

Christ Church CE Primary and Nursery
PARENT SOCIAL MEDIA AND WHATSAPP
COMMUNICATION POLICY



Academic Year: 2026–2027

Date: September 26

Review Date: September 27

1. Our Purpose

At Christ Church we value positive, respectful and open relationships with parents and carers.

We recognise that digital communication can make school information easier to access and can help parents feel connected to the school community.

The parent WhatsApp group is therefore intended to be a **simple, supportive communication channel for school-related information**.

It is designed to:

- share school notices and reminders;
- signpost information already issued by the school;
- share dates and important updates;
- remind families about events, trips, clubs and activities;
- help parents access general school information;
- support a positive sense of community.

The group is **not a replacement for the school's official communication systems**. Where there is any difference between information shared on WhatsApp and information communicated officially by the school, the school's official communication will take precedence.

2. Our Shared Commitment

We want our digital communication to reflect the same values that we expect within school.

We will:

- **Be Respectful.**
- **Be Kind.**
- **Be Factual.**
- **Be Child-Centred.**
- **Be Safe.**
- **Be Considerate of Other People's Time.**

Our guiding principle is:

"Would I be comfortable saying this respectfully, face-to-face, to the person concerned?"

If the answer is no, it should not be posted.

3. Who the Group Is For

The group is intended for parents and carers of children attending Christ Church.

Membership should be limited to parents/carers or other adults authorised by the school.

Parents/carers are not required to join the group.

No parent or carer should feel disadvantaged because they choose not to participate.

Important school information will continue to be communicated through the school's official channels.

4. The Purpose of the WhatsApp Group

The WhatsApp group is primarily an **information-sharing channel**.

Appropriate messages may include:

- reminders about school events;
- reminders about dates and deadlines;
- information previously issued by the school;
- reminders about uniform or equipment;
- information about school trips;
- PTA/PTFA information;
- school community events;
- reminders about clubs and activities;
- links to official school information;
- practical information that is genuinely useful to community.

Messages should be:

- **Relevant**
- **Brief**
- **Accurate**
- **Respectful**

5. What the Group Is NOT For

The group must not become a forum for:

- complaints about the school;
- complaints about individual teachers;
- complaints about individual children;
- discussions about another family's circumstances;
- discussions about a child's behaviour;
- discussions about SEND or medical needs;
- speculation about incidents;
- rumours;
- criticism of individual staff;
- criticism of individual parents;

- political campaigning;
- commercial advertising;
- chain messages;
- inappropriate images, videos or links;
- arguments;
- personal disputes;
- safeguarding concerns being discussed publicly.

In particular:

No individual child should ever be named, identified or discussed in relation to behaviour, learning, SEND, safeguarding, friendship difficulties or family circumstances.

This includes indirect identification.

For example, parents should not post:

"Does anyone know why [child's name] was sent home today?"

or:

"Has anyone else had problems with the child who keeps hitting people?"

or:

"My daughter says the boy in Year 3 is bullying everyone."

Even if a child's name is not used, a description may identify them.

6. Raising a Concern

If a parent or carer has a concern, the WhatsApp group is **not the appropriate place to raise it**.

Parents should contact the school directly using the appropriate communication route.

Depending on the concern, this may be:

Class teacher

For routine concerns about learning, friendship or classroom matters.

School office

For general queries, attendance, appointments or practical matters.

Executive Head/ Head of School / Senior Leader

For more serious concerns, complaints or matters that have not been resolved.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

For safeguarding concerns.

SENCO

For concerns relating to special educational needs or additional support.

The school will listen to concerns and deal with them appropriately and confidentially.

Please remember:

- **A WhatsApp group cannot investigate an incident.**
- **A WhatsApp group cannot establish the facts.**
- **A WhatsApp group cannot protect confidentiality.**
- **A WhatsApp group cannot replace the school's safeguarding procedures.**

7. Behavioural Concerns

Parents sometimes hear about incidents involving children through their own child.

We understand that this can naturally cause concern.

However:

Behavioural concerns must be raised directly with the school, not discussed on the WhatsApp group.

Parents should not:

- name another child;
- question another parent about their child;
- ask for explanations about another child's behaviour;
- speculate about sanctions;
- identify children involved in incidents;
- encourage other parents to contact the school about an individual child;
- share allegations about another child.

The school will always seek to deal with behavioural matters fairly, sensitively and confidentially.

8. Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of children is our highest priority.

If a parent has a concern that a child may be at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation, this must **not** be discussed within the WhatsApp group.

The concern should be reported directly to the school through the appropriate safeguarding route.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, parents should contact the appropriate emergency services.

Important:

- **Do not investigate safeguarding concerns yourself.**
- **Do not question children about another child's circumstances.**
- **Do not post allegations on WhatsApp.**
- **Do not circulate screenshots, photographs or messages relating to safeguarding concerns.**

KCSIE places safeguarding responsibility across the whole school community and requires schools to have clear procedures for recognising, responding to and recording safeguarding concerns. Our digital communication arrangements therefore support, rather than replace, the school's safeguarding procedures.

9. Respect for Children

Children are at the heart of our school community.

Parents and carers must not use WhatsApp or social media to:

- identify another child;
- discuss another child by name;
- post photographs of another child without appropriate permission;
- share information about another child's behaviour;
- share information about another child's family;
- discuss a child's SEND or medical circumstances;
- speculate about a child's home circumstances;
- label a child as a "bully", "troublemaker", "naughty" or similar;
- encourage others to exclude a child.

Every child deserves privacy, dignity and protection.

We ask parents to model the behaviour that we want our children to demonstrate online and offline.

10. Photographs and Videos

Parents should take particular care when sharing photographs or videos.

Parents must not use the group to:

- share images of children without appropriate consent;

- identify children who are not their own;
- share photographs from school where other children are identifiable unless appropriate permission has been given;
- circulate images of incidents;
- share CCTV or security footage;
- share recordings of staff or children without appropriate permission.

Where parents take photographs at school events, they are responsible for respecting the privacy and wishes of other families.

The school may ask parents not to photograph or record during particular events where this is necessary for safeguarding, privacy or other legitimate reasons.

11. Privacy and Personal Information

Parents must not share personal information about another member of the school community.

This includes:

- telephone numbers;
- addresses;
- email addresses;
- medical information;
- family circumstances;
- financial information;
- photographs;
- screenshots of private conversations;
- confidential school communications.

Parents should also consider carefully before sharing their own personal information.

Once information is posted to a group, it may be copied, forwarded or retained beyond the original group.

12. Respectful Communication

Parents and carers are expected to communicate respectfully.

The following are not acceptable:

- abusive language;
- swearing directed at another person;
- insults;
- threats;
- intimidation;
- harassment;
- personal attacks;
- discriminatory language;

- racist comments;
- homophobic, biphobic or transphobic comments;
- comments relating to disability or religion intended to demean;
- defamatory allegations;
- deliberately inflammatory comments;
- repeated messages intended to provoke an argument.

Disagreement is not itself a problem.

Disrespectful disagreement is.

Parents are welcome to hold different views.

They are not permitted to use the group to attack or humiliate another member of the school community.

13. The "Think Before You Post" Test

Before posting, ask:

Is it true?

Is it relevant?

Is it necessary?

Is it respectful?

Could it identify or embarrass a child?

Could it be misunderstood?

Would I be happy for the Headteacher to read it?

Would I be happy for my child to read it?

If you are unsure:

Don't post it. Contact the school instead.

14. Rumours and Unverified Information

Parents must not knowingly or recklessly circulate rumours or unverified information about:

- children;
- families;

- staff;
- school incidents;
- school policies;
- safeguarding;
- closures;
- staffing;
- allegations;
- disciplinary matters.

Information shared by one parent may not be accurate.

Please do not allow WhatsApp to become a source of misinformation.

Where information matters, check the school's official communication.

15. Disagreement and Debate

Healthy discussion can be positive.

However, the WhatsApp group is not intended to become a forum for lengthy debate.

If a discussion becomes:

- personal;
- repetitive;
- confrontational;
- political;
- critical of an individual;
- unrelated to the group's purpose;

the administrator may close the discussion or remove the relevant message.

The administrator's decision is intended to protect the group and maintain its purpose.

16. No Private Arguments

The group should not be used to resolve disputes between parents.

If two parents have a disagreement:

Take it away from the group.

Do not use the group to:

- publicly challenge another parent;
- recruit support from other parents;
- post screenshots;

- publish private conversations;
- make accusations;
- continue an argument.

Where a matter affects the school or children, parents should contact the school appropriately.

17. Direct Messages

Parents are not obliged to respond to direct messages from other parents.

Parents should respect reasonable boundaries.

Direct messaging must not be used to:

- harass;
- pressure;
- intimidate;
- repeatedly contact someone who has asked for communication to stop;
- discuss another child inappropriately;
- circulate confidential information.

Where direct communication becomes inappropriate, parents should stop the exchange and, where necessary, report the matter to the school.

18. Group Administrator

The class parent body will appoint a named **WhatsApp Group Administrator**.

A deputy administrator should also be identified.

The administrator's role is to:

- maintain the purpose of the group;
- monitor messages;
- remind members of the group agreement;
- remove inappropriate posts where necessary;
- prevent discussion of individual children;
- stop arguments developing;
- signpost concerns to the appropriate school contact;
- raise safeguarding concerns with the DSL or senior leader where necessary;
- keep a record of significant breaches where appropriate.

The administrator is **not expected to be available 24 hours a day**.

The administrator is not responsible for resolving school complaints through WhatsApp.

19. Moderation

Moderation will be proportionate.

For a minor issue, the administrator may post a reminder:

"A quick reminder that this group is for school notices and general information. Please take individual concerns directly to the school. Thank you."

For a more serious issue, the administrator may:

- remove a message;
- contact the individual privately;
- refer the matter to a senior leader;
- temporarily restrict participation;
- remove a member from the group.

Where a post raises a safeguarding concern, it will be dealt with through the school's safeguarding procedures.

The administrator will also take action if posts are sent too late at night – usually past 10:00pm

20. What Happens If the Agreement Is Breached?

The school will support the administrator and respond proportionately. This is a parent group however if it is impacting the well-being of children or individual adults the school may intervene and there is the possibility the WhatsApp group will cease if unresolved.

Depending on the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, this may include:

Stage 1 – Reminder

Parent/carer is reminded of the group agreement.

Stage 2 – Private discussion

A member of school leadership may contact parent/carer.

Stage 3 – Formal warning

The school may issue a formal written reminder or warning.

Stage 4 – Removal from the group

Parent/carer may be removed from the WhatsApp group.

Stage 5 – Wider action

For serious or repeated behaviour, the school may consider action under its Parent/Carer Code of Conduct, complaints procedure, safeguarding procedures or other relevant policies.

This may include restricting communication or access to school premises where appropriate and lawful.

Serious matters such as threats, harassment, discriminatory abuse or potentially criminal conduct may be referred to the appropriate authorities.

The response will be proportionate to the circumstances.

21. Parents Working in Partnership with School

We ask parents to remember that staff are people too.

Parents should not use WhatsApp to:

- criticise a teacher personally;
- question a teacher's professionalism;
- speculate about a member of staff;
- encourage other parents to complain about a member of staff;
- coordinate negative campaigns;
- share private correspondence from staff without permission.

If a parent is unhappy about something, we want them to tell us.

We would much rather have a difficult conversation directly than allow a concern to grow online.

Our aim is always to listen, understand, resolve and move forward.

22. Communication with School Staff

School staff should not be expected to monitor parent WhatsApp groups.

Parents should not assume that because a member of staff is a member of the group, they are available to answer questions at any time.

School staff will use the school's official communication channels for formal school matters.

Parents should not privately message staff about urgent school matters through personal social-media accounts unless the school has specifically provided that channel for that purpose.

23. Reasonable Hours

We respect that families and staff have lives outside school.

The WhatsApp group will operate during reasonable hours.

Recommended group hours:

Monday–Friday: 7:30am–8:30pm

Weekends: 9:00am–9:00pm

The group should be considered **closed outside these hours** except for genuinely urgent information.

Parents are not expected to read, respond to or acknowledge messages outside reasonable hours.

The administrator will not be expected to monitor the group overnight.

Please use the "mute notifications" function if helpful.

There is no expectation that parents respond immediately.

24. Emergencies

WhatsApp must not be relied upon as the school's emergency communication system.

For urgent school communications, the school will use its official communication systems.

If a parent has an emergency or immediate safeguarding concern, they should contact the appropriate emergency service or school safeguarding contact rather than waiting for a WhatsApp response.

25. Commercial and Promotional Content

The group should not be used for:

- business advertising;
- selling products;
- fundraising for unrelated causes;
- political campaigns;
- personal commercial services;
- repeated promotional material.

School/PTA fundraising or community activities may be shared where authorised.

26. Links and External Information

Links should be:

- relevant;
- appropriate;
- trustworthy;
- related to the purpose of the group.

Parents should not assume that information shared by another parent represents the views of the school.

Official school information will always come from the school.

27. Social Media Outside the WhatsApp Group

The same principles apply when parents discuss the school or members of its community on other social-media platforms.

Parents should not use social media to:

- identify or discuss individual children;
- make allegations about staff or pupils;
- share confidential information;
- publish private correspondence;
- post images of other children without appropriate permission;
- harass or intimidate members of the school community;
- encourage online campaigns against individuals;
- spread misinformation about the school/ publicly challenge school decisions.

Parents should raise concerns directly with the school.

28. Online Safety and Our Children

The school will continue to teach children about:

- online safety;
- respectful communication;
- privacy;
- digital footprints;
- cyberbullying;
- reporting concerns;
- healthy technology use.

Parents play a vital role in reinforcing these messages at home.

The government's 2026 online-safety programme places increasing emphasis on parents and carers supporting children to develop safe and healthy digital lives. Current government plans also include stronger protections for children online, with implementation of the new under-16 social-media restrictions planned for spring 2027.

Parents should therefore model the online behaviour that they expect from their children.

29. Relationship With the School's Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Parent/Carer Code of Conduct;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Acceptable Use Policy;
- Data Protection/Privacy Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- Attendance Policy.

Where a WhatsApp or social-media concern involves safeguarding, bullying, discrimination or serious behaviour, the relevant school policy will take precedence.

30. Our Commitment to Parents

We want parents to feel that they can:

- ask questions;
- raise concerns;
- disagree respectfully;
- seek clarification;
- challenge decisions appropriately;
- communicate with staff;
- feel heard.

This policy is **not intended to discourage parents from raising concerns**. It exists to make sure that concerns are raised through channels where they can be dealt with properly, fairly and confidentially.

We want parents to speak to us, not about us.

31. Parent/Carer Agreement

By joining the Christ Church Parent Class WhatsApp group, I agree that:

- ☐ I will use the group for its intended school-related purpose.
- ☐ I will communicate respectfully.
- ☐ I will not name, identify or discuss another child.
- ☐ I will not discuss another child's behaviour, SEND, medical needs or family circumstances.

- ☐ I will not raise individual complaints or grievances on the group.
- ☐ I will raise concerns directly with the school.
- ☐ I will not post rumours or unverified information.
- ☐ I will not share confidential information, screenshots or inappropriate images.
- ☐ I will respect other parents' privacy.
- ☐ I will respect reasonable communication hours.
- ☐ I understand that the group is moderated.
- ☐ I understand that inappropriate use may result in removal from the group and/or further action under the school's relevant policies.
- ☐ I understand that important official information will continue to be communicated through the school's official channels.

32. Our Simple WhatsApp Rules

- Be kind.
- Be respectful.
- Keep it relevant.
- Share useful school information.
- Check information before sharing it.
- Protect children's privacy.
- Raise concerns directly with school.
- Respect people's time.
- Don't name or identify children.
- Don't discuss behaviour.
- Don't discuss individual families.
- Don't criticise staff.
- Don't post rumours.
- Don't argue.
- Don't share screenshots or confidential information.
- Don't use the group for complaints.
- Don't message repeatedly outside reasonable hours.

33. The Golden Rule

USE THE GROUP TO HELP THE COMMUNITY — NOT TO DISCUSS INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE.

If your message is about:

Everyone → WhatsApp may be appropriate.

One child → Speak to the school.

One family → Speak to the family appropriately or school where relevant.

One member of staff → Speak to the school.

A safeguarding concern → Follow safeguarding procedures.

A complaint → Follow the school's complaints procedure.

34. A Final Message to Our School Community

Our children learn from the adults around them.

When children see adults communicate with kindness, patience, respect and self-control, they learn that these qualities matter.

When we disagree respectfully, we model resilience.

When we protect another child's privacy, we model compassion.

When we raise concerns directly rather than publicly, we model responsibility.

We want our WhatsApp community to be a **helpful, positive and respectful extension of our school community**.

Thank you for helping us make it that way.

Together, we can keep communication simple, respectful, safe and child-centred.