



POLICY AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE ACCEPTABLE USE OF FORM PARENTAL WHATSAPP GROUPS

Policy and Code of Conduct for the acceptable use of Form Parental WhatsApp Groups

Applies to:

- the whole school, inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours;
- all users of parental WhatsApp Groups

Availability:

This policy is made available via the School website.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher.
- The Proprietor undertakes a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than two years from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require. The key priorities from the review are incorporated into the School Development Plan on an annual basis.

Reviewed by:



Michelle Jenkin (Headmistress)

Date: 20th October 2025



Kane Andrews (Proprietor)

Date: 20th October 2025

Related Documents:

- Parental Code of Conduct
- School documents relation to the terms and conditions of offering and maintain a place at the School

Policy and Code of Conduct for the acceptable use of Form Parental WhatsApp Groups

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1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This document aims to provide guidance related to the use of parental/carer form WhatsApp groups, and similar chat groups. In doing so, we aim to:

- ensure that groups are used and administrated effectively;
- promote a safe and inclusive environment; and
- provide guidance on acceptable use.

2. INTRODUCTION TO PARENT/CARER FORM WHATSAPP GROUPS

Parent/Carer WhatsApp groups, which operate independently of the School, can be a particularly useful way to connect parents in a particular form group. Such groups are set up voluntarily by the parents in each form and endeavour to include all parents with children in the form. There is no requirement to join these groups and participation is voluntary.

These group chats are used as an efficient means of:

- receiving relevant updates and reminders about school events that have been published in the newsletter,
- the sharing of information that is of general interest to all parents in the class; or
- a forum to offer any supportive parenting advice.

The messages in such WhatsApp groups come from parents/carers in their personal capacity. The School does not post directly on any WhatsApp form groups, nor do we have 'parent advocates' who post messages on our behalf.

3. ACCEPTABLE USE – CODE OF CONDUCT

Most of the time, group chats will be a beneficial resource and an enjoyable environment to be in. However, these same spaces also have the power to inflame; they are a potential source of misinformation and can fuel bad feeling. At worst, online parent/carer communication groups have the potential to create unnecessary concerns.

3.1. Group Administrators

Each group should have a parent/carer administrator/moderator who is responsible for monitoring posts in order to oversee and ensure appropriate use; Any person acting as administrator/moderator should satisfy themselves that they are comfortable in their obligations of this role. It is imperative that the name of the administrator/moderator is notified.

3.2. Guidance for acceptable use

Most of the time, group chats will be a beneficial resource and an enjoyable environment to be in. However, these same spaces also have the power to inflame; they are a potential source of misinformation and can fuel bad feeling. At worst, online parent/carer communication groups have the potential to create unnecessary concerns.

In order to prevent any offense or upset, we require that everyone using these groups within our school community to read and follow the notes and guidelines listed below:

Policy and Code of Conduct for the acceptable use of Form Parental WhatsApp Groups

- The group should never be used as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a member of staff, child or parent in the class or school.
- Messages posted on the WhatsApp Year Groups should be supportive and respectful of all other group users.
- The group is not a political platform for airing opinions on current affairs.
- The group should not be used for private conversations with anyone else using the group.
- Bullying is not to be tolerated and should be reported.
- Only parents/carers of a child in that form, should be invited to the group.
- All group members should ensure mutual respect and cultural sensitivity between all its members.
- Private messages between a parent and a Teacher must not be screenshot and posted on WhatsApp/Social Media – this breaks both confidentiality and trust.
- Links to other online information posted in WhatsApp messages should only be made to sites which are relevant to school, education or extra-curricular activities. Links and other requests should not be posted if they relate to commercial services, unrelated campaigns or personal appeals.
- No one is under an obligation to chat or respond to questions posed.
- Some group members may message you directly. There is no obligation to answer. If this direct personal approach does not suit you, please let the individual know.
- If any group member considers a message inappropriate, they should contact the person who posted it and seek removal of the message if desired. It is expected that parents and carers using any form of social media or messaging:
 - respect the ethos, vision and values of our school;
 - work together with staff in the best interests of our pupils;
 - treat all members of our school community with respect – setting a good example with speech and behaviour;
 - seek a peaceful solution to any issue;
 - approach a member of school staff to help resolve any issues of concern.

4. Inappropriate use

To avoid uncomfortable or unpleasant situations for other group users, parents/carers are therefore expected to consider the nature of their WhatsApp post carefully as any opinions expressed are the opinions of individual members and may not be representative of the whole group.

Please note, the School considers the following WhatsApp activity inappropriate:

- abusive, personal comments or open criticism about staff, pupils or other parents or any member of the school community;
- displays of anger including swearing, or using offensive language;
- bringing the School into disrepute;
- posting aggressive, defamatory or libellous comments;
- using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children;
- the circulation of messages, whether circulated or sent directly, with abusive or personal comments about staff or pupils;
- threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language;

5. RAISING A CONCERN

For individual concerns regarding pupil performance, school policies, staff conduct etc. please raise any issues directly with the form tutor or, where necessary, a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Parents/carers should not use WhatsApp as a platform to air views.

If you are concerned about inappropriate comments on a form WhatsApp group, please contact our Senior Leadership Team, in confidence.

If the School suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent (or group of parents) has breached the code of conduct detailed above, the School will gather information from those involved and speak to the individuals about the incident. Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- send a cautionary notice to the individual(s);
- invite the individual(s) into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Headmistress;
- contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour);
- seek legal advice regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous);
- disallow the individual(s) from the School site;
- withdraw the place at the School of the child/children related to the individual(s).

If an individual(s) behaviour on a WhatsApp group breaches this policy and code of conduct, it is the prerogative of that group's administrator to remove the individual(s) from the group.

The School will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the code of conduct rests with the Headmistress.