

Guidance on use of Class WhatsApp Groups and Social Contact Lists

While the St. Gerard's Parents' Association has no role or responsibility in relation to the creation of Class WhatsApp groups or Social Contact lists, we have drafted these guidelines to assist our parent population.

We appreciate that such groups/lists have a function, however, please note that parents should email, telephone or call into the school if they require information or clarification on any school, event policy etc.

November 2022

Class WhatsApp groups

The Parents' Association and/or the administrator of the group have no liability for any utterances by members of the group and take no responsibility for any of its content.

The messages in the class WhatsApp groups come from parents in their personal capacity. The School neither sends nor monitors messages on WhatsApp. However, the School is often shown such messages by members of the group and may retained by the school where grievances/complaints/disciplinary procedures ensue.

Whatsapp groups are for parents and should be based on a voluntary 'opt-in' basis. As such, each parent must take responsibility for themselves. At any point a parent can leave the group.

Parents should use common sense when communicating through this medium and always keep in mind the purpose of the group is not idle chat.

Each individual parent is responsible for what they say / publish in the WhatsApp group. At no point should information regarding a child be referenced in such.

We recommend not using the class WhatsApp groups for the following:

- *political posts such as canvassing for support for a particular candidate or political cause, or for disseminating information on political events such as rallies and marches*
- *posting comments about teachers and members of staff, whether positive or negative*
- *posting comments about any parents or students in the school*
- *sharing memes, YouTube clips or internet jokes*
- *posting information about events not linked to the school*
- *as a platform to air views/grievances regarding a teacher, child or parent in the class or school*
- *personal comments*
- *private conversations with anyone else using the group.*

Remember that your post will be seen by up over 100 people and that children in the school may inadvertently view these also.

Remember that some of the members of the individual class groups may also be teachers in the school.

Always use respectful language in your post- if you would not be comfortable posting it on the school wall with your name under it then don't send it.

Ask yourself if it is necessary to post a response to a question if it is in the negative. For instance. For example, if you can't help out a parent in a situation it may be easier not to respond. It is worth bearing in mind that these days people are often on five or six WhatsApp groups between class groups, children activities, family groups etc. This means that people may be receiving large amounts of notifications every day.

Consider alternative methods of communication such as email for sharing information on external events etc.

Use the Private Messaging function if you just want to communicate with a small group or individuals in the group.

Social Contact lists

Social contact lists are for parents and should be based on a voluntary 'opt-in' basis. The Parents' Association and/or the creator of the group have no liability for the uses by members of the group and take no responsibility for same.

Each individual parent is responsible for their use of such lists.

These lists are for the sole purpose of arranging limited social activities among the students and parents in a particular year. Parents opt-in to the list on this basis.

The lists should not be used to deliver a mail drop, market, seek sponsorship or for any political or commercial reasons.

The lists should not be further shared with any third party outside the year group.