GUIDELINE ON THE USE OF
WHATSAPP IN CHI@CRUMLIN

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1.0   Introduction

WhatsApp is an instant messaging service for smartphone mobile devices that relies on the internet for messages to be delivered. WhatsApp is used in place of regular short message service (SMS) text messages. SMS text messages are non-instant messages that rely on mobile phone network(s) to be delivered. WhatsApp allows for the same message to be sent to 256 people at once. The number of people per SMS text message group is dependent on the network.

WhatsApp is advertised as a product that 'supports sending and receiving a variety of media: text, photos, videos, documents and location, as well as voice calls'[1]. There is some debate as to whether WhatsApp is consider social media or a cross-platform messaging service. The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) state 'Social media consists of the internet or web-based technologies that allow people to connect, communicate and interact in real time to share and exchange information.[2]' As WhatsApp allows for files and messages to be delivered, via the internet, to 256 people at once it is considered a form of social media in this guideline.

WhatsApp is being used by both the Clinical Nurses Managers (CNM's) and staff nurses in CHI@Crumlin to arrange shifts (at short notice), social events, leave and make staff aware of education sessions. Given the use of WhatsApp by nursing staff it was determined that a guideline was needed to clearly set out the correct use of this method of communication.

This guideline should be read in conjunction with the NMBI's 'Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics'[3] and 'Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Social Media and Social Networking'[2].

2.0   Applicable to

All nursing staff who work in CHI @ Crumlin, Crumlin.

3.0   Objectives of the Guidelines

To clearly set out how WhatsApp is to be used by all nursing staff in their professional role. This guideline does not apply to nursing staff who use WhatsApp for personal or private matters that are not related or relevant to the work setting.

4.0   Guideline

- ➢ There will be a WhatsApp groups recognised by CHI@Crumlin

- ➢ There will be one WhatsApp group for each clinical area

- ➢ Information that can be shared on these two groups are limited to: shifts and education

  - • Shifts:
    - - Requests for nursing staff, who are able and available, to come in on their rostered day off
    - - To inform staff of the option of a flex-off/annual leave
- ➢ The two WhatsApp groups are not to be used to share any information on
  - • Patients or patient information (including or excluding their name, MRN or Date of birth)

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- Family members or friends of patients
- Pictures of patients or family members
- Social events
- Non-related work messages
- Any management issues (i.e. cleanliness of unit, trolley checks, money owed for kitty)
- GIFs, jokes, pictures etc.
- Complaints

➢ Do not acknowledge that you have received the message or that it is not relevant to you or that you cannot facilitate the request. Only reply if you are able to facilitate the request that has been sent out or the sender asks you to reply.

➢ Other WhatsApp groups can be formed by members of the nursing staff but they will not be recognised by the ward

➢ WhatsApp is a mode of communication and therefore professional standards, as per the NMBI's 'Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics'[3] must be maintained at all times by all nursing staff.

➢ Any member of nursing staff that feels the guideline is not being adhered to must inform Lorraine O'Reilly (Clinical Nurse Manger III of the PICU) or if applicable the acting Clinical Nurse Manager III for the PICU.

Think about it this way: If you would not post it on your front door for everyone to see then do not post it on WhatsApp. You may be able to delete messages from WhatsApp but screen shots of messages stay forever!

5.0   Implementation Plan

All nursing staff to be informed of the guideline via posters, communication diary and staff meetings. Message will also be sent out to each WhatsApp group informing nursing staff of the new guideline.

6.0   Evaluation and Audit

Evaluation of the guideline will be on-going as any member of nursing staff that feels the guideline is not being adhered will need to inform your manager

7.0   References

WhatsApp (2018) About WhatsApp accessed from www.whatsapp.com/about/ on 11th September 2018

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2013) Guidance to Nurses and Midwives on Social Media and Social Networking accessed from https://www.nmbi.ie/nmbi/media/NMBI/Publications/Guidance-to-Nurses-Midwives-on-Social-Media-Social-Networking.pdf?ext=.pdf on 11th September 2018

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2014) Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics accessed from https://www.nmbi.ie/nmbi/media/NMBI/Publications/Code-of-professional-Conduct-and-Ethics.pdf?ext=.pdf   on 11th September 2018