

# Social Media & Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers



## St Gerard's Catholic Primary & Nursery School

*"Guided by God, St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School is an inspiring and aspirational community where we learn to love, hope, dream and achieve."*

## **Statement of intent**

St. Gerard's Catholic Primary & Nursery School understands the benefits of using social media; however if misused, the school community can be negatively affected, such as by damaging the school's reputation. This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents/carers and any other relevant parties to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, such as WhatsApp

## **Legal framework**

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Defamation Act 2013
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (as amended)

## **E-safety and social media conduct**

St. Gerard's Catholic Primary & Nursery School expects parents/carers to behave in an appropriate manner online and will not tolerate any of the following behaviour:

- Posting defamatory 'statuses' about fellow parents/carers, children, the school or its employees on social media or other sites
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media or other sites

The school has a Complaints Procedures Policy in place which provides the appropriate forum for parents/carers or any relevant party to express any concern or grievance that they may have regarding the conduct of the school or its staff. Such a policy is implemented to avoid parents/carers broadcasting any grievance online.

- Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking and their conduct online.
- 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 appropriate sanctions being taken by the school which shall not only include a temporary school ban for the offending party but also in more serious cases a criminal prosecution.
- Parents/carers will not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of school staff on social media.
- Parents/carers are instructed not post anonymously or under an alias to evade being identified and being in direct breach of the guidance as set out within this code of conduct.
- Aspiring Foundations Federated Nursery Schools retain the right to request any damaging material to be removed immediately by the offending party from social media and any other websites where it has been posted/published.

## **Online messaging**

Whilst St. Gerard's accept that parents/carers may wish to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes communicating to the school in a positive and constructive manner, the school shall not under any circumstances accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents/carers
- Sending abusive messages about other pupils, members of staff, parents/carers or the school
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff

The school acknowledges that through the simplicity and ease of instant messaging online can result in parents/carers and other parties keeping in contact outside of school and can ultimately benefit the school community by keeping the school community closer provided that such action is used in a positive manner.

Should any problems or breach of this code of conduct arise from communication via messaging apps, the school shall act immediately by contacting parents/carers or the relevant party directly, to prevent any further issues continuing.

St. Gerard's can request a meeting with parents/carers if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.

The school's complaints procedure will be followed accordingly if any members of staff or governing body cause any discrepancies through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

The **head teacher** can, subject to the written consent of the parent/carer, view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems more quickly and effectively.

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

### **Monitoring and review**

This code of conduct will be reviewed on an annual basis and will communicate any changes or amendments to the said code to all staff, parents/carers and any other affected parties.