



Parent Chat Groups

POLICY



Help for non-English speakers

If you need help to understand the information in this policy, please contact the school office on 9481 5577.

Policy Statement

Richmond Primary School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment and culture which enables positive relationships to be formed amongst all students, staff and parents. Effective engagement between Richmond Primary School and its parents is vital for the holistic development and academic success of our students. Parent chat groups, also known as parent forums or online communities, are used within our school community to foster communication and collaboration between parents.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the appropriate use of parent chat groups within Richmond Primary School. These groups aim to facilitate communication and collaboration between parents, fostering a supportive and inclusive school community.

Scope

This policy applies to all parent chat groups affiliated with Richmond Primary School, including those created on social media platforms, messaging apps, or any other electronic communication channels.

This policy is applicable to all Richmond Primary School staff and parents with children enrolled in Richmond Primary School who choose to participate in parent chat groups.

Definitions

Parent chat groups: Digital platforms or messaging applications used by parents to communicate, exchange information, and engage in discussions related to school matters. The platforms can include but are not limited to:

- WhatsApp
- Facebook Messenger
- Instagram direct messages
- Snapchat
- Telegram
- Slack

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Parent: For the purposes of this policy, 'parent' refers to individuals who hold legal responsibility for a student enrolled in Richmond Primary School. This includes biological parents, legal guardians, foster parents, or any other individuals legally recognised as having custodial rights over the student. In cases where there are shared custodial rights, both parties may be considered as parents for the purposes of this policy. The term 'parent' also encompasses individuals who are actively involved in the student's care and education, as recognised by Richmond Primary School administration.

Objectives of Parent Chat Groups

Foster Positive Communication: Parent chat groups should serve as a platform for positive and respectful communication between parents, promoting a sense of belonging and collaboration within the Richmond Primary School community.

Share Relevant Information: Parent chat groups should be used to disseminate relevant school-related information, such as upcoming events, announcements, volunteering opportunities, and general updates from Richmond Primary School administration.

Encourage Support and Engagement: Parent chat groups should encourage parents to support one another, share experiences, seek advice, and actively engage in discussions that contribute to the welfare and educational progress of their children.

Guiding Principles

Collaboration: Parent chat groups are intended to facilitate constructive collaboration between parents to support the holistic development of students.

Respectful Communication: All members are expected to communicate in a respectful and courteous manner, fostering a positive and inclusive environment for sharing ideas and information.

Student-Centric Approach: All discussions and information shared in the chat groups should primarily focus on supporting student learning, activities, and events.

Confidentiality: Confidential and sensitive information regarding students, teachers, or staff members must not be shared within the chat groups. Private matters should be discussed through appropriate channels.

Timely and Relevant Content: Messages shared should be relevant to school activities, events, announcements, or educational resources, ensuring that the group remains focused on its objective purpose.

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Moderation: The parent chat groups are not routinely moderated by Richmond Primary School. If conduct issues arise within a chat group or across a parent cohort, Richmond Primary School may choose to temporarily appoint a moderator to the affected chat groups to ensure that discussions align with the established guidelines.

Establishment and Membership

The Richmond Primary School parent class representatives establish the parent chat groups for each class at the commencement of the school year.

Parents of new prep students may also choose to establish parent chat groups during orientation sessions at Richmond Primary School.

Parents of the students in each class are invited to join the corresponding chat group.

Participation in the chat groups is voluntary, and individuals are free to leave the group at any time.

What information can be shared on parent chat groups?

Information shared should pertain to Richmond Primary School related matters, such as school events, activities, educational resources, homework, and general parent related inquiries. Some examples of information that can be shared on parent chat groups include:

- announcements regarding upcoming events, holidays, school closures, and other relevant information
- volunteering opportunities, such as excursions, class parties, and school events where parent assistance might be needed
- reminders for school events like assemblies, performances, fundraisers, and community support campaigns
- questions about lost items or reporting lost items found at school
- helpful educational resources, articles, books, and websites that benefit both parents and students
- coordinating carpooling arrangements and transportation details for school-related activities
- connecting with each other to discuss parenting challenges, share advice, and foster a supportive network within the school community
- additional real-time notifications in case of emergencies, such as weather-related school closures or security concerns.

What information cannot be shared on parent chat groups?

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Information unrelated to Richmond Primary School matters or controversial topics should be avoided to maintain a focused and positive environment. Some examples of the information that cannot be shared on parent chat groups include:

- personal phone numbers, home addresses, or other contact details
- health-related details about a student's medical conditions, allergies, or treatments
- behavioural or disciplinary issues involving specific students
- negative comments about other students, parents, teachers, or school staff
- discussions involving complaints, legal issues or disputes related to the school or individuals
- financial information, such as an individual family's financial situation, payment details, or discussions about fees
- unverified information, rumours, or hearsay that could cause unnecessary panic or confusion within the group
- content that is explicit, offensive, or inappropriate for a school-related context should never be shared
- confidential information that a parent might have access to due to their involvement with the school
- photographs or videos of students
- personal commercial promotions, such as advertising products or services unrelated to school activities
- political or religious discussions.

Behaviour Expectations

All members of the parent chat groups are expected to communicate in a respectful and considerate manner. Language that is offensive, discriminatory, or disrespectful towards any individual or group will not be tolerated. Disagreements should be expressed in a constructive and polite manner, promoting open dialogue and understanding.

Parents must respect the privacy of others and maintain the confidentiality of information shared within the chat group. Confidential matters discussed in the chat groups should not be shared outside the group without explicit consent.

A **Code of Conduct** (Attachment A) accompanies this policy to clearly set the guidelines on appropriate behaviour in the context of parent chat groups at Richmond Primary School.

Monitoring and Intervention

Richmond Primary School administrators reserve the right to monitor discussions and intervene if any behaviour or content violates this policy or the **Code of Conduct**.

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Richmond Primary School may issue warnings, remove offensive content, or temporarily suspend parents who repeatedly disregard this policy or **Code of Conduct**.

Reporting Issues

If a member of the chat group identifies any behaviour that violates this policy or the **Code of Conduct**, they should report the issue to the Principal of Richmond Primary School. Reports should include specific details of the incident to enable appropriate investigation and action.

Conflict Resolution and Complaints

If a conflict arises between parents, parents are encouraged to address concerns privately and respectfully.

For complaints about school related matters, parents should not raise these in the parent chat groups but instead raise these directly with Richmond Primary School and adhere to the process set out in the [Complaints Policy](#).

Compliance and Consequences

Compliance

All parents participating in the parent chat groups are expected to comply with this policy and the **Code of Conduct**.

Consequences

If Richmond Primary School suspects, or becomes aware, that a parent has breached the **Code of Conduct** or not adhered to the guidelines outlined in this policy, Richmond Primary School will gather information from those involved and speak to the parent about the incident.

Depending on the nature of the incident, the school may then:

- send a warning letter to the parent
- invite the parent into school to meet with a senior member of staff or the Principal
- contact the appropriate authorities (in cases of criminal behaviour)
- seek legal advice regarding further action (in cases of conduct that may be libellous or slanderous)
- ban the parent from the school site
- temporarily suspend, or permanently remove the parent from the chat group.

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Richmond Primary School will always respond to an incident in a proportional way. The final decision for how to respond to breaches of the **Code of Conduct** rests with the Richmond Primary School Principal.

Appeals

Parents who have been temporarily suspended or permanently removed from a chat group may appeal the decision to the Richmond Primary School administration. Appeals should be submitted in writing and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

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Attachment A - Code of Conduct for Parent Chat Groups at Richmond Primary School

Conduct element	It is expected that parents will:	Parents demonstrate this by:
<i>Respect and kindness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> treat all members of the school community with respect, kindness, and empathy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoiding using derogatory language, offensive remarks, or engaging in personal attacks
<i>Stay on topic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep the discussions relevant to topics related to the primary school experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> taking off-topic discussions to the appropriate channels
<i>Privacy and confidentiality</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect the privacy of parents, students and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not sharing personal information about other parents, students, or school staff without their explicit permission not sharing photos, videos or sensitive information in the chat group
<i>Constructive communication</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in constructive and meaningful conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sharing advice, experiences, and suggestions in a positive and helpful manner avoiding spreading rumours or engaging in negative gossip about parents, staff or students
<i>No promotional content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not promote products, services, or commercial activities unrelated to Richmond Primary School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refraining from sharing advertisements, sales, or promotional content
<i>Be mindful of time and frequency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be considerate of other parents' time and the volume of messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> avoiding excessive messaging and being aware of the time of day when engaging on the platform
<i>Use appropriate language</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use clear and appropriate language in all communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refraining from using slang, offensive language, or

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		inappropriate humour that might offend others
<i>Fact-check information</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that information is accurate and from a reliable source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> verifying the source of information before sharing with the group
<i>Resolve disagreements privately</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address disagreements privately rather than in the main chat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engaging in open communication to prevent misunderstandings from escalating
<i>Report inappropriate content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> report any content that violates this Code of Conduct to the Richmond Primary School administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not engaging in arguments or negative discussions about inappropriate content
<i>Leave personal issues out</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refrain from airing personal grievances or issues unrelated to Richmond Primary School. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintaining a positive and focused environment for everyone.

By participating in Richmond Primary School's parent chat groups, you agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in a member being temporarily or permanently removed from the chat group or other necessary consequences as outlined in the Parent Chat Groups Policy.

Richmond Primary School takes safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will deal with any reported incidents appropriately and proportionately.

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Related Policies and Resources

The following school policies are also relevant to this policy and can be found on the school website.

[Parent Disputes Policy](#)

[Statement of Values and Philosophy](#)

[Bullying Prevention Policy](#)

[Complaints Policy](#)

Policy review and approval

This policy was last updated May 2024 and is scheduled for review in 4 years.

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