

stChris

Communications and Social Media Guidelines

for Parents and Carers

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This guide covers the following:

- ↳ Why do we need communications guidelines?
- ↳ Who will send me information, and how?
- ↳ Our approach
- ↳ Class Rep messages
- ↳ Commenting on social media
- ↳ What does appropriate online behaviour look like?
- ↳ Complaints procedure

Communications and Social Media Guidelines

for Parents and Carers

There's always something happening in the St Chris community. The school and Parent Reps have worked together on this guide to ensure you know where to seek information, and how best to use email, social media (including WhatsApp) and the communications tools that St Chris uses if you are a parent or carer at the school.



WHY DO WE NEED COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES?

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide a reminder to our community about the expectations around the conduct of all those connected to our school.

At St Christopher School we are very proud and fortunate to have a dedicated and supportive school community. Staff, governors, parents and carers alike all recognise that the education of our young people is a partnership process between all these parties.

As a partnership we recognise the importance of solid working relationships to equip all of our young people with the necessary skills for adulthood.

We warmly welcome and encourage parents and carers to participate fully in the life of our school.

It's great to have so many communication tools to hand; it makes life much easier, as well as helping us cut down on paper. Unfortunately, sometimes message threads get out of hand, and people can become at best misinformed, and at worst deeply upset by discussions on WhatsApp or other social media/ email groups.

To avoid distress to students, parents, staff and governors, we ask that you read this guidance and then take a moment to consider what you post before you post.

We understand that everyday frustrations can cause misunderstandings and have a negative impact on our relationships. Establishing that where

this happens, we remain committed to resolving difficulties in a constructive manner through open positive dialogue is essential. In this way we can continue to flourish and progress, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding.



WHO WILL SEND ME INFORMATION, AND HOW?

THE SCHOOL

School news, trips, sports fixtures, events, clubs, school management issues, homework.

ALL PARENTS

Email – where teachers / Advisers need to contact you directly they will use the email you have provided to the school. We also share emergency information – such as school closures due to weather – via email.

The Roundup – weekly Friday newsletter to all parents containing news, notices and information about the week ahead

My School Portal – a parent portal where parents can see

- ↳ Timetable
- ↳ School calendar (option to import into your personal calendar)
- ↳ Attendance information
- ↳ Weekly menu
- ↳ School reports
- ↳ Homework for Senior School students (direct link to MS Teams which we use for setting Senior School homework)
- ↳ Book Parents' Consultations (direct link to School Cloud which we use for Parents' Consultations)
- ↳ Give permission and sign up for trips, visits and fixtures (via a direct link to Evolve – the system we use for booking all trips and activities)
- ↳ Ticket sales (however if the event is open to those without a child at St Chris, ticket sales will be on the website)
- ↳ Contact information for other parents who would like to share their details.

MONTE (NURSERY) AND K GROUP (RECEPTION) PARENTS

Tapestry – where we record your child's learning journal

JUNIOR SCHOOL PARENTS

Class Dojo – where we share homework, updates related to the Junior School and class specific reminders and news

In addition to the above the school uses the following information channels to share school news: Website, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn.

THE PARENTS' CIRCLE

- ↳ Events, calls for volunteers, news
- ↳ Via the The Roundup or school news channels as above

YOUR CLASS REPS

Class socials, organising volunteers, sharing Parents' Circle messages, class reminders, organising a card or thank you for teachers etc.

- ↳ WhatsApp, face-to-face.

Remember, the Parents' Circle and class reps are parents just like you, so if you have queries about anything other than Parents' Circle or social matters, the best place to go for clarification is direct to the school.

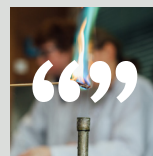


OUR APPROACH

- ↳ We are a supportive, caring and kind community
- ↳ We teach our students to avoid gossip, speculation and using unkind words
- ↳ We promote a culture of openness, saying sorry, and seeking forgiveness
- ↳ Mistakes happen, but we acknowledge them, say sorry, try to change, and move on.
- ↳ We ask parents to promote this culture
- ↳ If the school gets something wrong, come and talk to us. It doesn't help resolve issues if you only air your concerns on an online forum or to other parents.

CLASS REP MESSAGES

When a child starts at the school we ask their parent/carer if they would like to be put in touch with their Class Rep (where there is one available). The Class Rep usually creates a WhatsApp group to share information with their class. These groups are an efficient way to stay up to date and enable social engagements to be planned.



COMMENTING ON SOCIAL MEDIA, INCLUDING WHATSAPP

WhatsApp groups can be a wonderful source of knowledge, support and advice. We encourage you to join in and positively participate if you wish. Within these spaces however we ask that you use common sense when discussing school life online.

If you would like to post about something other than the reasons listed above, ask yourself if it might be better suited to a smaller group of parents in a separate friends' group.

We ask that social media, whether public or private, should not be used to voice complaints against the school, school staff, parents or students. We take very seriously inappropriate use of social media by a parent to publicly humiliate or criticise another parent, student or member of staff.

Comment threads can soon get out of hand. Think about how your post could come across, and about how you would feel if you were on the receiving end.

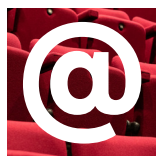
If parents/carers have any concerns about their child in relation to the school as above they should:

- 1 Initially contact the class teacher (Junior School), Company Adviser (Senior School) or Tutor (Sixth Form);
- 2 If the concern remains they should contact the Head, the Head of the Junior School or, in the Senior School the Head of Year, Assistant Head (Pastoral) or the Deputy Head;
- 3 If still unresolved, the school governors through the complaints procedure.

They should not use social media as a medium to air any concerns or grievances.

THINK BEFORE YOU POST...

- T** → is it true?
- H** → is it helpful?
- I** → is it inspiring?
- N** → is it necessary?
- K** → is it kind?



ONLINE ACTIVITY WHICH WE CONSIDER INAPPROPRIATE:

- ↳ Identifying or posting images/videos of students
- ↳ Abusive or personal comments about staff, students or other parents/carers
- ↳ Abusive or personal comments about students wishing to join the school
- ↳ Bringing the school into disrepute
- ↳ Posting defamatory or libellous comments
- ↳ Emails circulated or sent directly with abusive or personal comments about staff or students
- ↳ Using social media to publicly challenge school policies or discuss issues about individual children
- ↳ Threatening behaviour, such as verbally intimidating staff, or using bad language
- ↳ Breaching school security procedures

At St Chris we take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately.

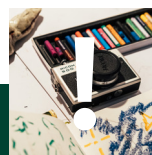


WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL A POST IS INAPPROPRIATE

- ↳ Please be assured that we will not tolerate inappropriate emails, posts or WhatsApp messages;
- ↳ If someone makes an inappropriate comment, any member of the group is encouraged to raise their concerns directly with the school;
- ↳ You can always choose to leave a WhatsApp group – and no-one should make a judgement about that;
- ↳ You can request that any photo or comment in which you are mentioned is removed.

We use these reminders with our students to encourage them to think before they share:

- ↳ Am I posting in anger?
- ↳ Who might be able to read this?
- ↳ Could someone misinterpret what I am saying?
- ↳ Am I responding in a reactive way?
- ↳ Should I wait and post this tomorrow?
- ↳ Could someone be upset by my comment?
- ↳ Is there a better way to respond to this situation?



COMPLAINTS

These guidelines do not prevent parents/carers from raising a legitimate complaint in an appropriate fashion. In most cases we hope that all complaints and concerns can be resolved through open dialogue with the school as appropriate.

Where you are not satisfied with responses received however, we would ask that you then follow the complaints procedure as laid out in our School Complaints Policy. This is available on the school's website but if you would prefer please contact the school office and we can arrange for a hard copy to be made available.