club.
- Public social media where members represent or refer to Crystal Palace Fun Runners.

WhatsApp groups established on behalf of the Club are administered by individuals appointed by the Committee.

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2. Purpose of the WhatsApp Group

Our WhatsApp groups are primarily intended to:

- Share run information and meeting arrangements.
- Communicate event details.
- Notify members of changes or cancellations.
- Celebrate members' achievements.
- Build a supportive and welcoming community.

Occasional wider conversations are welcome - however, members should be mindful that the primary purpose of the group is to support Club activities. Excessive messaging or prolonged discussions unrelated to the Club should be avoided.

3. Expected Standards of Behaviour

Members should:

- Be respectful, courteous and welcoming.
- Treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Help create an inclusive environment where everyone feels able to participate.
- Think before posting, recognising that written messages can easily be misunderstood.
- Respect differing views and opinions.
- Be mindful that online behaviour can affect the wellbeing of others just as much as behaviour during Club activities.

Members should avoid:

- Excessive messaging unrelated to the Club (recognising that members may occasionally share wider recommendations or requests).
- Spam, chain messages or repeated promotional content.

The following are deemed unacceptable:

- Offensive, abusive or discriminatory language.
- Personal attacks or arguments.
- Bullying, intimidation or harassment.

Members remain personally responsible for the content they post and should remember that messages may be retained, copied or shared by others.

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4. Respect and Inclusion

Crystal Palace Fun Runners welcomes runners of all backgrounds and abilities.

Members must not post content that discriminates against others on the basis of any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

We expect everyone to contribute to an environment where all members feel respected, valued and included.

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5. Photography and Media

Members should:

- Ask permission before posting photographs where individuals are clearly identifiable.
- Respect the wishes of anyone who does not want their image shared.
- Consider whether another person would reasonably be happy for an image to be shared before posting it.
- Avoid sharing photographs that could embarrass or distress another member.

Group photographs are often taken during Club runs and track sessions, and members may also share photographs on platforms such as Strava. *There is no obligation to appear in these photographs—simply let your Run Leader know if you would prefer not to take part.*

Members are welcome to share individual photographs and achievements within the WhatsApp group. This does not automatically mean they will be shared on the Club's Instagram or other social media channels. Permission will always be sought by the Club's Social Media/ Communications Manager before images are used.

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6. Confidentiality

Members should not:

- Share personal information from the WhatsApp group without permission.
- Publish screenshots of conversations without the consent of those involved.
- Share another member's contact details without their permission.

Whilst every member should respect confidentiality, WhatsApp should not be regarded as a private or confidential platform.

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7. Safety

WhatsApp should never be relied upon as an emergency communication tool.

If someone is injured or there is an emergency during a Club activity:

- Contact the emergency services where appropriate.
- Follow the Club's emergency procedures.
- Inform a Run Leader or Committee member as soon as practicable.

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8. Commercial Posts

Occasional recommendations relating to running are welcome.

However, members should not:

- Regularly advertise businesses or services.
- Use the group primarily for commercial promotion.
- Send unsolicited marketing messages.

Committee approval should be sought before promoting commercial events, fundraising or products on behalf of organisations.

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9. Political and Sensitive Topics

To maintain a welcoming environment for everyone, members should avoid:

- Political campaigning.
- Religious debate.
- Content likely to cause offence or unnecessary division.
- Deliberately controversial discussions unrelated to the Club.

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10. England Athletics Standards

As an England Athletics affiliated Club, members are expected to uphold principles of:

- Respect.
- Inclusion.

- Equality.
- Safe participation.
- Zero tolerance of bullying, discrimination, harassment and abusive behaviour.

Online behaviour should reflect the same standards expected during Club activities.

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11. Administration of the WhatsApp Group

Group administrators may:

- Remind members of this policy.
- Remove inappropriate posts where possible.
- Contact members privately regarding concerns.
- Temporarily restrict posting where necessary.
- Remove members from the group following repeated or serious breaches.

Serious concerns may be referred to the Committee and, where appropriate, the Club Welfare Officer.

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12. Reporting Concerns

If a member experiences or witnesses behaviour that causes concern, they should contact:

- A Run Leader.
- A Committee member.
- The Club Welfare Officers.

Concerns will be treated seriously and handled fairly, proportionately and confidentially wherever possible.

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13. Breaches of this Policy

Most issues can be resolved through a friendly conversation or informal reminder. Formal action will normally only be considered where behaviour is repeated, serious, or inconsistent with the Club's Code of Conduct.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Bullying or harassment.
- Discriminatory comments.
- Repeated inappropriate posts.
- Sharing confidential information.
- Bringing the Club into disrepute through social media.

Depending on the seriousness of the matter, action may include:

- Informal reminder.
- Formal warning.
- Removal from the WhatsApp group.
- Referral to the Committee.
- Action under the Club's disciplinary procedures.

The Committee reserves the right to interpret and apply this guidance where necessary to maintain a safe, respectful and inclusive environment.

The THINK Test

Before posting, ask yourself:

- **T** – Is it **True**?
- **H** – Is it **Helpful**?
- **I** – Is it **Inclusive**?
- **N** – Is it **Necessary**?
- **K** – Is it **Kind**?

If the answer to any of these questions is **no**, please reconsider before posting.

Our Aim

We want our WhatsApp community to reflect the same welcoming, supportive and inclusive atmosphere that exists on every Crystal Palace Fun Runners session. Every member plays an important role in creating and maintaining that culture.
Crystal Palace Fun Runners is an England Athletics affiliated Club. Where appropriate, concerns arising under this policy will be managed in accordance with those procedures.