

6. MAKING THE MOST OF SOCIAL NETWORKING GROUPS



There are several social networking groups. For this guide, we will focus on a popular one: WhatsApp. You may be part of one or more WhatsApp groups. Even though these groups are active, not all posts may be helpful for your professional development. If used effectively, however, WhatsApp groups can be useful communities of practice and a platform for you to share, learn and grow.

Here are some strategies to help you make your WhatsApp groups effective:

1. Clear guidelines

Working with group administrators and members to make guidelines will help make this a fruitful learning experience. It's very important that all participants know the objectives of the group. Clear rules which are agreed together will help build a collaborative environment and problems can be avoided.

Here are some guidelines you can use for your group:



No greetings and forwards!



Topic for the week



Share experiences and learning



Quiet hours from 10pm to 6am

2. Schedule

Schedule 5-10 minutes every day to check your WhatsApp groups.

3. Useful tools

Star e.g.



Use the star icon to mark interesting messages and links. You can star multiple messages at the same time. These can be retrieved from the WhatsApp menu.

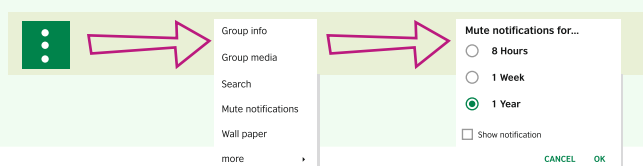
Delete



Delete irrelevant messages or forwards as these may take up your time and are not related to professional development.

Mute

It's a good idea to mute all group chats. Getting notifications throughout the day can be distracting and annoying. To mute notifications, access the user function menu within a chat by selecting the three dots in the top right corner. Then, select mute notifications. Keep 'Show notifications' unchecked.



This guide uses Quick Response (QR) codes. To scan these codes, look for the app in Google Play or App Store and download it for free. To access resources, open the app and hold it above a QR code.

Making the most of social networking groups

4. Engage

Don't be a spectator! Interact with group members by appreciating, sharing ideas, asking questions and seeking advice.



5. Share



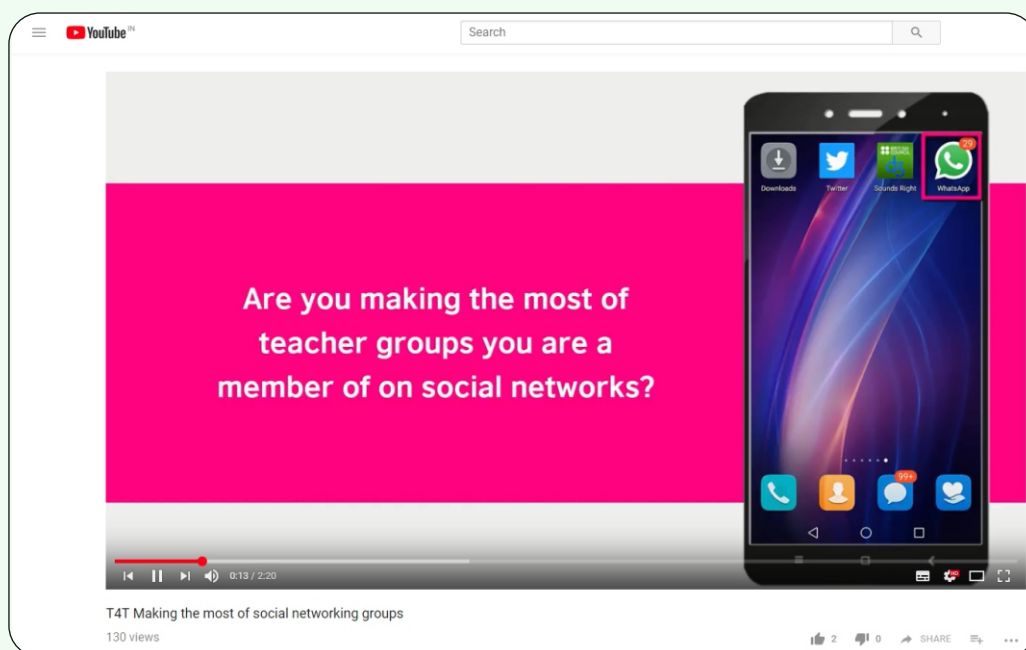
Across social media and on most sites, you'll see this icon.

Use it to share interesting links with group members. You can also share links from within your group to Facebook or Twitter.

6. WhatsApp Web

If the group is very active, you might find it challenging to read messages on your phone. You can access the group on a computer using the link web.whatsapp.com.

Here's a supporting video to show you how you can make the most of this social networking platform:



This guide is linked to the British Council CPD Framework for Teachers.

It develops the professional practice:

Integrating ICT: Promoting collaborative and participatory learning by exploiting online communities, tools and platforms.

Stage: Awareness