

# **“Friends of Friends”**

## **Common social media issues for Schools and parents.**



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## Welcome

In today's world, your digital life has as much impact as your social life. Behaviour changes towards social networking means that it is socially acceptable, to some extent expected, to have a digital presence on a number of social networking platforms. Facebook is the largest social networking platform with 28 million users in the UK alone. Other platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and google plus are quickly growing.

As social media continues to grow, so do the potential dangers that can occur if we do not take the necessary precautions. Wardle Academy has made the decision to block social media in school, unfortunately this doesn't stop issues arising at home. With the rise in popularity and availability of mobile internet, many young people access the site through their own internet connected devices. If unchecked, problems can escalate rapidly and have a detrimental impact on the rest of the class as well as the individual pupils concerned.

This guide will look at some of the common issues that schools are finding and how to deal with them. The advice is split into two sections: *'Immediate action'* and *'preventative strategies.'* This guide will focus on Facebook as the key example as this is the most popular social media site. Other social networking platforms will be addressed more specifically in additional documents. The majority of scenarios and advice within this document can be considered for all social media platforms. The various sections of this document are a guide for parents, staff and students. It is encouraged that you familiarise yourself with all of the various possible situations.

It is important to note that in order to address the most common social networking issues you will need to have an account with the site. If you are going to create an account, make sure you keep professional and personal use completely separate. For further advice about this, read our guide to social media safety for professionals.

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## Upsetting or offensive comments

### **Typical scenarios**

*A student or member of staff complains that people are posting nasty or upsetting comments on their Facebook page.*

*A student is being bullied on Facebook and other people are writing offensive things on their page.*

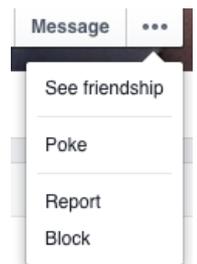
### **Information**

There are two ways that people can post to your Facebook wall. The way that Facebook is set up means that you have to be 'Friends' with somebody on Facebook before you can post comments to their wall. This means that people can control who can post to their wall very easily by simply controlling who they are 'Friends' with on Facebook. You should know that this is not the same for other social media platforms such as Twitter. For more information on other social media platforms, please check back for updated documents.

### **Immediate action: Removing the unwanted post**

To remove a post from you profile, simply hover over the offending post towards the right hand side where you will find a cross. Once you hover over the cross the word 'remove' will appear. Once you click on this button you will be asked if you are sure and then the post will be deleted.

In order to avoid the person continuing to post unwanted comments to your page it is important to block the person who is posting the comments. To do this, click on their profile and look to the right of the large picture at the top of their profile. The menu to the right of the Message button will reveal the option to block the person. Note the 'Report' button. This option will result in Facebook asking you a series of questions that will either help the person if something is wrong with their profile, or report the person to Facebook if they are using Facebook inappropriately.



### **Parents**

If you are partially concerned that your child is receiving posts of a sexual or extreme nature then they need to report the post to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) or the police. You can do this in a number of ways such as visiting the CEOP website: <http://www.ceop.police.uk>, clicking on CEOP via the Facebook app or by calling their local police station directly.

It is recommended that you familiarise yourself with CEOP and make sure that your child is aware of the role of CEOP in protecting them online.

### **Preventative strategies**

Some people may have a number of Facebook 'Friends' who they don't know in real life and this can lead to problems with unwanted posts and comments. It is recommended that you discuss with close ones how adding friends that you do not know can be dangerous.

**What does being a 'Friend' with someone on Facebook mean?** Are they sharing more information with a Facebook 'Friend' than they do with real life friends? Below are two films that explain the dangers of adding 'Friends' that you don't know in real life:

Age 11 - 16: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hK5OeGeudBM>

Age 8 - 10: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8auwnJtqE>

The films shows the dangers of adding people that you don't know in real life to your friends list. It may also be a good idea to raise the issue of adding 'friends of friends'. This is a popular activity amongst young people who will add a friend of a friend even if they do not know them.

The second way of posting onto somebody's wall is through commenting on an existing wall post.

As with all privacy settings in Facebook, you can change your settings to determine who can see your posts. Your settings can be set to:

- 'Everyone'
- 'Friends of Friends'
- 'Friends only'
- 'Customise'

This is set to 'Friends only' by default, however, as with wall posts, this does mean that Facebook users can control who can post to their wall very easily through controlling their 'friends' list.

In instances where the post is part of a wider form of bullying, it is important that the user doesn't delete the evidence; however, they don't want to leave it on their wall. A good skill to learn is the ability to take a screenshot:

To take a screenshot on a PC you need to find the button that says **Prnt Scrn**, you may need to press the **Fn** key at the same time. This copy's the screen image, you will then need to paste the screen image into a document.

To take a screenshot on an Apple computer you need to press **shift+cmd+3**. This will take a picture of the screen which will become available on your computer desktop.

To take a screenshot on an iPad or iPhone press the lock button and the central button at the same time. Please note that there will be different options to take screenshots on different devices. You should explore your device settings to discover these.

If you, your child or your pupil suspect any issues of cyberbullying, that is, any form of bullying that takes place online, then you can contact the school who will report the issue to our dedicated safeguarding officers. There are also a number of websites that can support children with bullying and cyberbullying.

<http://www.cybermentors.org.uk>

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

<http://www.stopcyberbullying.org/>

<http://www.digizen.org/resources/cyberbullying/overview>

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## Harassment through private messages

### **Typical senario**

Your child comes to you and complains that people are sending nasty/upsetting comments to them through the Private message facility on Facebook.

### **Information**

Facebook has a built in private message facility which enables users to send private messages to other people registered with the site. This is a common feature among social media platforms. These messages will appear in the users inbox much like an email. Depending on your privacy settings it may be anybody registered to the same social media site can send you a private message. These messages, while not anonymous, could potentially be from somebody that your child does not know.

### **Immediate action**

If the message is upsetting or harassing you can report the message. To do this click on the settings menu in the conversation's message feed. Within this menu you can find the 'report' button which you can click. Once you click report you will be taken to a form. The form also offers the opportunity to block the person and prevent them sending further messages to your child.



Facebook settings icon

It is recommended that you check that your child has their privacy settings set so on their friends can contact them through the Facebook message facility rather than everyone. You can find out more information on privacy settings on the section 'unwanted or offensive comments'.

### **Preventative strategies**

If your child receives an unwanted message from someone, they can report the message to Facebook. It is important to remember that Facebook will only act if the message is a violation of their Statement of rights and Responsibilities which you can find by clicking on the link.

In instances where the message is part of a wider form of bullying, it is important that the child does not delete the evidence; however, they don't want or leave it in their inbox. It is a good idea to learn how to take a screenshot and save the image and/or print a copy. Once you have taken then copy, you can, if applicable, report the message and delete it.

If you, your child or your pupil suspect any issues of cyberbullying, that is, any form of bullying that takes place online, then you can contact the school who will report the issue to our dedicated safeguarding officers. There are also a number of websites that can support children with bullying and cyberbullying.

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If your child is concerned that the messages are of a sexual or extreme nature, they need to report the post to CEOP or the police. This may be particularly relevant if the post is from someone they do not know in real life.

CEOP facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/clickceop/timeline>

CEOP website: <http://ceop.police.uk>

CEOP is the police department that is there to look after young people online. It is important that you and your child know who to report to if there are concerns.