



Charnock Hall Primary Academy

A L.E.A.D. Academy

Carter Hall Road,
Sheffield
S12 3HS
0114 2396083
enquiries@charnockhallacademy.co.uk

Headteacher: Mr P M Burgess - NPOH

Friday 25th October 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

I write to you following the letter sent earlier in the week regarding parental conduct. It is important again to state that this is being shared with all parents to ensure that everyone is clear of our expectations and what CHPA feels are acceptable and appropriate actions by parents, however this time it focuses upon Social Media use, namely Facebook and WhatsApp.

Social Media platforms can be simple and successful forums for sharing information. The engagement we get from yourselves with our Social Media posts is excellent and I am glad you find them useful to understand all the fantastic things that happen at CHPA daily.

As a parent myself, I know the majority schools have parent-initiated messaging apps, like WhatsApp, set up to share various pieces of information, such as parties, or to check if something is happening (as it is easy to forget at times as we all have busy lives). My own daughters' school have these, and they can be a real force for good.

However, whilst the significant majority of posts within these groups are appropriate and in line with what the groups are for, it seems recently that a very small number of posts being added are untrue/inaccurate and are becoming increasingly defamatory, slanderous and provocative. It is important that people are aware, that where such messages have been posted, there are other parents who have approached me to share the content of these concerns as they are becoming increasingly concerned by the nature and content of them and feel that what is being written is inaccurate and unfair.

For clarity, whilst we do not manage or have any input into the WhatsApp groups, moving forward, if any Social Media content is posted that is aimed towards CHPA or any staff that is offensive, defamatory or untrue, and then shared with us, we reserve the right to consider removal of the licence to be on CHPA property or even undertake more formal action if required.

As has been witnessed from the outcomes of events in the summer, people are being held increasingly responsible and accountable for the content of their social media posts, both by employers and through legal processes. Additionally, and as a reminder to the content of the letter you received on Monday, The Governing Board give implied licence to parents to enter the CHPA premises to drop off and collect their children, to be invited in to CHPA to discuss matters relating to their children and their education in a calm and reasonable manner and to enjoy events organised by us, peacefully with other members of the CHPA community. However, as Headteacher and in conjunction with the Governing Board, we have the authority to withdraw that licence if it is felt that it is necessary for health and safety, or to ensure the efficient running of the academy.

It is important that group administrators (the people who set groups up) and parents with in any groups self-manage them, holding each other accountable for acceptable usage. As explained above, a number of parents have been to me to share content and question/discuss the unhelpful post content that has been made – and I thank you for that.

As adults, we know that in every walk of life, people make mistakes, generally these are unintentional, and at times those mistakes are not known, so it can only be through effective communication that this can be addressed.

It is completely natural for there to be differences in opinion at times, but if you have a concern or query, the correct route is to contact CHPA, be that class teacher or a member of the Leadership Team to discuss and address it. It is through this approach that we can listen carefully and share the full facts as we know them at the time and what is or has been done to rectify/address it. The use of Social Media forums to complain is ineffective as this is not communicating with people who have the full facts, can help, or do anything to address the issue.

I am surprised and very disappointed to have to write and send this message to everyone, but I think it is important that we all hold each other to a standard as we move into Autumn Term 2 and beyond, particularly as the focus of us communicating is for the benefit of your children.

I wish you all a fun filled half-term break.

Regards

Mr P M Burgess - Headteacher