**Broadstone Scout Group (BSG) Communication Policy**

Communication from Group sections, leaders to Parents/carers

* Primary communication will always be via email, sent to the email addresses recorded on OSM, our Scout management system. This can be changed by logging into the platform and choosing the ‘personal details’ option under the relevant young person’s name.
* If we need to talk in person, we will use the phone numbers recorded on OSM to call, or speak to them on the section’s night.
* Where possible, we will use Broadstone Scout Group email addresses, identifiable by the ‘@broadstonescouts.org’ domain name at the end of the address. Our platform will also send messages with the ‘@onlinescoutmanager.co.uk’ domain name. We recommend that both domains are added to your ‘safe senders list’ or whitelist them so they do not end up in spam folders.
* Some sections may use WhatsApp and other social media platforms for an additional communication channel at their discretion. Please be advised that these are run under the terms and conditions of the provider and only moderated by the leaders set as Admins. As such any issues that may arise on those channels must be taken up with the provider or moderators.
* We are exploring the use of WhatsApp Communities as an official BSG channel- this is in trial stages – please see the WhatsApp section for our specific policy relating to this.

Communication from Parents/carers to Group sections, leaders

* Parents, guardians and carers may contact leaders by email where necessary; each section has a specific contact email address e.g. Brookdaletroop@broadstonescouts.org which will forward to that section’s leadership team. Leaders may also have their own BSG email addresses which you can use for private scout related issues.
* Team leaders may also give out a private contact number, and key members of the overall Group leadership team, e.g. the Group Lead Volunteer will also have numbers for you to contact them. Please remember that they are personal contact numbers and that they are volunteers, so please consider whether an email may be more appropriate.
* We rely on OSM for the latest information for our Young People, so it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian/carer to make sure that the information provided is up to date and accurate, especially as it involves emergency contacts and allergy information.

**WhatsApp Community trial**

We are currently trialling the new WhatsApp community option with two troops. This allows us:

1. A mechanism to send notifications to both troops at the same time, allowing us to save time with the reposting.
2. the ability to set up sub chats for different things, for example, group camp, parent helpers, etc., which users can easily see and join if relevant to them.
3. Easily switch out leaders/moderators/members between chats as the troops change and grow over time.
4. Manageable oversight and a more co-ordinated, modern approach to communication, as well as a means to bring parents and leaders together as a community rather than as just a contact list.

BSG WhatsApp Policy

* Users of WhatsApp are bound first and foremost to the terms and conditions of the provider. BSG are unable to assist with issues relating to the functionality of the app or website, or any issues relating to breaches of their code of conduct.
* The nature of WhatsApp means that by joining our community or chats each member’s phone number will be visible to all other members in those conversations. Users should consider if this is acceptable to them before joining our community.
* Users may be contacted directly by other users in the group. Unfortunately there is no way to prevent this, however there will still be the usual options in the app to report and block other users.
* Chats in the BSG Community will be run by leaders as admins, and will have an AGSL or GSL present for additional oversight. Only chats in the community should be considered official, so beware of copies and fakes!
* Chat Admins (leaders) will moderate conversations in accordance with our own guidelines and safeguarding policies, and will use their discretion to remove comments and users where needed.
* Community Admins moderate and manage the wider collection of conversations, and will remove individuals and conversations from the community in accordance to our own guidelines and safeguarding policies.
* People can join the Community via a link. This is usually given out to new parents/helpers/guardians/carers/leaders only, however it will allow anyone to join, so it is possible that non-scouting people may get hold of it. For this reason, all chats will be set to ‘apply to join’ (with the exception of the help channel) and it will be down to the admins of each chat to verify the suitability of the applicant for membership to their conversation.
* **Conduct.** If there is an issue regarding the conduct of another member of the chat, the first stop is with the leaders/admins of the chat. Contact them directly to explain the concern. If a user is unhappy with the resolution or the issue is involving a leader/admin, the AGSL is the next stop. For assistance with who that is for that section, ask in the help channel.
* **Media** posted on the channel. All media (photos, videos, documents) posted in a chat is visible to everyone in that chat, and can potentially be copied and used off of the platform. By sharing, a user is putting it into the public domain, so they should consider if the media is suitable and whether they are happy for it to be shared.
* Additionally, by posting media in the community BSG is assuming user permission to use it elsewhere, for example: images for the website or Facebook page- but will only do so if it doesn’t breach our safeguarding policy- for example if someone featured in the image does not have camera permissions set in OSM.
* If users don’t want their images used by BSG outside the WhatsApp platform, they can: let us know when posting, contact the leaders, make sure their permissions are set on OSM to reflect that, or don’t post them! If you see media anywhere on BSG’s digital assets that shouldn’t be there, contact the web admin and they will remove it ASAP.