Dealing with Complaints Against Education Settings on Social Networking Sites

Guidance for Education Setting Leaders

Kent
County
Council
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Contents

Disclaimer

This document was last reviewed and updated in August 2024. This guidance is based on content written by the LADO and Education Safeguarding Advisory Service, with input from the Kent Area Directors Education (ADEs) and Schools Personnel Service, and draws upon national advice and guidance from the UK Safer Internet Centre.

Kent County Council make every effort to ensure that the information in this document is accurate and up to date. If errors are brought to our attention, we will correct them as soon as practicable.

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1. Introduction

The increasing number of people using social networking sites has had both a positive and adverse effect on the reputation of settings in local communities. Many education settings use social media as an effective tool for parental engagement, for example, to forward information through Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or X (previously known as Twitter), and all parents are encouraged to comment regularly to Ofsted through Parent View. However, in some cases, parents have bypassed the official complaints procedures and taken to social networking sites to criticise and, in some cases, make malicious comments about individuals, or regarding decisions that have been taken by education leaders.

> **There is no single effective method of dealing with complaints on social networking sites. However, settings can take a proactive approach to minimise incidents rather than having to be reactive and put together a quick response to stop the spread of rumours. This guidance shares approaches education settings could use to deal with any problems, as well as preventative approaches, to help ensure that parents/carers follow the appropriate complaints procedures.**

The use of social networking sites to express opinions reflects how people already share their views online; people use sites such as 'Trip Advisor' to review holiday accommodation and are encouraged to give online assessments of products they have purchased. However, remarks made about a setting, member of staff or child can be destabilising for a community and for the professional status of staff members who may have had allegations made against them. It can also lead to a 'whispering campaign' which can undermine leadership or target a child or family, and can have a negative emotional impact on those who may have been identified

A key question is how settings should respond to complaints made on social networking sites by parents/carers; often, settings will only become aware of a concern when they are brought to their attention by a child, member of staff or parents who has access to the comments as the vast number of social media platforms means that it can be hard for settings to proactively monitor issues being discussed. A settings online reputation is important; however, leaders should be mindful that proactively looking for content may potentially have a detrimental impact on staff health and wellbeing and should ensure appropriate support is available. Online reputational searches and/or responding to specific concerns should only be undertaken by members of leadership who have the resilience to cope with potentially negative commentary about their setting or colleagues and/or indeed, themselves.

> **Education is a public matter, so it is important to understand that a level of scrutiny is inevitable at times. Online censorship will not be possible, so a proportionate and measured response should be taken by leaders where content impacts on the daily running of a setting or poses a risk of harm to members of the community.**

2.   Responding to Specific Concerns

It is important to acknowledge that each situation will be different; there may be complicating factors which need to be considered. The following guidance outlines the basic steps leaders and managers could take when responding to specific concerns. A flowchart is provided within Appendix 1.

Keep calm

> **Although sometimes difficult, it is essential that leaders ensure that their response to comments posted on social media is proportionate and impartial.**
>
> **Overreactions or emotionally led responses are likely to inflame the situation which can mean that a successful positive outcome is less likely to occur for all involved.**

Parents and members of the public are entitled to hold opinions about education settings, many of which will be positive, some might not be so pleasant. Expressing negative views is not always illegal and it usually isn't possible to prevent people posting comments about settings online. Unless a criminal offence has been committed, for example they make a credible threat towards someone's safety (such as death threats or other specific threats of violence towards staff or children), named a teacher who is subject to an allegation, contained hate content or could be considered as harassment, comments cannot and will not always be removed. Please see appendix 2 for further details on potential legal implications.

However, this does not mean that this behaviour should be tolerated, especially if it is directed at specific members of the community. The best course of action is for leaders to adopt a partnership approach with parents, where possible, and to speak directly with any members of the community involved when concerns are raised.

In some cases, leaders may decide that the best response will simply be to monitor the situation. In these situations, leaders should still follow the below guidance regarding gathering evidence in case action is required at a later stage.

Gather evidence

When a setting becomes aware of any information that is damaging towards an individual member of staff and/or the community, it is important to gather evidence (such as screenshots and printouts which include times, dates and names where possible) and establish exactly what has been posted. It is important that evidence be obtained so that the facts can be established.

When dealing with cases involving Facebook, parents may have set up a page or public/private group to discuss or in some cases, criticise the setting or members of staff. On a Facebook page or a public group, comments will be public and can be viewed by anyone. In a private group, they will only be visible to group members. It is important, where possible, to find out who has set up the page or group; often this is the parent who has the grievance. It can be difficult to trace the owner of a Facebook page, however, groups clearly identify which members are administrators and closed groups also publicly list all members.

It is essential that members of staff, including non-teaching staff and governors, do not become embroiled in discussions as this can aggravate the situation. Leaders should ensure that members of staff are aware of how to respond to concerns - further information is contained within section 4: 'Preventative Actions'.

> **It is important that any evidence is kept, enabling settings to collate a record of events; this should include usernames, specific dates and times, as well as actions taken. In many situations this will be a one-off concern which can be resolved quickly, however in some situations this could be part of a bigger or ongoing issue. A clear chronology will be essential if further action is required.**

In some cases, parents may post comments on their own personal social media profiles; the visibility of these comments will depend on the individual parent's privacy settings. If a comment is public (on Facebook for example, this is indicated by the presence of a globe icon next to the post) then it is likely that it will be visible to anyone who has access to the internet, even if they do not have a specific account.

Depending on the site/app involved, other privacy settings may include "friends only" or "close friends"; this means only those people who are friends with the original poster, or those who are members of a smaller selected group can see the comment/content. In most group chats, comments/content will only be visible to members of the chat. In cases where comments/content has been shared in closed group chats, or with "friends of friends" or "friends only", it is essential that headteachers/managers ensure that the identity of the person who bought the concern to the settings attention is protected as far as possible.

Reassuring those affected

i.   Supporting staff

If staff are being harassed or directly named online, leaders have a duty to protect them from third party harassment. Appropriate support will depend on the nature of the concerns and the reaction of the individual.

If the member of staff is aware of the comments, headteachers/managers should explain to them how they intend to address the concerns and offer support to them. Leaders should encourage staff to let them know if there is any further support that they feel they need.

If the member of staff is unaware of the comments, headteachers/managers should consider if it necessary to inform them, and if so, what would be the best approach. Depending on the nature of the comments, this decision may require additional advice:

- Staff may wish to contact their professional union and other networks for additional support and guidance. For example, in Kent KALE have peer support available for school leaders.
- Support may be accessed via the Education Support Network: Education Support
- Staff and leaders can also access help via the UK Safer Internet Centre's Professional Online Safety Helpline (POSH): Professionals Online Safety Helpline - UK Safer Internet Centre
- Headteachers/managers may want to take legal advice from their personnel provider or other legal support services.
- Headteachers/managers may be able to access support via the Local Authority such as via education management and/or safeguarding; in Kent, for example, this could include the Area Directors for Education (ADEs).
- If any allegations have been made against a member of staff (even if the setting believe they are malicious), headteachers/managers will always need to discuss those concerns directly with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).

> **Additional resources, links and support**
> - The Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) has useful guidance for schools and settings.
> - POSH have published 'Responding to Online Reputational Issues and Harassment Directed at Schools and School Staff' which may be helpful for leaders.
> - Childnet Teacher Guidance: www.childnet.com/teachers-and-professionals/for-you-as-a-professional
> - The Department for Education Preventing and Tackling Bullying www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
> - The NAHT have useful guidance on their website. www.naht.org.uk

ii. *Supporting other members of the community*

There have been cases where negative or malicious comments posted on social media have not been about a member of staff, but about a child or another parent. It is important that headteachers/managers are aware of the need to promote the wellbeing and safety of the whole community, however, they should also be aware of some of the limitations and be clear about how achievable this may be in some cases.

When responding to issues where parents are writing negative or unkind comments about other parents, the setting needs to consider how best to mediate concerns (if appropriate) and to what extent they can resolve concerns if they are having a detrimental impact on the setting. In cases where there is a concern regarding potential for physical violence, headteachers/managers will need to involve the police.

In some cases, there may be a requirement to consider the potential safeguarding impact (including emotional consequences and a risk to physical safety) on children if comments are made online about them. In many cases children will be unaware of these comments, especially where they are not using social media, however in some situation's children may be made aware by their parents.

Settings should be aware that 'playground' gossip can cause considerable emotional distress to children, therefore safeguarding action will be required. A discussion may need to take place with a wider group of parents, and settings may need to undertake direct work with a group of children to address concerns. In some cases, it may require involvement of other external agencies (such as the police, if credible threats to safety are being made) in line with existing safeguarding procedures.

If Kent headteachers/managers are unclear about how to respond, they can seek advice from the ADE.

Meet face to face (ideally) with parents or carers involved

> **In most incidents, a face-to-face meeting with the parents involved can resolve the matter. This allows the headteacher/manager to identify the parents' concern and will help ensure that a suitable solution is put into place, or to instigate the official complaints process.**

In many cases, the reason why a parent has made comments about the setting or staff members is due to being oblivious about the implications of making such comments, or because they are unaware of or disillusioned with the complaint procedure. An initial response via a formal letter can in some cases exacerbate situations, and often ends up being shared on social media itself; a face to face or "offline" discussion is likely to have a more positive outcome.

The headteacher/manager (or other appropriate member of senior leadership staff) should attempt to meet with the parents to express their disappointment with the current situation and explain that the setting would like to work with them to resolve the problem that is obviously causing them distress. If multiple parents are involved, settings should consider how best to respond safely and effectively, whilst maintaining confidentially. This may require multiple meetings with parents on an individual basis.

Headteachers/managers should address the matter of social networking with the parents concerned and explain how this behaviour can have a detrimental impact on the setting and potentially their children's education, while not allowing the setting to address their concerns. It can be helpful to discuss the importance of considering any messages they post online in the future, as these can have a detrimental impact on themselves as well as the wider community. Parents should be made aware that comments posed online (even if made privately) can easily be misread or misinterpreted.

At this meeting, if possible, it may be helpful to have printouts of any allegations or comments made by the parents available so their concerns can be discussed and if possible, addressed. Settings should take steps to ensure that any content (such as names or usernames) which could identify the individual who bought it to the settings attention is removed. It is also recommended that settings keep the copies of any 'evidence' and do not let parents take it away with them.

Headteachers/managers can request that any offending posts, content, comments or pages etc. are removed. Parents should be invited to work with the setting by following the official complaints procedure if they remain unhappy. If parents refuse to remove content, headteachers/managers can report the concern to the website (see appendices for advice regarding reporting) or in some cases, escalate the concern to the [Professional Online Safety Helpline](#).

If the meeting does not have a successful outcome, it is important for the headteacher/manager to stress that the setting may consider taking further action to resolve the matter if/as appropriate and legal advice should always be sought in relation to this.

It is important leaders are cautious not to exacerbate situations or cause further problems, however, the professional status of staff and the setting needs to be maintained and cannot be compromised by malicious comments or allegations. The setting may want to warn the parents that any existing comments or a continuation of posts could lead to civil or criminal action being taken, (legal advice should be sought before making this comment) but the setting would prefer to avoid having to take this route.

If headteachers/managers think that a criminal offence has been committed or believe that speaking directly to the parents would lead to a confrontation or offence being committed, they should speak with their local police contact to work together to support the setting in discussing this with the parent concerned in more detail.

If headteachers/managers are concerned that children may be at risk of harm, they should respond in line with their child protection policy and involve other agencies as appropriate; in Kent that may mean making a request for support through the Front Door Service.

3.   Resolving Difficult Situations

If the matter is not resolved through a face-to-face meeting, the setting has several options to try and address the situation. While the setting will not want to escalate the matter unnecessarily, it is crucial they try to come to a sensible and proportionate conclusion.

Arrange a further meeting and invite the chair of governors/committee

To ensure that the parents understand the seriousness of the matter, a further meeting could be arranged with the chair of governors or committee (as appropriate to the setting) present to convey the damage that these comments are having on the community. It is essential that the chair of governors etc. is fully briefed before the meeting and that a common approach is taken by the setting to address this matter. Again, it gives an opportunity for the parents to share any grievances and for an action plan to be established to deal with any concerns expressed.

If parents refuse to meet with the setting, the headteacher/manager/chair of governors may wish to use the final letter in appendix 2. Please note that all other options should be explored before using this letter.

Report content to the site involved

If parents do not agree to remove any offending content, the setting can report content to the website where it has been posted. This raises a 'ticket' with those who monitor content on the site, so they can assess this in relation to whether any of the terms and conditions have been violated. Information about how concerns can be reported to some of the most popular social networking sites can be found in the appendices. For other services, it will be necessary to visit the specific site being used; many platforms have specific help or report sections.

Settings should be aware that there may be a time delay in the review of this content and that if the content does not breach the terms and conditions, the site administrators will not remove it.

If the content is not removed by the website, some settings may find it helpful to escalate the concern to the [Professional Online Safety Helpline](#) and to use tools available via [Report Harmful Content](#).

It is important to remember that forced removal of profiles/content/comments will usually only occur if they break the law or breach the website's terms and conditions, so this route will not guarantee removal and may not prevent parents/carers creating/posting new content in the future.

Seek further advice

The final step in some cases may be for a setting to seek legal advice on comments posted online. In some cases, this has resulted in a letter from a solicitor being sent out to the parents warning them that malicious comments or allegations could result in legal action. Headteachers and managers should be aware that this can have a detrimental impact and may worsen situations; it is therefore recommended to try all other possible routes first. Advice may be available via existing support channels, such as professional unions, personnel providers, legal support services or trusts/academy chains etc.

If an allegation has been made against a member of staff, advice must always be sought from the LADO at an early stage and in line with local procedure. This is important to safeguard both the member of staff, and the setting.

In cases where a criminal offence has been committed, police advice should be sought at an early stage. This should usually take place via 101, but if there is an immediate risk or threat of harm to any member of the community, this should be reported via 999. It is advisable that settings record any crime reference numbers etc., even if police action is not considered to be necessary.

If there is a concern that content poses a safeguarding concern to children, headteacher/managers should respond in line with their child protection policy and involve other agencies as appropriate; in Kent that could mean making a request for support through the Front Door Service.

If there is a concern that content posted online may indicate an adult is at risk, social care and any other agencies should be informed as appropriate: Report abuse - Kent County Council

If education settings are concerned that an issue may receive media attention for example, local/national press may become involved/aware, the school/setting may wish to consider drafting a media response. Support with this may be available via Unions, Local Authorities or Academy Trusts etc. For Kent education settings, the KCC Press Office can be accessed via: www.kccmediahub.net/about

Dealing with complaints from members of the public

In some cases, complaints may be posted on social media by a member of the public; this could be a friend or family member of a parent, or someone completely unknown to the setting. In these situations, settings may only be able to act if the comments are criminal or are deemed to have broken the sites terms and conditions.

Leaders should consider if it is always required for them to respond directly to complaints made by members of the public. If it is deemed necessary, it is important to ensure the response if proportionate and impartial as overreactions or emotionally led responses are likely to fuel the situation further. In some cases, leaders may decide that the best response will be to monitor the situation. Leaders should still gather evidence and record decision making in case further action is required at a later stage.

If the person is known to a parent (for example, they have commented on parents own post on their Facebook profile), the best approach will be to discuss the concern with the parent as outlined in section 2.

If the person is not identifiable (for example, anonymous accounts on google reviews or X/Twitter profiles), the setting should report the content to the site concerned but be aware that it may not be removed unless they breach the sites terms and conditions. If sites are unable to take content down, additional advice can be sought from the [Professional Online Safety Helpline](#).

If the comments posted by a member of the public give the setting a reason to believe that a member of the community is at risk of harm, such as credible threats made against an individual, or that a criminal offence has been committed, advice should be sought from the police.

If education settings are concerned that an issue posted online by a member of the public may receive media attention, they may wish to seek advice from their local authority press team. Additionally, advice may be gathered via their own support channels, such as professional unions, personnel providers, legal support services or academy chains etc. For Kent education settings, the KCC Press Office can be accessed via: www.kccmediahub.net/about

4.   Preventative Actions

Malicious comments about settings can have an unwanted effect on the setting's ethos and can result in a detrimental effect on children and young people. It is crucial that settings take steps to try and prevent these types of issues from occurring.

It is important for leaders to be realistic about what they hope to achieve when responding to negative comments or complaints on social media. Leaders should remember that isn't always possible to prevent parents posting comments online, and comments cannot always be removed. The focus should therefore be on achieving the best outcomes for children, especially if they are at the centre of the concern.

Build a whole community ethos towards safe use of social networking

Settings may wish to regularly highlight awareness regarding responding use of social networking such as via school/setting newsletters etc. Example text and letters can be found in appendix 3.

If there have been specific issues, settings could consider sending a specific letter to parents to encourage them to be mindful about what they post on social networking sites and to be aware of the impact such comments could have on the community. The letter could also include the fact that unpleasant or hurtful comments should not be posted online as they may potentially be considered as a criminal offence. Settings should ensure parents involved are spoken to first and be mindful not to share information which could identify members of the community. For template letters please see appendix 3.

The setting may want to remind all parents of the official communication and complaints channels which are available to be used should they need them, as this is the most appropriate way of dealing with any concerns. Settings may also wish to remind parents that they can "report" any unpleasant comments or content to Facebook or other social networking sites, who may remove comments and block/ban users who break these rules. Parents should also be aware of the importance of role modelling appropriate behaviour for their children online, much like they should offline.

Leaders should ensure that all members of staff receive safeguarding training that is robust and up-to-date and covers online safety, as identified within 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE). This training should include ensuring that all members of staff know how to respond to concerns they may see online in a way that supports the setting and does not compromise their professional role. Leaders should ensure that all members of staff sign an Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUP) and are aware of expectations with regards their use of social media.

Acceptable Use of Technology Policies (AUP)

Settings should have an AUP that is signed by staff and learners (as appropriate to their age and ability) to ensure that they use digital technology and the internet safely and understand the sanctions resulting from breaches of this policy. Many settings have included statements that refer to parental support on this matter and these also ask parents to monitor children and young people's use of digital technology and social media while they are out of the setting.

Policies should be reviewed and, where necessary, updated on an annual basis; settings could include a statement on parental use of social networking. Please be aware that this approach can sometimes be difficult to enforce. AUP templates can be found on our website.

Example statements:

 I will support the school/setting approach to online safety. I will role model safe and positive online behaviour for my child by sharing images, text and video online responsibly.

 I, together with my child, will not deliberately upload or add any images, video, sounds or text that could upset, threaten the safety of or offend any member of the school/setting community.

Setting policies (including the complaints policy)

Whenever there is a dispute between a parent and a setting, it is important that the complaints procedure is followed so that grievances are taken seriously, and solutions can be quickly found to ensure that a learner's education is not disrupted. The complaints policy should be easily accessible via the setting website. Headteachers/managers may also wish to draw attention to this concern in other related polices including anti-bullying, Safeguarding, online safety, data protection/security and confidentiality.

In accordance with KCSIE, schools and colleges should have a staff behaviour policy (sometimes known as a code of conduct) which covers the use of social media. Settings may choose to have a specific social media policy or could integrate this within existing policies such as their child protection or online safety policy. A social media policy should cover appropriate use of social media by the setting and identify appropriate behaviour on social media for all members of the community. A template social media policy can be found on the Kelsi [website](#).

Home-Setting Agreements

Most settings have a contract between parents and the setting to ensure that children and young people are fully supported with their learning and welfare both inside and out of the classroom. Many of the statements refer to parents reinforcing settings' policies on homework, behaviour and conduct. To counter parents discussing sensitive issues about individual staff or learners on social networks, many settings include a statement on the Home-Setting Agreement. While it is difficult to monitor parents' use of social networking and enforce the agreement, it does show that the setting takes this matter seriously. As parents have signed the agreement, they do have a responsibility to act appropriately.

Example home-setting agreement statements:

"We will support the school/setting approach to online safety and will not upload, share or add any pictures, video or text that could upset, offend or threaten the safety of any member of the school/setting community".

"Parents/carers are reminded to use existing structures when making any complaint about the school/setting or a member of staff. They are advised not to discuss any matters on social networking sites."

"If at any time during your child's time at xxxx school/setting, you wish to make a complaint, then you are advised to follow the school's complaints procedure, which can be found on the school website [insert link]. We request that all parents and carers refrain from using social networking sites to discuss sensitive issues about the school/setting."

Promote positive use of social media

Some settings are now exploring the proactive use of social media as a positive engagement tool for parents. Many social media complaints arise out of parental frustrations and because parents may feel that they are not listened to or valued by settings; therefore, many parents take the matter out of the settings hands and set up unofficial and unapproved profiles, pages or groups.

In some cases, profiles, pages or groups may be set up and run (either officially or unofficially) via parent teacher associations or other similar groups. It is important that in these cases the headteacher/manager is involved in ensuring that the groups/pages are run in accordance with the settings policies and clear boundaries are in place about appropriate online behaviour.

If a setting has an official and appropriately managed profile, page or group, this can minimise some of the concerns or ensure that the setting has a way to respond appropriately via an official and approved communication channel.

Other approaches

Headteachers/managers may want to consider implementing a range of routes to encourage parents to raise concerns directly with the setting, for example ensuring a senior member of staff is available on the gate at the start and end of the day, dedicated email accounts etc.

5. Responding to 'Fake' Accounts Targeting Settings and Staff on Social Media

Another common issue reporting by schools and settings relates to social media accounts being set up, sometimes using schools' names, and/or sharing inappropriate and sometimes derogatory and bullying videos relating to schools and/or individual learners or staff members. In November 2021, there was a significant increase in concerns reported across the country following a national viral trend.

These accounts often share images of learners and/or staff, usually taken from the school or settings website or by learners when on site or, in some cases, have been taken from learners or staff members' personal social networking profiles. They may claim to the representing the school and use the school or settings logos, or they may be using titles such as school/setting name 'Muggies/Muggy' or other similar 'baiting' headlines and invite people to contribute their own content or rumours. In many cases the videos/images shared by these accounts is felt to be 'offensive', could be viewed as bullying or harassment, and in some cases may be making potential allegations against staff or are sharing potentially criminal content.

In most cases, these accounts can be traced back to learners as part of a 'prank', and they are seeking to gain large numbers of views and followers. Whilst the intention for sharing this material often begins as a 'joke', it can have a considerable emotional impact on learners and staff and the school/setting being targeted, as well as there being potential criminal or disciplinary consequences for those involved in the creation of the accounts.

We appreciate this can be a distressing issue for schools. Support from the UK Safer Internet Centre Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) have published advice and also have an in-depth article about reporting fake accounts online. The Professionals Online Safety Helpline have also put together a short video which explains the issue, including how educators can report distressing content and how to contact POSH for further support. The SWGfL have also published 'Responding to Online Reputational Issues and Harassment Directed at Schools and School Staff'.

Dealing with Specific Concerns

There may be complicating factors which need to be considered and, in these situations specific advice may be sought from the Local Authority, and/or the UK Safer Internet Centre Professional Online Safety Helpline is advised. However, in general, if this issue is bought to your school or settings attention, we suggest the following approach.

Gather Evidence

Identify an appropriate member of the senior leadership to collate evidence of the concerns to ensure prompt and appropriate action can be taken; we suggest this is the DSL and/or headteacher/manager due to the potentially sensitive nature of the content. The DSL may need to take safeguarding action, and if allegations or low-level concerns about staff have been posted, the headteacher/manager will need to seek advice or report concerns to the LADO.

Take screenshots/copies of the content and make notes of any usernames posted or interacting with the content, as well as times and dates content was posted etc. This will enable the setting to build up a chronology and look for patterns of behaviour. Make a note of any accounts on any 'followers' and 'following' lists as well as any users who have posted comments etc. or reshared the content.

Staff and children reporting concerns should be advised not to engage with content or become embroiled in any discussions as this can aggravate the situation – concerns should be passed to the DSL and/or headteacher/manager immediately.

Undertake an Initial Investigation

Due to data protection laws, social media companies are likely to only release personal information about account owners to law enforcement in specific circumstances. Unless criminal offences have been committed, police action is unlikely, so settings may need to undertake their own initial internal investigation to try and identify the account owner. In most cases, these accounts are set up by someone within the community, usually learners, however, staff and parents have also been identified to be behind fake accounts.

Begin by analysing the information gathered and look for patterns within this. For example, are specific friendship groups or year groups involved, have any locations been shared or tagged etc. It can be helpful to cross-reference the 'followers' and 'following' lists - in many cases the person behind the account can be found on both lists as users will often follow their own personal accounts etc. to boost numbers and reshare content!

Speak directly with any members of the community known to have interacted with the account in any way; the concern and the seriousness of the issue should be discussed with them and their parents if appropriate, and learners should be given the opportunity to share any information they may have.

If this isn't successful, the next step could be to talk about social media use more generally with the wider community. We recommend information is kept as general as possible to avoid generating additional attention. For example, not naming specific accounts as this can be counterproductive and could result in copycat accounts being set up. If it is felt to be appropriate, we suggest settings state that an account(s) which is posting harmful content online has been bought to their attention and this will be taken very seriously, as with all forms of bullying and harassment.

If the setting speaks directly to learners, such as in tutor groups or assemblies, we suggest ensuring several members of staff are present to monitor children's reactions and provide safeguarding support as necessary.

In some cases, settings opt to mention that if it is felt to be necessary, legal action may be taken, including the possibility of police being informed. This can be a risky approach as in some cases the police may not be able to help, however, some settings have found this results in a member of the community sharing information about the account owner, someone admitting they set it up, or the account being deleted.

Apply Internal Sanctions/Support to Account Creators

While this content can be distressing to settings and their staff, in many cases they are likely to have been created as a 'joke' and without any consideration to the emotional impact it could have on individuals, or indeed the potential reputational damage it could have for settings.

If the setting can identify the account creator, action should be taken in line with existing policies such as behaviour, anti-bullying, social media and acceptable use. This could include requesting the account is deleted as well as providing targeted education, support and/or sanctions.

If there are any safeguarding or child protection concerns for any of the children or families involved, for example the children are vulnerable and/or known to services, additional action may be required, such as making a request for support or speaking with their social worker or equivalent.

Provide Support to Staff/Learners

Leaders and managers need to be mindful of their duty of care to those involved. Where this involves staff, there is a specific duty on employers to protect their staff from third party harassment. Appropriate support for staff members will depend on the nature of the concerns and the reaction of the individual.

If the member of leaner/ member of staff is aware of the issues, managers/headteachers should explain to them how they intend to address the concern and offer support to them, for example via internal and external support such as counselling or for staff, well-being helplines such as Education Support etc. Leaders should encourage learners and staff to let them know if there is any further support that they feel they need.

If the learner/member of staff is unaware of the comments, headteachers/managers should consider if it necessary to inform them, and if so, what would be the best approach to do so. Depending on the nature of the comments, this decision may require additional advice, for example if the comments involve staff, for the local authority, the LADO and/or any legal or personnel advice.

Staff (and indeed headteachers/managers) may wish to contact their professional union for additional support and guidance. Leaders/managers may also take additional legal advice, for example via their union or personnel provider, especially if civil issues such as libel/slander are a concern.

Report

If a specific issue has occurred, settings may wish to communicate with, and make it clear to all staff, learners and parents that this behaviour is not acceptable, and any form of bullying and harassment will not be tolerated.

- It is important settings be realistic about what they hope to achieve and ensure the focus is on safeguarding all members of the community and achieving the best outcomes for children and indeed staff.

- Although sometimes difficult, it is essential settings ensure that their response is proportionate; incorrect information, overreactions or emotionally led responses are likely to inflame the situation or can undermine the settings credibility and this can mean a successful positive outcome is less likely to occur for all involved.

If the setting believes that a criminal offence has or could be committed, for example the content contains credible threats to someone's safety, hate crimes (for example, racist, homophobic content), malicious communication, persistent harassment, and/or sexual harassment (including 'upskirting' or other similar offences), the police should be informed, via 101, or 999 if there is an immediate risk.

If a potential allegation has been made against a member of staff, or a low-level concern has been shared, this should be discussed with the LADO in line with local allegation and child protection policy and procedures. This should take place even if the school believe the claim to be malicious.

If a criminal offence has not been committed and the setting is not able to identify the person behind the account, the remaining option is to report the content and accounts to the social media platform directly.

If staff have been specifically featured on fake accounts, they can file a privacy violation report, or alternatively the headteacher/manager or a member of leadership can do this on their behalf – in most cases platforms do not require staff or schools to have a registered account.

If the content being shared is protected (for example it contains trademarked or protected logos or content), many platforms offer options to report this under copyright violations etc.

If the platform does not remove the account/content following a report and the account is having a significant impact on the setting community and staff, additional advice and support may be accessed via the [Professional Online Safety Helpline](#) (POSH)

- Please be aware social media platforms can sometimes take some time to respond to reports - we suggest allowing at least 72 hours for a response.
- POSH has some useful information for schools regarding police action and fake accounts [here](#).
- Individuals can also be advised to report concerns via [Report Harmful Content](#).

Preventative Action

Getting fake accounts taken down is a positive outcome and should send a clear message that this behaviour is not tolerated within our communities. However, if an account is removed, it does not always prevent the person behind it from creating additional ones or stop others within the community from setting up 'copycat' accounts. It's therefore important that all settings consider preventative action they can take as part of a long term, whole setting approach.

- Review your policies to ensure that online behaviour is specifically addressed and that clear and effective procedures for dealing with incidents are in place.
- Clarify expectations on learner behaviour and conduct with staff, parents and learners, including your expectations regarding the use of mobile technology on site and social media.
- Revisit your curriculum approaches and ensure online safety is viewed as part of your RSHE approaches. Consider if there is sufficient regular and embedded education taking place regarding appropriate online behaviour and use of social media; this should include healthy relationships, positive use and respect.
- Revisit your staff training and staff behaviour policy. Ensure all staff are aware of the process to follow if they are aware of a concern or become a victim of bullying and how they can access support. Remind all staff to ensure they have appropriate privacy settings on personal social media sites and are checking these settings regularly.
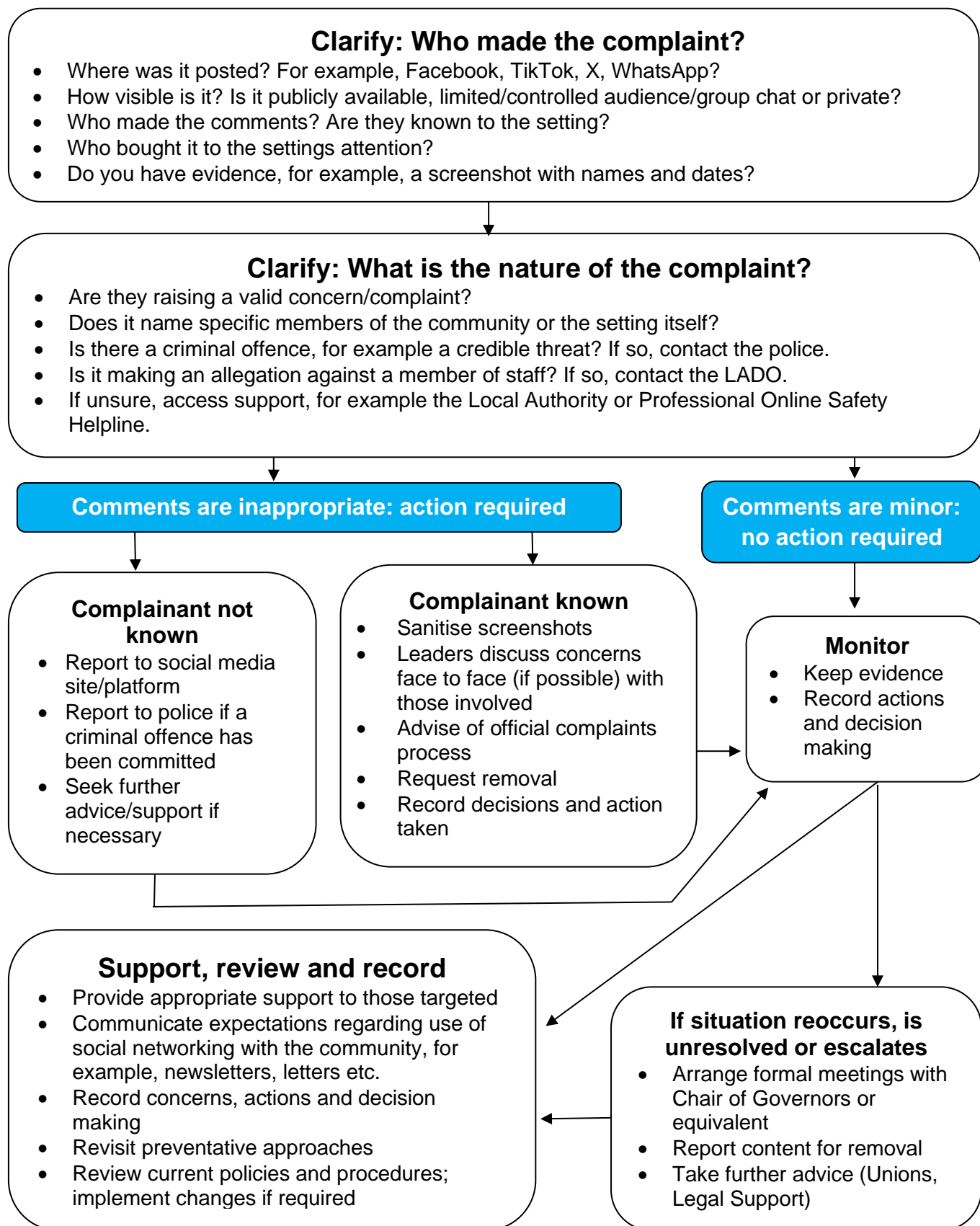
6. Conclusion

Education settings cannot monitor every comment posted on social networking sites, but they can be proactive in trying to ensure that parents and carers are aware of the appropriate processes in place to raise complaints or concerns, as well as their responsibility to act as a 'positive online role model' to their children.

In the age of social media, all education institutions need to be robust against criticisms and opinions. Complaints by parents/carers are not a new issue for education settings, in the past many parents have made comments on the playground or have gone to local media outlets such as newspapers to highlight decisions or complaints. However, today, these complaints can easily be shared in the public domain and a post on a social networking site can reach thousands of users instantly, damaging reputations and giving a misleading slant to any issue.

It is important that education setting leads are proactive in implementing preventative approaches to minimise the likelihood of complaints on social media, but also that they take prompt and proportionate action when concerns are brought to their attention.

Appendix 1: What to do if a complaint is made on a social networking site

Clarify: Who made the complaint?
- Where was it posted? For example, Facebook, TikTok, X, WhatsApp?
- How visible is it? Is it publicly available, limited/controlled audience/group chat or private?
- Who made the comments? Are they known to the setting?
- Who bought it to the settings attention?
- Do you have evidence, for example, a screenshot with names and dates?

Clarify: What is the nature of the complaint?
- Are they raising a valid concern/complaint?
- Does it name specific members of the community or the setting itself?
- Is there a criminal offence, for example a credible threat? If so, contact the police.
- Is it making an allegation against a member of staff? If so, contact the LADO.
- If unsure, access support, for example the Local Authority or Professional Online Safety Helpline.

Comments are inappropriate: action required

Comments are minor: no action required

Complainant not known
- Report to social media site/platform
- Report to police if a criminal offence has been committed
- Seek further advice/support if necessary

Complainant known
- Sanitise screenshots
- Leaders discuss concerns face to face (if possible) with those involved
- Advise of official complaints process
- Request removal
- Record decisions and action taken

Monitor
- Keep evidence
- Record actions and decision making

Support, review and record
- Provide appropriate support to those targeted
- Communicate expectations regarding use of social networking with the community, for example, newsletters, letters etc.
- Record concerns, actions and decision making
- Revisit preventative approaches
- Review current policies and procedures; implement changes if required

If situation reoccurs, is unresolved or escalates
- Arrange formal meetings with Chair of Governors or equivalent
- Report content for removal
- Take further advice (Unions, Legal Support)

Appendix 2: Legal Information

In most circumstances where parents/carers or members of the public are expressing an opinion or experience, it is not usually possible to take legal action. However, if settings feel it is necessary to pursue a legal course, we recommend they contact legal support services and/or the police.

In some situations, comments posted on social media may be a criminal or civil offence; if so, action could be considered under some of the following legislation.

> **Please note, this is not legal guidance. Settings are advised to take/seek appropriate legal advice as required.   This list is not exhaustive, and, in some cases, other legislation may apply**.

Criminal Concerns

- **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**: This Act is relevant for incidents that have happened repeatedly (i.e. on more than two occasions). The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it a criminal and civil offence to pursue a course of conduct which causes alarm and distress, which includes the publication of words. The victim can also bring a civil claim for damages and an injunction against the abuser, although this is a remedy that is only used by individuals with the financial means to litigate. It is only possible if the abuser can be identified, which is not always possible.

- **Malicious Communications Act 1988:** Section 1 makes it an offence to send an indecent, grossly offensive or threatening letter, electronic communication or other article to another person with the intention that it cause them distress or anxiety.

- **Public Order Act 1986 (sections 17 — 29)**: This Act makes it a criminal offence to stir up racial hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening.

- **Communications Act 2003:** Section 127 covers all forms of public communications, and subsection (1) defines an offence of sending a 'grossly offensive…obscene, indecent or menacing' communication. Subsection (2) defines a separate offence where for the purposes of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety, a person sends a message which that person knows to be false (or causes it to be sent) or persistently makes use of a public communications system.

- **Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006.** This Act makes it a criminal offence to threaten people because of their faith, or to stir up religious hatred by displaying, publishing or distributing written material which is threatening.

- **The Education Act 2011** makes it an offence to publish the name of a teacher who is subject to an allegation until such a time as that they are charged with an offence. All

members of the community need to be aware of the importance of not publishing named allegations against teachers online as this can lead to prosecution; settings should contact the LADO for further guidance.

Civil Concerns: Libel and Privacy

Comments made online by parents could possibly be classed as 'Libel' in some cases. Libel is defined as 'defamation by written or printed words, pictures, or in any form other than by spoken words or gestures'. The authors of such comments can be held accountable under Defamation law, which was created to protect individuals or organisations from unwarranted, mistaken or untruthful attacks on their reputation.

Defamation is a civil "common law" tort in respect of which the Defamation Acts of 1952 and 1996 provide certain defences. It applies to any published material that damages the reputation of an individual or an organisation, and it includes material published on the internet. A civil action for defamation can be brought by an individual or a company, but not by a public authority. Libel is a civil and not criminal issue and specific legal advice may be required. Legal advice should be sought if settings or individuals which to consider taking further action.

Where defamatory material is posted on a website, the person affected can inform the host of its contents and ask the host to remove it. Once the host knows that the material is there and that it may be defamatory, it can no longer rely on the defence of innocent dissemination in the Defamation Act 1996. This means that the person affected could (if the material has been published in the jurisdiction, i.e. in England and Wales) obtain a court order (an injunction) to require removal of the material and could sue either the host or the person who posted the material for defamation. Legal advice should be sought if settings or individuals which to consider taking this action.

Other issues

If social media is used to publish private and confidential information (for example breaches of data protection act) about an individual, it could give rise to a potential privacy claim. It is possible to seek an injunction and damages. Legal advice should be sought if settings or individuals which to consider this action.

Appendix 3: Template letters

<u>Please be aware that settings must not share any information which could compromise a live police or other investigation; please seek advice before using these templates if this is a possible risk</u>

i. Preventative approaches

General Awareness Information for Newsletters

At <school/setting name>, we strive to achieve the best for all children; however, we recognise that on some occasions you may feel that we could have done better.

We would be grateful if parents do not use social media to raise complaints but instead, we encourage you to come into school/setting and speak with us so that we can understand your concerns and help solve the problem. Complains on social media can be damaging for the school/setting, its staff and most importantly for the children.

We would like to encourage you to come in and discuss any concerns with us by (insert details, for example, speaking with the headteacher/manager). If you feel that an issue has not been dealt with appropriately, we will provide you with a copy of the formal complaint procedures.

Many thanks in advance for your support in this matter.

[Name]

Headteacher/Manager/Chair of Governors

General Awareness Letter for all parents

Dear Parent/Carers

Online Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at <school/setting name>. We can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work with you to ensure that safety messages are consistent and that all members of the community behave safely and appropriately online.

We are writing to you to request your support in ensuring that our children have responsible online role models when posting and sharing content on social media sites. Whilst we are all entitled to have our own views and opinions, we would like to ask that all members of our community consider how our comments may be misunderstood or misinterpreted when shared online, and the possible impact and consequences on others of our online actions.

If parents have any concerns or complaints regarding the school/setting, then we would like to request that they be made using official channels, so we can work together to help resolve the concerns. The complaints procedure, anti-bullying policy and other relevant policies are available online via our website [link] or upon request at the office.

As responsible adults it's important we all consider the potential impact and implications of online behaviour for ourselves and our families, as well as other members of the community Our school/setting is keen to work in partnership with parents and carers to promote responsible internet use and acknowledge how important your role is in setting a good example of positive and responsible online behaviour for your child.

More information about online safety can be found at the following places:

- www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/
- www.saferinternet.org.uk
- www.childnet.com
- www.nscpcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
- www.internetmatters.org

If parents/carers wish to discuss this matter further or have any other online safety concerns the please contact [Name] Designated Safeguarding Lead, or myself (if different).

Many thanks in advance for your support in this matter,

[Name]

Headteacher/Manager/Chair of Governors

ii.   Letters following specific issues

Do not use this letter if sharing it could identify members of the community and do not send this letter until the parents/carers involved have been spoken with

Template Incident Letter (following a specific issue) for all parents/carers

Dear Parent/Carers

Online Safety is an important part of keeping children safe at <school/setting name>. We can only be successful in keeping children safe online if we work with you to ensure that online safety messages are consistent and that all members of the community behave safely and appropriately online.

Unfortunately, it has been brought to our attention that some parents/carers have been using social media to complain and/or be abusive about the school/setting and/or members of staff/parents/children in the school/setting community. Amend as appropriate – please remember the need for confidentiality; this section can be removed.

Whilst we are all entitled to have our own views and opinions, we would like to ask that all members of our community consider how this may be misunderstood or misinterpreted when shared online and the possible impact and consequences of these actions. Whilst we can

continue to raise the profile of online safety, we need the help of the whole community to support us in keeping our wider community safe online.

It is important that all members of our community understand that the use of technology (including social networking, mobile phones, games consoles and other websites) to deliberately threaten, upset, harass, intimidate or embarrass someone else could be viewed as cyberbullying or harassment. Cyberbullying is just as harmful as bullying in the real world and is not tolerated at <school/setting name>. We take all instances of cyberbullying or harassment very seriously as we want all members of our community to feel safe. Posting threatening, obscene or offensive comments online can potentially be considered as a criminal offence and can therefore have serious consequences. Amend as appropriate.

Any complaints should be made using the correct and official channels, so we can work together to help resolve any concerns that parents may have. The complaints procedure, anti-bullying policy and other relevant policies are available online via our website (link) or upon request at the office.

I would like to ask all parents to think carefully about the information and comments they post online. As responsible adults it's important that we all consider the potential impact and implications posting such content may have on you and your family as well as other members of the community. I would also like to remind all parents about the need for us all to work in partnership to promote responsible internet use. Your role in setting a good example of positive and responsible online behaviour for your child is crucial.

If parents wish to discuss this matter further, or have any other online safety concerns the please contact [Name] Designated Safeguarding Lead, or myself (if different).

Many thanks in advance for your support in this matter,

[Name]
Headteacher/Manager/Chair of Governors

iii.   Letter to use with parents specifically involved in concerns

This template should be used with care/caution and only sent if you are unable to meet with parents involved directly, ideally this should be face to face

Dear parent/carer

It has been drawn to my attention that you have recently made comments online on [site] relating to [event]. I enclose a screenshot of the material in question, which you will note has been signed and dated.

I am disappointed that you have chosen to use this medium to express these views and I am greatly concerned about the tone of the comments made and their abusive and threatening

nature [substitute for more appropriate adjectives if necessary] relating to another member of our community.

It is important that all members of our community understand that the use of technology (including social networking, mobile phones, games consoles and other websites) to deliberately threaten, upset, harass, intimidate or embarrass someone else could be viewed as cyberbullying or harassment. Cyberbullying is just as harmful as bullying in the real world and is not tolerated by our school/setting. <school/setting name>takes all instances of cyberbullying or harassment involving any members of our community seriously, as we want members of the community to feel safe and happy both on and offline. Amend as appropriate.

Please contact me at your earliest convenience to arrange an appointment as I would appreciate a meeting with you to discuss this matter in an open and constructive manner. I emphasise that the conversation will remain confidential. My colleague [name and role, for example, chair of governors] will be present to act as note-taker, and you may also wish to be accompanied by a family member or friend (if needed). Amend as appropriate.

I am sure that we will be able to resolve this situation and achieve a positive outcome. I look forward to meeting with you.

Yours sincerely,
[Name]
Headteacher/Manager/Chair of Governors

Appendix 4: How to report/remove content on Facebook

Please note this content is subject to change; settings are advised to always access Facebooks help section to ensure the processes followed are up to date.

Removal

To remove a Facebook post

To remove a comment of a Facebook profile the user must access their profile and click on ⌄ in the top right of the post and then select the "delete"
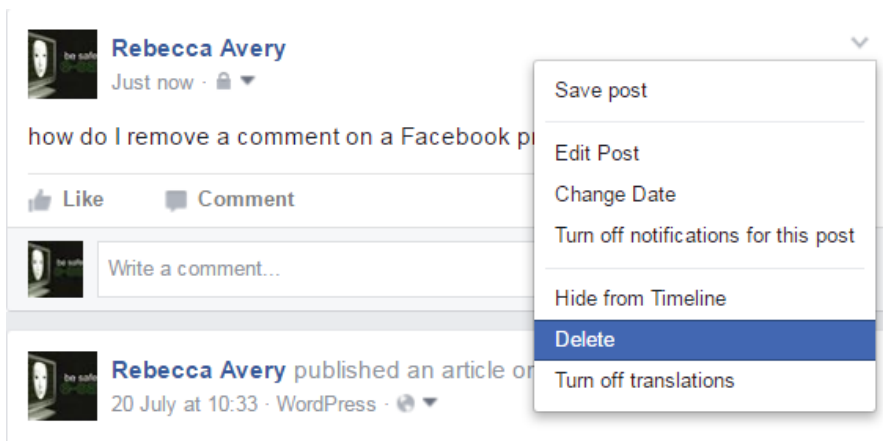
To remove a Facebook page

Only Facebook or the page administrator can delete a Facebook page. To remove a page admin should:

1. Click Settings at the top of your Page
2. From General, click Remove Page
3. Click Delete [Page name] and follow the on-screen instructions

To remove a Facebook group

Only Facebook or the page administrator can delete a Facebook group. Groups are automatically deleted when they have no members. If you've created a group, you can delete the group by removing all its members and then yourself.

1. Go to the group you want to delete and click Members below the cover photo
2. Click ⚙ next to each member's name and select Remove from Group
3. Select Leave Group next to your name once you've removed the other members

Note: An admin can't delete a group they didn't create unless the original creator chooses to leave it.

Reporting

When something gets reported to Facebook, they will review it and remove anything that doesn't follow the Facebook Community Standards. Facebook don't include any information about the person who filed the report when they reach out to the person responsible. Please keep in mind that reporting something to Facebook doesn't guarantee that it will be removed.

Headteachers/managers may wish to encourage the member of the community who bought the concern to the settings attention to report the issue themselves.

Finding the URL (web address) of a Facebook post

Please note this is not always possible to obtain via the Facebook app. Access will be required via a web browser.

To get a URL:

1. Click the date or time link in the post or comment
2. Copy the link in the web address bar (see EXAMPLE below)

Reporting without an Account

If the headteacher/manager does not have a Facebook account, a report can be made via this form: www.facebook.com/help/contact/274459462613911

To report a concern without an account then you will require the link (URL) to the specific content you're reporting (see above). If you're unable to provide the link to the content, Facebook may be able to find the content if you provide as much of the information below as possible:

- Link to the Facebook profile, Page or group that created the content that you're reporting, and the time and date that the content was posted
- A screenshot of the abusive content. If possible, the screenshot should include the name of the person, Page or group that created the content you're reporting and the time and date it was posted.

To report a Facebook profile:

1. Go to the profile you want to report
2. In the bottom right of the cover photo, click [...] and select **Report**
3. Follow the on-screen instructions

To report a specific comment/post:

1. Click ⌄ in the top right of the post, you want to report and select **I don't want to see this**
2. Click **Why don't you want to see this?**
3. Choose the option that best describes the issue and follow the on-screen instructions

To report a photo or video:

1. Click on the photo or video to expand it
2. Click **Options** in the bottom right
3. Click **Report Photo** for photos or **Report Video** for videos

To report a message:

1. Open the message you'd like to report
2. Click ✱ **Actions** in the top right
3. Click **Report Spam or Abuse...** and follow the on-screen instructions

To report an abusive Page:

1. Go to the Page you want to report
2. Click ••• on the Page's cover photo
3. Select **Report Page** and follow the on-screen instructions

Facebook will review the Page and remove anything that doesn't follow the Facebook Community Standards. Facebook may also warn or disable the person responsible.

To report a group:

1. Go to the group you want to report
2. Click ••• at the top right
3. Pick **Report Group** from the dropdown menu

To report a comment:

1. In the top right, click ✖
2. Select **Report**

Appendix 5: How to report/remove content on X/Twitter

Please note this content is subject to change; settings are advised to always access X/Twitters help section to ensure the processes followed are up to date.

Removal

To delete a Tweet

1. Visit your **Profile** page.
2. Locate the Tweet you want to delete.
3. Click the ⌄ icon
4. Click **Delete Tweet**.

Be aware:
- When a Tweet is deleted, it is removed from the users account, the timeline of any accounts that follow the user, and from Twitter/X search results.
- Retweets of the deleted Tweet will also be removed.
- If other people have copied and pasted part or all of the text into their own Tweet, their Tweets will not be removed.
- If other people have Retweeted the Tweet with a comment of their own, their Tweets will not be removed.
- Tweets may be cached or cross-posted on third-party websites, applications, or search engines. Twitter/X cannot remove Tweets that are not on twitter.com, Twitter for iOS, or Twitter for Android.

Reporting

When something gets reported to Twitter/X, they will review it and remove anything that doesn't follow the [Twitter Rules](#) or [Terms of Service](#). Specific policies that may be helpful to access include the [Hateful conduct policy](#) and the [Trademark policy](#).

Twitter/X doesn't include any information about the person who filed the report when they reach out to the person responsible. Please keep in mind that reporting something to Twitter/X doesn't guarantee that it will be removed or that an account will be suspended.

Anyone can report abusive behaviour directly on Twitter/X. Headteachers/managers may wish to encourage the member of the community who bought the concern to the settings' attention to report the issue themselves.

It's important to be aware that once you have reported content to Twitter/X, it will disappear from your timeline or inbox; it's therefore recommended that you obtain screenshots (including usernames, times and dates) before doing this.

Additional information about reporting abusive behaviour to Twitter/X can be found at:
https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/report-abusive-behavior

How to find a Tweet's URL

In some cases, it may be helpful to access the URL (web address of a Tweet)

1. Navigate to the Tweet you'd like the URL of.
2. Click the ⌄ icon located within the Tweet.
3. From the pop-up menu, select Copy link to Tweet. The URL should now be copied to your clipboard.

Whenever you view a Tweet's permanent link, you can see:

- The exact time and date the Tweet was posted.
- The number of favourites and retweets the Tweet received.

Reporting without a Twitter/X account

If the headteacher/manager does not have a twitter account, a report of someone on Twitter engaging in abusive or harassing behaviour can be made via this form:
https://help.twitter.com/forms/abusiveuser

To report a concern without an account then you will require the link (URL) to the specific content you're reporting (see above how to do this).

How to report profiles for violations:

1. Open the profile you'd like to report.
2. Select the overflow icon ⋮ (via twitter.com and Twitter for Android) or tap the gear icon ⚙ (from Twitter for iOS).
3. Select Report and then select the type of issue you'd like to report.
4. If you select 'They're being abusive or harmful', Twitter/X will ask you to provide additional information about the issue you're reporting. Twitter/X may also ask you to select additional Tweets from the account you're reporting so they have a better context to evaluate your report.
5. Twitter will include the text of the Tweets you reported in any follow-up emails and notifications to you. To opt-out of receiving this information, please uncheck the box next to 'Updates about this report can show these Tweets'.
6. Once you've submitted your report, Twitter may provide recommendations for additional actions.

How to report an individual Direct Message:

1. Click into the Direct Message conversation and find the message you'd like to flag.
2. Hover over the message and click the report icon when it appears.
3. Select 'Report @username'.
4. If you select 'It's abusive or harmful', Twitter/X will ask you to provide additional information about the issue you're reporting. Twitter/X may also ask you to select

additional messages from the account you're reporting so they have better context to evaluate your report.

5. Once you've submitted your report, Twitter/X provides recommendations for additional actions you can take to improve your Twitter/X experience.

How to report a Tweet:

1. Navigate to the Tweet you'd like to report on twitter.com or from the Twitter/X for iOS or Android app.
2. Click or tap the ⌄ icon.
3. Select Report.
4. Select 'It's abusive or harmful'.
5. Twitter/X will ask you to provide more information about the issue you're reporting. Twitter/X may also ask you to select additional Tweets from the account you're reporting so they have better context to evaluate your report.
6. Twitter/X will include the text of the Tweets you reported in follow-up emails and notifications to you. To opt-out of receiving this information, please uncheck the box next to 'Updates about this report can show these Tweets'.
7. Once you've submitted your report, Twitter/X will provide recommendations for additional actions.

How to report an account that has been blocked:

You can report an account that you have blocked or that has blocked you.

1. Go to that account's profile and click or tap the gear icon ⚙ or overflow icon ⋮ and select 'Report'.
2. Twitter/X will ask you to provide additional information about the issue you're reporting.

Appendix 6: How to report/remove content on TikTok

Please note this content is subject to change; settings are advised to always access TikTok's help section to ensure the processes followed are up to date.

Removal

To delete a video:
1. View the video you want to delete.
2. Tap the **3-dot icon** on the right of the video.
3. Select **Delete**.

To delete a comment you posted or a comment that was posted on your video:
1. On the video, tap the **comment icon** on the right to get to the comments.
2. Press and hold on the comment you want to delete.
3. Tap **Delete**.

To delete comments on your video in bulk:
1. On the video, tap the **comment icon** on the right to get to the comments.
2. Press and hold on a comment or tap the pencil in the top left corner.
3. Tap **Manage multiple comments**.
4. Tap next to the comments you'd like to delete. You can select up to 100 comments.
5. Tap **Delete**, then tap **Delete** to confirm.

To delete your account:
1. Tap **Profile** in the bottom right.
2. Tap the **3-line icon** in the top right.
3. Tap **Settings and Privacy**.
4. Tap **Manage account** > **Delete account**.
5. Follow the instructions in the app to delete your account.

Reporting

To report someone on TikTok:
1. Go to the person's profile.
2. Tap the **3-dot icon** in the top right.
3. Select **Report** and follow the instructions provided.

To report a suspected underage account:
1. Go toTikTok's online [reporting form](#).
2. Select **Report an underage user** on the form.
3. Enter the account information and click **Submit**.

To report a video in the TikTok app:
1. Go to the video you need to report.

2. Press and hold on the video.
3. Select **Report** and follow the instructions provided.

To report a comment:
1. Long press the comment that you want to report.
2. Select **Report** and follow the instructions provided.

To report comments in bulk:
1. Long-press on a comment or tap the pencil icon in the upper left corner to open a window of options.
2. Tap **Manage multiple comments**.
3. Select up to 100 comments.
4. Tap **More.**
5. Tap **Report comments.**

To report a hashtag:
1. Tap the hashtag you want to report.
2. Tap **Share**.
3. Select **Report** and follow the instructions provided.

To report another issue:
1. Tap **Profile** in the bottom right.
2. Tap the **3-line icon** in the top right.
3. Tap **Settings and Privacy**.
4. Tap **Report a problem**.
5. Select a report topic.
6. Submit your feedback and provide a contact email.

TikTok also have an online form to report content.

Appendix 7: How to report/remove content on Instagram

Please note this content is subject to change; settings are advised to always access Instagrams help section to ensure the processes followed are up to date.

Removal

To delete a photo or video from your story:

1. Go to your story by tapping **Your story** at the top of feed.
2. Tap ··· **More** (iPhone) or ⋮ **More** (Android) in the bottom right of the photo or video that you'd like to delete.
3. Tap **Delete**, then tap **Delete** again to confirm.

To delete a photo or video you've added to your story on Facebook:

1. Go to the **Stories** section at the top of your News Feed.
2. Click **Your story**.
3. Click to find the photo or video you want to delete.
4. Click ••• in the top right.
5. Click **Delete photo** or **Delete video**.

If a photo or video is deleted from a story on Facebook, it will also be deleted from Messenger. Any changes made to stories will update across both apps.

Content that you choose to delete is removed from your account immediately and moved to **Recently Deleted**. Content in **Recently Deleted** will be automatically deleted 30 days later, or up to 24 hours for stories that aren't in your stories archive. During those 30 days, you can access deleted content from your account in Recently Deleted on the Instagram app for Android and iPhone and either restore it or permanently delete it.

To delete your Instagram account, following the guidance here.

Reporting

Report a post through feed

1. Tap ··· (iPhone) or ⋮ (Android) above the post.
2. Tap Report.
3. Follow the on-screen instructions.

Report someone through their profile

1. Tap their username from their feed, story post or from your chat with them. You can also tap 🔍 and search their username to go to their profile.
2. Tap ··· (iPhone) or ⋮ (Android) in the top right of the profile.
3. Tap Report.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions.

If you don't have an Instagram account, you can report abuse, spam or anything else that doesn't follow Instagram's Community Guidelines using this form.

After you've reported something on Instagram, you may be able to check the status of your report.

Learn more about reporting different types of content on Instagram and what you can do if you don't agree with Instagram's decision about content you've reported.