Parent Class WhatsApp Guidelines – St Andrew's C.E. Primary School

Dear Parents and Carers,

At St Andrew's we recognise the value of social media platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook as both a communication tool and community for parents and carers to liaise on practical matters, like classroom activities and logistics.

To help maintain the positive resource these groups provide, we have compiled guidelines, which also give clarity with regards to when you should and should not contact the school.

Primarily, as is common with other schools, St Andrew's does not establish or manage these groups. They are **completely independent of the school**. Responsibility for content and regulating them lies **solely** with the external group administrators, **unless** the welfare of a child is impacted at which point the school should be contacted.

Code of Conduct

Parents should adhere to the following guidelines when using class WhatsApp groups:

- The group should never be used as a platform to air views or grievances regarding a teacher, child or parent in the class or school.
- The group is not a political platform or community forum to air opinions on current affairs.
- The group should be used keeping in mind mutual respect and cultural sensitivity between all its members.
- Bullying is not tolerated.
- People who are not directly related to, or responsible for a child in the school, should not be invited to the group.
- The group should not be used for private conversations with anyone else using the group.

The school considers the following online activity inappropriate:

- Abusive or personal comments about staff, pupils or other parents / carers.
- Bringing the school into distribute, posting defamatory or libellous comments.
- Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children.
- Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating individuals or use of bad language.

Safeguarding

Pupil's welfare is the school's priority and we take safeguarding responsibilities seriously.

No photos of any school outings or activities, should ever be posted on social media.

This includes posting photos on closed WhatsApp groups.

For example, class trips to the beach or lagoon where parents are invited to attend and watch.

We will deal with any reported incidents regarding pupils.

Recommendations

Please note that as these groups are not part of the school, it is not the school's responsibility to intervene, **unless the welfare of a pupil is involved.**

If you are concerned about inappropriate comments on a WhatsApp group, please contact the group administrator, which will be a fellow parent or carer.

It is the administrator's responsibility to manage the group chat and remove content that falls outside the code of conduct.

We recommend each class WhatsApp group has a number of administrators so the responsibility to manage group chat can be shared.

We strongly advise keeping the subject of conversation to school or classroom related activities.

Please consider when it may be appropriate to set up alternative WhatsApp groups, to which parents can be separately invited when liaising about events outside of school. For example; external year group camping trips, which are not organised by the school.

Raising Concerns

Importantly, if you are concerned about an issue **directly related to the school or a pupil**, please contact the school administration team or the child's class teacher.

Otherwise, please liaise with your individual group's WhatsApp administrator and request for the relevant post to be addressed.

We hope these guidelines provide clarity, so the class WhatsApp groups can continue to be a useful resource tool for all parents and carers to have support and feel part of the positive school community.