



Moat Farm Infant and Nursery School

and Lavender Farm Nursery

Headteacher: Mrs Deborah Walker

Lavender Farm Nursery Manager: Mrs Sian Stevens

www.moatfarm-inf.sandwell.sch.uk



Brookfields Road

Oldbury

West Midlands

B68 9QR

Tel: 0121 552 1885

Tuesday 7th November 2023

Parent WhatsApp groups

Dear Families,

We have been notified of a few parent WhatsApp groups that have been causing concern, particularly around some of the comments that are being made regarding school and school staff.

I would like to assure you that we value open communication and encourage parents to actively participate in their child's education. Our "open door" policy reflects our commitment to fostering a supportive and collaborative environment for both parents and staff members. I would like to draw your attention to the following points:

- Our school has an 'Open Door' policy and believe that parents can readily raise, with staff, any issues they may have. If as a parent or carer, you have any concerns about your child, you should initially raise it with your child's class teacher and if you feel this is not resolved, a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- If you are still unsatisfied then raise your concern with the Head Teacher.
- If you are still unsatisfied then you may refer to the School's Complaints Procedure, which is on our school website, or can be reached using the links:

<http://www.moatfarm-inf.sandwell.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Complaints-Policy-2023-2024.pdf>

If for any reason a parent is unhappy about the way something has been dealt with, we understand that people talk and may 'let off steam', however, some parents have reported occasions when parents have engaged in conversations on social media/WhatsApp groups to voice their criticisms of a school or members of its staff, or make veiled comments about particular children.

As is sometimes the case with the use of social media/WhatsApp groups, comments posted can be malicious, and potentially libellous or defamatory. Of similar concern, such comments

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can often be intemperate and extreme, and remain available for long-term viewing online. To some readers, a comment can carry much weight, and yet be factually incorrect and unfair.

Generally, we tend to be made aware when critical comments, especially personal ones directed against a member of staff, have been posted. When this happens, schools are strongly advised to record as much information about abusive and inappropriate content before seeking its removal.

It is our hope that parents would follow the school's **Parent Acceptable use of the Internet Agreement** and the **Parent Code of Conduct**, and refrain from using social networking sites/ WhatsApp groups to voice concerns regarding school issues. In much the same way that school staff have a legal duty of care that requires them to share with Sandwell Social Care services any information regarding the safety and well-being of any pupils in the school, the Governing Body and Head Teacher have a similar duty of care for the safety and well-being of school staff.

As such, and where considered appropriate, any incident of violent, aggressive or defamatory behaviour shown towards school staff, including comments on social networking sites, WhatsApp groups, will be passed on to the appropriate organisations.

Once again, at Moat Farm Infant School, we welcome parental engagement and our door is always open for any parents. If you have any questions or an issue you wish to raise, please come and speak to us, we appreciate the very positive relationships that the school has with parents but wanted to make you aware of this potential issue.

Thank you to the parents who have brought this to our attention, remember that we are all working towards the same goal - the well-being and education of our children. By fostering a positive and collaborative school community, we can create an environment where everyone thrives.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Deborah Walker
Headteacher

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