

Facebook 'cheat sheet' for governors

DO

- ✓ Remove yourself from any private parent groups that are associated with the school name. Being in these groups increases your risk of hearing about parents' concerns outside of the school's complaints procedure and could affect your role in a complaints panel at a later stage
 - ✓ Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if not, ensure that the image is professional
 - ✓ Check your privacy settings regularly
 - ✓ Be careful tagging other governors and staff members in images or posts
 - ✓ Use Facebook's tagging function so that you can accept content you've been tagged in before it appears on your profile
 - ✓ Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone – it recognises wi-fi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same wi-fi connection (such as parents or pupils)
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DON'T

- ✗ Don't accept friend requests from pupils on social media
- ✗ Don't disclose any information which is confidential or would breach data protection principles
- ✗ Don't make comments online about members of your governing board or the school community – once it's out there, it's out there
- ✗ Don't link your governor email address to your social media accounts – anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile phone number) is able to find you using this information

Check your privacy settings

- Change the visibility of your posts and photos to 'Friends only', rather than 'Friends of friends'. Pupils and their families may still be able to read your posts, see things you've shared and look at your pictures if they are friends with anybody on your contacts list
- Don't forget to check your **old posts and photos** – go to bit.ly/2MdQXMN to find out how to limit the visibility of previous posts
- Remember that the public may still be able to see posts you've **'liked'**, even if your profile settings are private, because this depends on the privacy settings of the original poster
- **Google your name** to see what information about you is visible to the public. Facebook also has a setting that allows you to see what your profile looks like to other people, including specific friends and people searching for your name – go to bit.ly/2vJXvJ0 to find out how to do this
- Prevent search engines from indexing your profile so that people **can't search for you by name** – go to bit.ly/2nC3I59 to see how to do this
- Remember that **some information is always public**: your display name, profile picture, cover photo, user ID (in the URL for your profile), country, age range and gender

What to do if:

A pupil adds you on social media

- In the first instance, ignore and delete the request. Block the pupil from viewing your profile
- Check your privacy settings again, and consider changing your display name or profile picture
- If the pupil asks you about the friend request in person, remind them of your school's social media policy (if you have one), or tell them that you're not allowed to accept friend requests from pupils and that if they persist, you'll have to notify senior leadership and/or their parents
- If the pupil persists, take a screenshot of their request and any accompanying messages
- Notify your senior leadership team (SLT) or headteacher about what is happening

A parent adds you on social media

- It is at your discretion, in accordance with your school's social media policy and/or code of conduct, whether to respond. Bear in mind that:
Responding to one parent's friend request or message might set an unwelcome precedent for both you and other governors
Pupils may then have indirect access through their parent's account to anything you post, share, comment on or are tagged in
- If you wish to decline the offer or ignore a message, consider drafting a stock response (either individually or as a school) to let the parent know why you are doing so

You are being harassed on social media, or somebody is spreading something offensive about you

- Do not retaliate or respond in any way
- Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred
- Report the material to Facebook or the relevant social network and ask them to remove it
- If the perpetrator is a current school pupil or staff member, the school's own mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents. Refer this matter to the chair of governors and headteacher so these procedures can be followed
- If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, the school should invite them to a meeting to address their concerns, make any reasonable complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material
- If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or someone from the school should consider contacting the local police
- Contact The Professionals Online Safety Helpline for any further advice if necessary

Do you have access to The Key for School Governors?

Membership covers your entire governing board. If you haven't registered yet:

- Go to www.thekeysupport.com/gov
- Click 'School already a member?'
- Complete the 2-minute registration process

You'll have immediate access to practical guidance and resources to help you perform your role effectively.