



Digital Communications Policy

Introduction

This Digital Communications Policy sets out guidelines for employees, volunteers, and representatives of Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group when using digital communication platforms, including but not limited to WhatsApp, email, SMS, and instant messaging apps. The purpose is to ensure safe, secure, and professional communication that aligns with the charity's values and legal obligations.

Purpose

The objectives of this policy are to:

Ensure responsible and appropriate use of digital communication channels.

Protect the confidentiality and security of sensitive information.

Maintain professional boundaries when using messaging platforms.

Comply with data protection laws and safeguarding requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, trustees, volunteers, and representatives of Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group who use digital communication tools for charity-related purposes, including:

WhatsApp, Signal, Telegram, and other messaging apps.

Email and SMS.

Social media direct messaging.

Video conferencing platforms (e.g., Zoom, Teams, Google Meet).

General Guidelines

Digital communication should be professional, respectful, and in line with Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group's values.

Confidential or sensitive information must not be shared via informal messaging platforms unless necessary and appropriately encrypted.

Any external communication on behalf of Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group must be approved by relevant leadership.

Keep personal and professional communication separate where possible.

Avoid sending messages outside of working hours unless urgent.

WhatsApp & Messaging Apps

Only use WhatsApp or similar apps for charity-related communication when necessary.

Groups must have a designated administrator responsible for managing content and access.

Personal phone numbers should not be shared without consent.

Do not share confidential or sensitive data in group chats.

Avoid discussing confidential matters in non-secure messaging platforms.

Remove members who no longer require access to charity-related chats.

Email & SMS Communications

Official charity email addresses should be used for all work-related correspondence.

Personal email accounts must not be used for charity business.

Be mindful of GDPR when collecting and storing contact details.

Avoid sending sensitive information via email unless encrypted.

SMS should only be used for urgent messages and not for detailed or confidential discussions.

Safeguarding & Digital Communication

Digital communication with beneficiaries, particularly children or vulnerable adults, must be in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Avoid one-to-one private messaging unless necessary; where possible, include another staff member in the conversation.

Maintain professional language and boundaries at all times.

Any safeguarding concerns arising from digital communication must be reported immediately.

Security & Data Protection

Ensure devices used for charity communications have password protection.

Enable two-factor authentication where possible.

Regularly update software and security settings on communication devices.

Delete or archive old messages that are no longer needed for operational purposes.

Consequences of Misuse

Misuse of digital communication platforms may result in:

Restricted access to charity communication channels.

Disciplinary action for employees and volunteers.

Termination of association with Chichester and Arun Down Syndrome Group in severe cases.

Review & Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually to remain current with technological and legal developments.

Approval and Update

This Digital Communications Policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on 26th June 2025

It will be reviewed regularly and updated as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

Review Control:

Reviewed By	Date Reviewed	Date of next Review