

# Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers

## Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents/Carers

Ashley High School



The Bridge School



The Cavendish High Academy



Chesnut Lodge School



Cronton Sixth Form College



Ormiston Bollingbroke Academy



Ormiston Chadwick Academy



Riverside College



Sandymoor School



Wade Deacon High School



Sts Peter and Paul Catholic College



The Heath School



The Grange Academy



St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School



## **Contents:**

### Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. E-safety and social media conduct
3. Online messaging
4. Monitoring and review

### Appendices

- a) Acceptable Use of Social Media Letter to Parents/carers

## **Statement of intent**

**Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers** understand the benefits of using social media. However, if misused it can be extremely detrimental to our young people, staff and school communities.

The purpose of this code of conduct is to provide clear guidelines on how we expect other relevant parties (guardians) to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps such as WhatsApp, to avoid the negative impacts misuse can have. The Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents/carers sits alongside and compliments the social media expectations for both staff and students.

The Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers are aware of their obligations under this code of conduct and ask that parents and carers support their child's secondary school to ensure students, staff and other members of the school community are further protected.

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. 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)

## 2. E-safety and social media conduct

2.1. The **Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers** expects parents/carers to behave in an appropriate manner online and will not tolerate any of the following behaviour online:

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

2.2. Every 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/college or its staff. Such a policy is implemented to avoid parents/carers broadcasting any grievance online.

2.3. Parents/carers will be made aware of their responsibilities regarding their use of social networking and their conduct online.

2.4. Breaches of this code of conduct will be taken seriously by the Halton Secondary Schools Colleges and, in the event of illegal, defamatory, or discriminatory content, breaches could lead to appropriate sanctions being taken by the school/college which shall not only include a temporary school/college ban for the offending party but also in more serious cases a criminal prosecution.

2.5. Parents/carers will not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of school/college staff on social media.

2.6. Parents/carers are expected not to 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.

2.7. **Halton Secondary Schools and Colleges** 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.

## 3. Online messaging

3.1. Whilst the Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers shall accept that parents/carers may wish to use messaging apps for the purpose of

communicating to the school/college in a positive and constructive manner, the school/college 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/college
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff

- 3.2. The Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers acknowledges that the use of instant messaging e.g. *WhatsApp* is a simple and easy way for parents/carers to communicate with other parties outside of school/college. This can benefit the school/college community by keeping it informed and updated provided that it is used in a positive manner. Should any problems or breach of this code of conduct arise from communication via messaging apps, the school/college shall act immediately by contacting parents/carers or the relevant party directly, to prevent any further issues continuing.
- 3.3. Halton Secondary Schools and Colleges can request a meeting with parents/carers if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.
- 3.4. The school's complaints procedure will be followed accordingly if any members of the parent teacher association or governing body cause any discrepancies through their conduct whilst using online messaging.
- 3.5. The Headteachers can, subject to the written consent of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body in order to deal with problems more quickly and effectively.
- 3.6. The Headteachers can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents/carers or parental bodies.

## **4. Monitoring and review**

- 4.1. The Halton Association of Secondary Headteachers will review this code of conduct on an annual basis and will communicate any changes or amendments to the said code to all teachers, parents/carers and any other affected parties.
- 4.2 All parents/carers and child representatives shall be required to adhere to this code of conduct.