

These guidelines are intended to provide some helpful hints and guide parents in the use of group online communication tools for school related purposes.

Parents at Dalkeith Primary School take on roles within various committees and groups, and as such it is important that they be able to communicate about important events and updates. Group communication apps are an efficient tool for getting a message out to a lot of people very quickly. The use of a class WhatsApp group for example is a useful way for the Class Reps to post messages or announcements pertaining specifically to their class or events relating to Dalkeith Primary School. This will include announcements or day-to-day information that is relevant, messages from the class teacher, or for parent members to occasionally ask specific questions that may be useful and relevant to the whole class.

The use of a group online communication tool is not intended for personal questions, general 'chitchat', large amounts of photo sharing or for personal RSVP or acknowledgement purposes. The aim is to minimise the volume of messaging given the large group sizes.

Group Online Communication encompasses a broad range of communication tools such as, but not limited to, email, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and Instagram.

Guidelines

Parents and carers should act respectfully and responsibly at all times when using Group Online Communication within the school environment. Parents and carers using any app that is used for group messaging and is related to Dalkeith Primary School content, events and activities, are asked to adhere to the following set of guidelines.

- Year based communication groups i.e. class WhatsApp groups, are predominantly for Class announcements and school specific information sharing.
- Keep messages to your class group minimal, relevant and to the point.
- If it is not class or school related please don't post it. You are able to message other parents privately within WhatsApp if you need to. The WhatsApp class groups aren't for general 'chit chat'.
- If someone has asked a question, and it has been answered by someone else, please don't continue to post on the matter.
- Even if it is friendly, there is no need to thank the sender with a message or an emoji.
- Please be mindful of language at all times, and keep it courteous and respectful.
- Please refrain from jokes, gossip and any anecdotes of the children.
- Don't post large quantities of photos to the group as these potentially sit on all the receivers' camera rolls (see helpful hints below).
- Please keep the Group and its members details confidential *at all times*, respect each other's privacy and refrain from sharing the content of any WhatsApp message with other classes in the school (unless it is obviously relevant).
- Don't send large messages - if you need to convey a lot of information, use email.
- Don't use parent contact details to personally promote businesses.
- Don't post inappropriate content – e.g. videos, images, or texts that contain illicit material.
- Do not exclude people who you would normally expect to be part of the group.

Grievances

Like any means of communication, from time to time issues and misunderstandings can arise. If you have an issue with another parent member or the school, then please refer to the '**Code of Conduct for Carers' Policy**, and keep the general principals of respect, courtesy and confidentiality in mind at all times. The policy can be found on the School website, and the link is below:

<http://www.dalkeithps.wa.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/CODE-OF-CONDUCT-FOR-CARERS.pdf>

Helpful Hints - User Management of Privacy and Other Settings

When using a tool such as WhatsApp, you can manage your settings to suit how you receive messages and what others can see of your profile.

Messages: You can 'mute' conversations and adjust notifications so that you manage when you view the messages.

Do this by going to WhatsApp>Settings>Notifications>Group Notifications

Photos: You can turn off the default autosave function for any photos posted to the group that are automatically saved to your phone's camera roll.

Do this by going to WhatsApp>Settings>Data and Storage Use>Photos (select "never")

Privacy settings: be aware the WhatsApp's default privacy setting allows any other WhatsApp user to view your profile photo, status and when you were last using the app. You can specify that your account can be seen by 'Everyone', 'My Contacts' or 'Nobody'.

Adjust the privacy setting to 'My Contacts' by accessing
WhatsApp>Settings>Account>Privacy.