

**Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Allotment Group
WhatsApp Media Policy
Aligned with the Council's Social Media Policy**

1. Purpose

This policy ensures that communication within the allotment WhatsApp group is respectful, safe, and aligned with the values and standards of Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council. It supports effective information sharing while protecting members' privacy and wellbeing.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the allotment group using WhatsApp for group communication. It complements the Council's overarching Social Media Policy and must be read in conjunction with it.

3. Moderation & Oversight

A designated councillor and/or the Parish Manager will act as the group moderator. The moderator is responsible for:

- Enforcing group rules.
- Removing inappropriate content or members.
- Escalating serious issues to the Council
- Ensuring safeguarding and privacy standards are upheld.

4. Consent & Privacy

- Members must give consent before being added to the group.
- Phone numbers are visible to all members—respect each other's privacy. • Do not share personal information (e.g. addresses, photos) without permission.
- Chats may be cleared periodically to maintain privacy and reduce clutter.

5. Group Rules

✓ Do:

- Be kind, respectful, and inclusive.
- Share relevant gardening or community-related content.
- Use clear, polite language.
- Ask questions and offer help.
- Respond only when necessary (e.g. RSVP).

✗ Don't:

- Post offensive, abusive, or misleading content.
- Share spam, chain messages, or “forwarded many times” content.
- Share the group invite link publicly.
- Use the group for personal grievances or non-group matters.
- Comment on individuals, policies, or decisions in a negative or divisive way.

6. Safeguarding & Children

- Children under 16 should not be added to the group.
- If children are involved in group-related activities:
 - Parental consent is required for communication or image sharing.
 - All communication must be transparent and appropriate.
 - Parents should be copied into any messages involving their children.

7. Use of Images

- Do not share photos of others without explicit consent.
- Children must not be identifiable in shared images unless written parental consent is obtained. If not obtain please cover the child's face with an emoji sticker)
- Images must be respectful and appropriate to the context (e.g. gardening, events).

8. Communication Guidelines

- WhatsApp is for group-wide communication only.
- Avoid one-to-one messaging unless necessary and appropriate.
- Use the group for:
 - Meeting reminders.
 - Weather or safety alerts.
 - Group updates.
- Do not use WhatsApp to:
 - Debate policies or decisions.
 - Replace formal communication channels.
 - Share personal opinions or private messages.

Legal & Policy Compliance

- All members must follow:
 - WhatsApp's Terms of Service
 - The UK Data Protection Act 2018
 - The Council's Social Media Policy (2024)
- Members must not:
 - Disclose confidential information.
 - Use defamatory, libellous, or offensive language.
 - Misrepresent the Council's views.

9. Leaving the Group

- Participation is voluntary.
- Members may leave the group at any time.
- Exits are private—only the moderator will be notified.

