

Cotton End Forest School

Social Media Code of Conduct for Parents

Last reviewed: September 2026

Review September 2027

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Statement of intent

Cotton End Forest School understands the benefits of using social media; however, if misused, the school community can be negatively affected, such as damage to the school's reputation.

This code of conduct sets out clear procedures for how we expect parents to conduct themselves on social media and when using messenger apps, such as WhatsApp.

We ask that parents read this document, complete the declaration form and ensure that they always act in accordance with the stipulations detailed below.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This document has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- The General Data Protection Regulation 2018
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

1.2. This document operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedure Policy
- Social Media Policy

2. E-safety and social media conduct

2.1. The school expects parents to behave in a civilised nature online and will not tolerate any of the following online behaviour:

- Posting defamatory statuses about parents, pupils, the school or its employees
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media
- Posting statuses containing confidential information, e.g. regarding a complaint outcome
- Contacting school employees through social media, including requesting to 'follow' them or sending them private messages
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff or the school in general

2.2. If parents wish to raise a complaint, the school has a Complaints Procedures Policy in place.

2.3. 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 prosecution.

2.4. Parents will not attempt to 'friend' or 'follow' any member of staff on social media.

2.5. Parents are instructed not to post anonymously or under an alias to evade the guidance given in this code of conduct.

2.6. The school retains the right to request any damaging material is removed from social media websites

2.7. Parents' social media usage will be in accordance with the school's **Social Media Policy**.

3. Online messaging

3.1. The school expects parents to use messaging apps, such as WhatsApp, for purposes beneficial to themselves and the school, and will not accept any of the following behaviour:

- Sending abusive messages to fellow parents
- Sending abusive messages about members of staff, parents or the school
- Sending abusive messages to members of staff
- Sending frequent messages to members of staff
- Posting defamatory statuses about parents, pupils, the school or its employees
- Complaining about the school's values and methods on social media
- Posting statuses containing confidential information, e.g. regarding a complaint outcome
- Contacting school employees through social media, including requesting to 'follow' them or sending them private messages
- Creating or joining private groups or chats that victimise or harass a member of staff or the school in general

3.2. The school appreciates the simplicity and ease of instant messaging; keeping in contact outside of school can benefit the school community by keeping it closer.

3.3. The school does not, however, condone parents sending frequent and unimportant messages to staff. Parents should understand that staff should never be contacted outside of working hours.

3.4. If parents wish to talk to staff, parents should arrange a meeting with the teacher by speaking to the school office.

3.5. Should any problems arise from contact over messaging apps, the school will act quickly by contacting parents directly, to stop any issues continuing.

3.6. The school can request a meeting with parents if any misconduct, such as sending abusive messages or posting defamatory statuses, occurs online.

3.7. The school's complaints procedure will be followed as normal if any members of the parent teacher association or governing board cause any issues through their conduct whilst using online messaging.

3.8. The headteacher can, with the permission of the parent, view messages sent between members of the parental body to deal with problems quickly and effectively.

- 3.9. The headteacher can request that 'group chats' are closed down should any problems continue between parents or parental bodies.

4. Monitoring and review

- 4.1. The headteacher will review this code of conduct on an annual basis and will communicate any changes to all teachers and parents.
- 4.2. The next scheduled review date for this document is September 2027
- 4.3. All parents will be required to read this code of conduct and sign the Parental Declaration Form should any changes be made.

