



# CLUB COMMUNICATIONS POLICY 2026

VERSION 1 - JANUARY 2026



ROOTED IN TRADITION. DRIVEN BY COMMUNITY.

## Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels GAA — Communication Policy

### 1. Purpose & Scope

This Communication Policy sets out how Dunshaughlin & Royal Gaels GAA (“the Club”) will communicate with members, players, parents/guardians, volunteers, officials, and the wider community. It aims to ensure that all official communication is:

- Clear, transparent, respectful, timely, and appropriate.
- Consistent with the values and principles of the GAA, including respect, community identity, player welfare, teamwork and inclusiveness; and
- Compliant with legal and safeguarding requirements, particularly with respect to the protection of underage members.

This policy applies to all Club communications platforms and to all Club members acting in an official capacity.

### 2. Communication Channels & Their Use

#### 2.1 Spond — Official & Exclusive Team Communication Platform

Spond is the sole authorised platform for all routine and official communication between coaches, mentors, players, and parents/guardians.

All team-related communication must take place on Spond, including but not limited to:

- Fixture details and changes
- Training schedules and locations
- Attendance and availability tracking
- Team announcements
- Internal updates and notices
- Messages between coaches, mentors, players, and parents/guardians

All coaches, team managers, mentors, players, and parents/guardians are required to:

- Be registered on Spond
- Regularly check the app for updates relevant to their team
- Use Spond as the default and primary method of communication

No alternative messaging platforms (including WhatsApp, SMS, or social media) are to be used for routine team communication.

#### **Rationale:**

**Spond provides a secure, structured, and trackable communication system that ensures clarity, accountability, safeguarding, and organisational efficiency. Using one central platform reduces miscommunication and supports best practice in team management and child protection.**



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## **2.2 WhatsApp — Emergency Use & Community-Wide Information Only**

WhatsApp is not an approved platform for routine team communication and must not be used as an alternative to Spond.

WhatsApp may be used only in the following limited circumstances:

- Emergency alerts
- Last-minute fixture or training cancellations (e.g. due to weather)
- Urgent, time-critical match-day notifications where immediate visibility is required

### **WhatsApp Group Rules**

- All WhatsApp groups must be admin-led and closed (no open discussion threads).
- Messages must be brief, factual, and operational only.
- WhatsApp must not be used for:
  - Daily planning
  - Team discussions
  - Feedback or complaints
  - Sensitive or safeguarding-related matters
- All communication must remain respectful, relevant, and age-appropriate.
- Any follow-up communication must revert to Spond or email.

**Rationale: Restricting WhatsApp use minimises the risk of informal, unmonitored communication, reduces confusion, and supports safeguarding standards**

## **2.3 WhatsApp Community — Club-Wide Information Sharing**

A WhatsApp Community will be developed for club-wide information sharing only.

The WhatsApp Community will include:

- Coaches and mentors, FLOs, Parents/guardians, Players (where age-appropriate, Wider club community members)

The purpose of the WhatsApp Community is to share:

- Vital club announcements
- Event reminders
- Emergency or critical information affecting the wider community

The WhatsApp Community:

- Is not a replacement for Spond
- Will not be used for team-specific communication
- Will be admin-controlled with limited posting permissions

All team-specific and routine communication will continue to take place exclusively via Spond.

**Rationale: The WhatsApp Community allows rapid dissemination of important club-wide information while maintaining Spond as the single, official platform for team communication.**



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## **2.4 Clubforce — Lotto & Fundraising**

Clubforce will continue to be used for lotto entries, lotto weekly email and related fundraising activities only. All other communications should not be conducted through Clubforce, and promotional messaging about lotto should comply with appropriate fundraising guidelines.

## **2.5 Social Media & Public Platforms**

The Club's official social media accounts (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) are managed by the Club Communications Team and should be used for:

- Public club news
- Fixtures, results, and event promotion
- Celebrating achievements
- Sharing approved images and club content

### **Standards & Expectations:**

- The tone must be positive, respectful, and reflect the GAA's values.
- Only authorised administrators may post or moderate official accounts.
- Personal opinions that could be interpreted as official Club positions should not be posted on official channels.

### **Underage Welfare Requirements:**

- Parental/guardian consent must be obtained before posting photographs of underage members.

## **3. Safeguarding & Data Protection**

### **3.1 Communications with Underage Members**

Club officials, coaches, volunteers, and other adults should not engage directly with underage players on personal messaging platforms (e.g., WhatsApp, SMS, social media) unless explicitly agreed with parents/guardians.

All official communications with underage players should:

- Be sent via approved channels (e.g., Spond or email to parents/guardians).
- Avoid any private or direct messaging where possible.

### **3.2 Personal Data & GDPR**

The Club collects and uses personal data (e.g., names, contact details, attendance) only for legitimate Club purposes. The Club will:

- Store personal data securely.
- Use it only for the purpose it was collected.
- Respect individuals' rights to privacy and requests for data removal.



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#### 4. Code of Conduct for Communication

All Club members using official communication channels must:

- Communicate respectfully, clearly, and professionally.
- Not post defamatory, offensive, discriminatory, or harassing content.
- Not disclose Club confidential information.
- Uphold the Club reputation and GAA values in all public or internal communications.

Guidelines include:

- Avoid political or controversial topics.
- Do not respond impulsively or aggressively to negative feedback online.
- Forward serious concerns or complaints to the PRO or the Executive Committee.

Breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action in line with Club and GAA procedures.

#### 5. Roles & Responsibilities

##### 5.1 Club Communications Team / PRO

- Oversee all official communications.
- Maintain and monitor official social media accounts.
- Approve content before publication.
- Train administrators and ensure compliance with this policy.

##### 5.2 Team Managers & Coaches

- Ensure Spond is used for team communication and attendance tracking.
- Direct members and parents to official channels for updates.
- Escalate any inappropriate communication issues to the Club PRO.

##### 5.3 Members, Parents & Guardians

- Respect the purpose of each communication platform.
- Keep personal and Club communications separate.
- Report any concerns about communications conduct to the designated Club officer.

#### 6. Review & Updates

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Club Executive Committee to reflect evolving communication platforms, Club needs, regulatory changes, and feedback.