

WhatsApp Messaging Policy

In order for the Pilgrimage to run more smoothly we aim to set up WhatsApp groups between the Redcap volunteers and their Team and Group Leaders. The reasons and benefits of this are specified below:

- More effective communication between team leaders, groups leaders and the volunteers.
- To be able to send out up to date information, changes of arrangements and reminders.
- To report sickness, lateness, an inability to be on duty, or to seek practical advice.
- Emergency situations

On arrival in Lourdes, the Youth Director will create WhatsApp groups for all the Redcap teams (not including those whose consent has not been received). Each WhatsApp Group will include the associated Group Leaders (e.g. Teacher, Parish Leader, etc), Team Leaders, Youth Director, Pilgrimage Administrator and the Chief Redcap. At the end of the Pilgrimage all group WhatsApp chats will be ended and saved by the Youth Director.

Consent

All volunteers must provide personal consent to being included in the WhatsApp groups prior to them being added. In addition, prior written consent must also be obtained from the parent / legal guardian of each person under the age of 18. Parents / legal guardians should approve and have access to all sanctioned social networking that is directed at children and young people

When written consent is being sought the potential benefits and risks should be explained before deciding on whether or not to receive the WhatsApp communication.

Consent to be contacted by WhatsApp messaging can be withdrawn at any time and will be implemented without delay.

Administration

In addition to the appointed Group Leader(s) (i.e. Teacher, Parish Priest, etc) responsible for the young person in Lourdes, the Diocese also appoints two of its named Pilgrimage Managers to oversee and administer all messaging groups. These named individuals are:

- Elizabeth Uwalaka (Pilgrimage Administrator)
- Katrina Lavery (Pilgrimage Youth Director)

Risk Management

In order to safely implement this working practice amongst our volunteers, the following risks have been assessed and mitigated:

- **Intended / Unintended Recipients** Chat group members correct mobile number will be verified prior to groups chat go-live. Communication by electronic means is only approved via

these channels, meaning there is a greatly reduced chance of sending to unintended recipients (i.e. as may be the case with direct MSS messaging or email).

- **Content sent in haste that cannot be retracted** All leaders and managers who use this service will be appropriately trained in its use. Furthermore, groups chats will be monitored by Group Leaders, and Pilgrimage Management.
- **Storage of Content as 'Records'**. No formal 'records' will rely upon the use of the service. However, an exported backup will be retained by the pilgrimage for later verification if required.
- **Information not being sent securely via the internet.** The reason for the selection of WhatsApp over other free platforms is its use of End-to-End encryption techniques which provide enhanced security of data and content to all users.
- **Including minors in volunteer messages.** Parental consent will be obtained before any volunteer under the age of 18 is included in any group messages. Individual consent will also be obtained from any volunteer aged 16 or over.
- **Monitoring of Communications.** To ensure appropriate use of the WhatsApp chat groups, training will be given to all involved prior to the pilgrimage and the group will be monitored by pilgrimage management.

Training

Training will be provided, prior to the commencement of the WhatsApp group, to all parties involved, specifying both appropriate and inappropriate uses of the WhatsApp group.

Inappropriate Use, Incident Management and Reporting

Any instance of inappropriate use of WhatsApp groups will be immediately investigated by the Pilgrimage Management Team, and categorised as one of the following:

- **Inappropriate Use which is of a Safeguarding Nature**
Any instance of inappropriate use which **is of a safeguarding nature** will be immediately reported to the Pilgrimage Safeguarding Officer and handled in line with the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- **Inappropriate Use which is not of a Safeguarding Nature**
Any instance of inappropriate use which **is not** of a safeguarding nature (such as communications not related to the pilgrimage or its activities, personal conversations, pictures, jokes or anything of a personal nature) will be handled by the Pilgrimage Management Team, who will determine the appropriate action. In instances where the content is rude, offensive or potentially libellous, a copy will be immediately exported as a record, prior to the item(s) being deleted from the group / visibility of other users.