

WhatsApp Groups and Communication Guidance

The Friends of the William Hogarth School (FOWHS) ask parents to join a class Whatsapp group to offer reminders and information relating to school and the FOWHS activities. We have developed these guidelines to enable Class Reps and parents/ carers to get the most out of our WhatsApp groups, so please take a moment to read this guidance.

Why do we need Whatsapp guidelines?

Whatsapp can be a great tool to share information and keep up to date, as well as build community, when used appropriately and constructively. Sometimes, however, exchanges on Whatsapp can stray into personal, non-school matters or become unconstructive or abusive. To avoid misunderstandings or distress to parents, pupils and staff, it is important to reflect on these guidelines and whether your message is appropriate before you send it.

What should Whatsapp messages be used for?

Reminders and information about school and FOWHS activities such as school trips, events, clubs, news, homework, school meals, lost uniform, fundraising and social events, calls for volunteers and donations, ticket sales etc.

What should Whatsapp messages NOT be used for?

As parents and carers we teach our children the importance of kindness, patience and inclusion and this is what we should promote when communicating within this group. Below is a list of examples of behaviour and matters that are not an appropriate use of the Whatsapp group. The list is not exhaustive, so please consider if your words may fall into one of these categories and ask yourself if it might be better suited to a smaller group of parents in a separate friends' group or whether you send the message at all.

- Concerns about your child's education
- Personal, social arrangements
- Personal attacks against pupils, staff members or parents
- Selling items
- Advertising messages and views from other groups or organisations

The FOWHS Committee and Class Reps are parents just like you, so if you have specific queries about your child's education, the best place to go for clarification is direct to the school.

What can you do if you feel a post is inappropriate?

Inappropriate messages will not be tolerated. We realise mistakes and misunderstandings can happen, and hopefully most situations will simply be resolved by ensuring any negative discussions stops swiftly.

If someone makes a comment that you feel is inappropriate:

- contact your class rep, or a senior member of staff to advise them of your view and reasons
- class reps should advise the group or individual/s to stop inappropriate discussions

- class reps do not need to manage such situations on their own. Class Reps should advise FOWHS Officers, who will work with the school to review and resolve the situation.
- In some cases, such reviews may potentially lead to exclusion of individuals from a group and/ or referral to any other relevant external body.
- Individuals can always choose to leave a WhatsApp group – and no-one should make a judgement, but ideally we would remain as a cohesive, mutually supportive group.
- You can request that any photo or comment in which you are mentioned is removed

Other modes of communication

The school and the FOWHS also use a number of other methods to ensure parents and carers are kept up to date and informed. The year group noticeboard is the key area that will keep you up to date about your child's class requirements. The noticeboards are online and can be found on the school's website or via the William Hogarth School app. The school's website also holds a wealth of general information.

Each class also uses Twitter to provide up to date information and images around class activities and projects. Weekly newsletters, hard copy letters sent in book bags and noticeboards in reception and at the school gates are also used.

Images of children, staff and other parents.

We understand that parents will want to capture memorable moments in photographs. The school operates an 'acceptable use of digital images' policy to protect those staff and parents who do not wish to have photos of themselves or their children posted online. If you take photos at a school event, please do so with thought and care.

If you would like a photo removed, or have any concerns please contact the FOWHS on williamhogarthpta@gmail.com or the school directly, and we will help you help action this. Please, always consider what you post before you post.