



Class WhatsApp Group Guidance

Class WhatsApp groups have increasingly become a way that many parents/carers stay in touch with each other and to share EP news and experiences. We know that these prove so useful for families to keep up to date with school events and for those last minute reminders. The PTA also find class WhatsApp groups invaluable as a way to share news and elicit support, for which we are most grateful.

A class WhatsApp group may comprise of up to 60 parents/carers and within that there will of course be a wide range of interests, concerns or opinions which may or may not align with your own. In expressing a viewpoint it cannot be assumed that all others are in agreement, as many people may choose to silently disagree. Unfortunately, whilst primarily positive and useful, these groups also have the potential to cause upset and conflict.

As with any open discussion group, it is important that there are agreed guidelines to maintain the forum as a place of positive communication, which is useful and enjoyable for all. We are therefore proposing a code of conduct that respects the ethos and values of our school. We have clear expectations and guidelines for children, families and staff within our Behaviour Policy and explicitly teach three simple rules:

- Ready
- Respectful
- Safe

We want to clarify that the school **does not set up class WhatsApp groups, does not post directly onto the group, does not oversee or have visibility of any of the content of WhatsApp group communications.** Whilst set up by a parent/carer administrator, there must be a collective responsibility for all members of a class Whatsapp to keep the forum respectful, safe and inclusive. Also a preparedness by all to encourage others to revert or refer to school for clarification. **School will never use class WhatsApp as a way to communicate with families.** To avoid any confusion about where class WhatsApp messages come from, **please do not use the school name or logo on a class WhatsApp group name.**

Please adhere to the following **principles** when participating in a class WhatsApp group:

- Reflect the value and ethos of the school
- Maintain a safe and inclusive environment
- Act together for the best interests of the children, families and school
- Treat all members of the school community – parents, children and staff - with respect
- Communicate positively and co-operatively
- Take care with language to avoid misinterpretation
- Refer readily to a teacher/headteacher to help with any unanswered question or unresolved issue.



It is **never appropriate** to use the group to:

- Discuss issues or incidents regarding individual children, parents or staff
- Air views, grievances or make any personal comments about any child, parent or staff
- Express hearsay
- Publically challenge school policies
- Share photos of children – there are many families who have requested that images of their children are not shared, but may not wish to disclose this more widely.

For matters relating to issues of policy or questions about your children's experiences in school, please contact a teacher as the most effective way to gain understanding, context and, if needed, resolution.

As always, thank you for your support in this.