

Online Communication, Images & Digital Conduct Policy

1. Purpose

The Walrus Cruise uses digital communication and images to support its charitable objectives, including:

- building community among Crew and Leaders;
- encouraging and supporting young people in faith and life;
- recording memories of Cruises;
- communicating safely and transparently with parents and supporters.

This policy sets out clear expectations to ensure that all online communication and use of images:

- safeguards children and young people;
- protects Leaders and volunteers from misunderstanding or false allegation;
- complies with safeguarding, data protection and charity best practice;
- reflects the Christian ethos and values of The Walrus Cruise.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding Policy, which takes precedence in the event of any safeguarding concern

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- all Trustees, Leaders and volunteers;
- all Crew (with expectations proportionate to age);
- all online and digital communication connected with The Walrus Cruise, whether during or outside a Cruise.

It is particularly relevant where communication involves children or young people under the age of 18.

3. Core Principles

All online activity and use of images must:

- honour and glorify God;
- prioritise the safety and welfare of children and young people;
- be open, accountable and transparent;
- avoid situations that could be misinterpreted or misused;
- comply with consent, safeguarding and data protection requirements.

4. Approved Communication Channels

4.1 Public and Group-Based Communication

Communication between Leaders and Crew must be *public or group-based* wherever possible. Acceptable examples include:

- official Walrus Cruise social media pages or groups;
- group messaging (e.g. WhatsApp) including multiple Leaders and/or parents;
- group email with parents copied.

Approved platforms are those officially established or explicitly agreed by the Commodore or Trustees for Walrus Cruise use.

4.2 One-to-One Communication

One-to-one communication between a Leader and a Crew member under 18 should be avoided.

Where one-to-one contact is unavoidable (e.g. pastoral support or welfare matters):

- another adult (preferably a Leader or parent) must be included or informed;
- communication must be appropriate, factual and supportive;
- records must be retained.

5. Prohibited Communication Methods

The following must not be used for Leader–Crew communication:

- platforms that delete messages automatically or do not allow records to be kept (e.g. Snapchat disappearing messages);
- private social media messaging between a Leader and a single minor;
- video calls where participants are in private spaces such as bedrooms or bathrooms.

6. Video and Voice Communication

Video or voice communication involving minors must:

- involve at least three participants;
- take place in clearly public or shared spaces;
- follow the same transparency and record-keeping principles as written communication.

7. Digital Images and Video

7.1 General Principles

Images and video are an important way of recording, sharing and celebrating the life of The Walrus Cruise. They must always be handled in a manner that:

- safeguards children and young people;
- respects individual dignity and privacy;
- reflects the charity's Christian ethos;
- complies with consent, safeguarding and data protection requirements.

7.2 Consent

- Parental consent for the taking and use of images of children is obtained through the booking process.
- Any refusal or limitation of consent must be respected.
- Consent may be withdrawn, subject to safeguarding, legal and archival considerations.

7.3 Appropriate Content

Images and video must:

- show participants appropriately dressed and behaving safely;
- avoid situations that could reasonably be misinterpreted;
- reflect positive, respectful participation in Walrus Cruise activities.

7.4 Rights in Images and Video

The Walrus Cruise recognises that images and video submitted to the charity may have been taken by a range of people, and that the charity may not always know who holds copyright in a particular image or recording.

By submitting images or video for Walrus Cruise purposes (including uploading material to shared folders or albums), the person submitting the material confirms that, to the best of their knowledge, they have the right to do so and grants The Walrus Cruise a non-exclusive, royalty-free licence to:

- store, organise and manage the material;
- share it privately with Crew and parents;

- use it in connection with the charity’s activities, including communication, promotion and fundraising;
- retain selected material as part of the charity’s curated historical archive.

This licence does not transfer ownership of copyright and is exercised subject to consent, safeguarding and pastoral considerations.

7.5 Storage and Retention

- Images and video must be stored securely and handled responsibly.
- Material should be retained in line with its intended purpose, recognising that purposes may include short-term operational use, private sharing, public communication, or longer-term archival retention.
- Images selected for long-term retention may be kept for historical and educational purposes in accordance with the Archive & Heritage Statement.
- Personal devices may be used to capture images where appropriate. Images should be transferred to approved Walrus Cruise storage as soon as reasonably practicable, and unnecessary long-term retention on personal devices should be avoided.

8. Social Media Conduct

All users representing The Walrus Cruise online must:

- communicate respectfully and truthfully;
- avoid discriminatory, abusive, threatening, sexual, bullying or offensive content;
- avoid political campaigning or commentary unrelated to the charity’s purposes;
- remember that online content is public and permanent.

Leaders must not:

- initiate ‘friend’ requests to individual minors;
- engage in behaviour that blurs professional boundaries.

9. Record Keeping

Where communication relates to:

- safeguarding concerns;
- discipline or complaints;
- pastoral support;

records must be retained in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Data Protection requirements.

10. Breaches of This Policy

Any concern or alleged breach of this policy must be reported to:

- the Commodore; or
- the Welfare Officer; or
- another Trustee if appropriate.

Breaches may be dealt with under the Complaints Procedure, Safeguarding Policy, or Volunteer Leader Policy, depending on severity.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if required by changes in law, safeguarding guidance, or operational practice.

Last Updated: February 2026