Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

Oakleigh School understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the school community can be negatively affected, such as damage to the school's reputation.
This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, such as WhatsApp.
We ask that parents read this document, complete the declaration form and ensure that they always act in accordance with the stipulations detailed below.

1. Legal framework

This document has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

This document operates in conjunction with the following school policies

- Online safety Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Parents Code of Conduct
- Complaints Procedures Policy

2. Online safety and social media conduct

The school expects parents to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following online behaviour:

- Posting defamatory statuses about parents, pupils, the school or its employees
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media
- Posting statuses containing confidential information, e.g. regarding a complaint outcome
- Contacting school employees through social media, including requesting to 'follow' them or sending them private messages. We respect staff may work privately with families and therefore phone contact is essential. Staff sign the 'Annual declaration for staff working with families'.

Reviewed by Sandra Down October 2024, ratified by Governors 16.12.24, review date October 2027

- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff or the school in general

2.1. If parents wish to raise a complaint, the school has a Complaints Policy in place.

2.2. Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the school and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to prosecution.

2.3. Parents will not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on social media.

2.4. Parents are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

2.5. The school retains the right to request any damaging material is removed from social media websites

2.6. Parents' social media usage will be in accordance with the school's Internet safety Policy

3. Online messaging

3.1. The school expects parents to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves and the school, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- Sending frequent messages to members of staff
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Sharing confidential or sensitive information about members of staff, parents, pupils or the school
- Bringing the school or its staff into disrepute

The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; however, the school does not condone parents sending frequent and unnecessary messages to staff. Parents will be expected to understand that staff should not be contacted outside of working hours. If parents wish to talk to staff, parents will arrange a meeting with the teacher by speaking to the school office

3.2 Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing.

3.3 The school can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.

3.4 The school's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the parent Staff association or governing board cause any issues through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

3.5 The Headteacher can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

3.6 The Headteacher can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

4. Monitoring and review

4.1. The Headteacher will review this code of conduct on a three yearly basis and will communicate any changes to all teachers and parents.

4.2. All parents will be required to read this code of conduct and sign the Parental Declaration Form should any changes be made.

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Acceptable Use of Social Media **Letter to Parents**
RE: Parents' use of social media

Dear parents,
Oakleigh School understands and appreciates the benefits of social media; however, there may also be some significant negative impacts which the school does not tolerate.

We would like to invite parents to also lead by example. The school urges parents to review and sign our code of conduct, which outlines how to act when using social media.

Should the school be subject to any online abuse, we will take the appropriate action, which may include considering our legal options to deal with any defamatory or libellous activity on social media.

If any parents do have any concerns to raise, or would like to discuss this subject further, please contact me through the school office.

Kind regards,

Clare Power
Headteacher

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Oakleigh School
& The Early Years Centre

Parental Declaration Form

I _____ (name), parent of _____ (name of child), declare that I have received, read and understood the terms and conditions of this code of conduct. I understand my obligations under this code of conduct and agree to comply fully with them. I will ensure that my conduct does not breach this code of conduct in any way, including:

- Sending abusive messages to parents or teachers.
- Sending abusive messages about parents and teachers.
- Posting defamatory ‘statuses’ about other parents, pupils, teachers or the school.
- Using social media to complain or post any grievances about the school’s values and methods.
- Posting statuses containing confidential information, e.g. regarding a complaint outcome.
- Contacting school employees through social media, including requesting to ‘follow’ them or sending them private messages.
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff or the school in general.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

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