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social media and your school community



We're a community – inside the school or in cyberspace/virtual reality – and we need to think about everyone in it.

So, offline and online:



Think **first**

- Think before you click: anything you post onto social media will be there long after you've gone; even if it's in an archive
- Once you have posted content you lose control – your comments may be circulated to others without your permission
- Think about what and when you share: is what you post to or about the school safe, useful, relevant, the best way to do it? If in doubt, don't
- Think about who your message is going to and who else might see it



Think **smart**

- Be smart with social media: ask yourself: are you likely to get a better/faster result if you phone or email the school office or a teacher?
- Contact the school office direct (phone or email) if you need information, especially if you need it in a hurry, for example when the school trip is due back; what time parents' evening starts, when the summer holidays fall
- Make an appointment with your child's teacher and speak to them face-to-face, for example if you are worried about something or want to make a complaint



Think **about safety**

- Do your bit in keeping your own and other children safe online: sharing too much personal information (often people do it without realising) can leave them open to bullying, harassment, grooming
- Something you post in good faith could be used by someone else for personal gain, such as identity theft
- So, it means not sharing your photos or other people's photos or names or locations or other personal information which could be pieced together (a bit like a jigsaw). That could be really risky, say, if these was an issue about child protection domestic abuse, forced marriage and so on



Think **about community**

- Respect: anything you post should be tactful. Once it's online it doesn't go away
- It's best to treat folk online as you would in person (most of us are kind and thoughtful most of the time)
- Check it out first. If you are not sure about something or unhappy about it, speak to someone; ask the school. It's tempting to assume the worst. We all make mistakes, and often it's just blunder rather than a conspiracy
- Ask yourself: how is what you post going to come across? Will it do anyone any good? Will it upset or embarrass your child? What kind of example are you setting? (If you are feeling angry or upset about something, give yourself some time to calm down)
- Over-reacting can upset a lot of people, including children. Something can go viral very quickly
- Keep your messages meaningful, positive and short: stick to the point. the



Think **about your school**

- Sometimes it can take a while to sort out a problem because of the way schools work. Class/subject teachers are accountable to their headteacher, and headteachers are accountable to their local authority education department. Also, decisions affect everyone in a school and it may take time to explore this. So, the wheels can turn slowly but that doesn't mean that nothing is happening
- Try to remember that you are not the only parent/carer; your child is not the only pupil. The school is for everyone; and everyone's different
- Schools don't always get social media right: it's helpful to let them know (respectfully and constructively) how they could do it better



Think **about legal consequences**

- You could face police investigation and legal action if something you post is criminal, abusive, hateful and/or defamatory

