



Guidance for schools using Facebook

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Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Creating a school Facebook presence | 3 |
| To Facebook or not to Facebook? | 3 |
| Questions to ask | 3 |
| What do we want to achieve? | 3 |
| What are the alternatives? | 4 |
| What are the risks and what would the impact be on the school if one of those risks actually happened? | 4 |
| Who will be responsible for the content? | 6 |
| Are appropriate policies in place? | 6 |
| Facebook Terms & Conditions to be aware of | 7 |
| Key points: | 8 |
| Facebook settings | 9 |
| The school as a standard user | 9 |
| The school as a page | 9 |
| The School as a group | 10 |
| Creating your account/page/group | 11 |
| Creating a School Facebook Account | 11 |
| Creating a school Facebook Page | 14 |
| Creating a school group | 17 |
| School Facebook Checklist | 20 |
| Useful links: | 21 |
| Primary Schools using Facebook | 21 |
| Secondary Schools using Facebook | 21 |
| Secondary Departments using Facebook | 21 |
| Copyright | 21 |
| Acknowledgements | 21 |



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Creating a school Facebook presence

To Facebook or not to Facebook?



Whether we like it or not Facebook is one of the only websites which schools can almost guarantee that the majority of parents and students will visit. As with any web publishing tool, Facebook has its critics and, if used irresponsibly, can cause myriad problems for schools; but increasingly many schools are finding that it is a free and effective way of engaging with parents. The decision to use Facebook as a communication tool must not be taken lightly and a number of different factors must be considered before any page is set up.

Questions to ask



1. What do we want to achieve?
2. What are the alternatives?
3. What are the risks and what would the impact be on the school if one of those risks actually happened?
4. Who will be responsible for the content?
5. Are appropriate policies in place?

What do we want to achieve?

Most schools have access to a number of different communication tools, e.g. school website, blogs, VLEs, text-messaging systems, notice boards, newsletters, etc. Before adding another communication tool to the list it is important that schools have a clear rationale. If, as a school, you are already paying for different systems, you may wish to consider focusing the energy spent creating and updating a Facebook page onto increasing user interest in existing tools. For example, consider if your school website can be used to create a live feed that can update parents regularly.

However, there are a number of benefits to using Facebook and, for some schools, it is the most successful communication tool they have. Schools have found that, if used well, a Facebook account can

1. Increase parental engagement
2. Communicate more effectively with parents about school events etc. - as they often have Facebook on their phones
3. Deter people from setting up unmonitored Facebook groups or pages
4. Communicate with students (over 13) and the wider public



Guidance for schools using Facebook

What are the alternatives?

Before embarking on the process of developing a school social-media presence it is worth investigating what alternatives you have. You may find that you already use different tools that can be developed to provide the facilities that Facebook offers. For example, blogs can be used to post photographs and allow comments or to act as a discussion board with greater control over comments and views.

Schools are now obliged to provide a basic website which includes a wide range of information and, where possible, it makes sense to establish the website as the first point of call for parents. YHGfL member schools automatically have free access to video, podcast and blog hosting which can be linked directly to your site and offer the opportunity for simple real-time updating.

If your school has taken the decision to invest in a virtual learning environment (VLE) or commercial website it is worth investigating the different communication options they may offer. Many VLE providers, and indeed some website developers, offer the option of a parent account which can be used to develop a parent area that allows discussion boards as well as promoting and encouraging general VLE use.

It is important to remember that, unlike many tools used for communication, Facebook is not designed with schools in mind; therefore there will always be a compromise of some sort.

What are the risks and what would the impact be on the school if one of those risks actually happened?



If used carefully, Facebook can be a powerful tool for communication. However, as with any web publishing site, there are risks; and it is vital that schools have explored the consequences of these and fully accepted them before setting up a presence online.

Schools intending to use Facebook need to be very mindful of their obligations under both data and child protection and for their responsibility to protect the reputation of the school. Ultimately, if the account leads to a breach of law, puts a child at risk or in danger or causes something untoward to happen as a result of the school's activity, then the headteacher, the governors and the person with responsibility for the site will be answerable in law. The school can also expect to receive significant negative press coverage.

Kent has produced a useful document for risk assessing the use of any new technology in schools which is a must read. It covers the different aspects of risk and also provides a helpful checklist.

Using Social Media and Technology in Education Settings (2011, Edition 2)

www.kenttrustweb.org.uk//Children/safeguards_esafety.cfm



Guidance for schools using Facebook

As part of the eSafeguarding role in school a risk register should exist and this will need updating to reflect the use of Facebook to engage with stakeholders.

Data Protection



No personal data – including full names or contact details should be discoverable on the Facebook page. Potentially, this includes personal Facebook pages [under EU law](#) (although UK courts are less clear, data protection is guided by the EU).

Child Protection

There should be nothing on the site that could lead to anyone discovering the identity of a child or where they live. This should be reflected in your school's eSafeguarding policy and photography and image policy (if you have a separate one).

Bear in mind that schools may have children involved in custody cases and witness-protection schemes. Also consider that children under 13 do have (illegal) accounts and the location services could potentially be activated. This may cause problems if pupils are commenting on your page and do not have adequate privacy settings.

Finally be aware of parents commenting on photographs which may enable people to identify their child and other details. For example, if a parent has included personal information on their profile and has not set their privacy settings then personal information may be discoverable.

Reputation

The local press are not forgiving. A school's reputation is important and it is the headteacher's and governing body's moral duty to protect that status.



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Who will be responsible for the content?

As with any website, it is important that a designated individual(s) is charged with overall responsibility for keeping the content up to date. It is important that this person is clearly identified and that procedures, e.g. usernames and passwords, are securely recorded for continuity purposes. You may also wish to make it clear to parents about expectations relating to updating the site, e.g. updates during holidays or weekends. The following points will need consideration

1. Who will be responsible for updating the account?
2. How often will updates occur?
3. How will the account be policed at the weekend?
4. Will the account remain active during school holidays?
5. What continuity measures do you have in place?
6. Who will be responsible if inappropriate comments are seen by parents or pupils?
7. What measures are in place for misuse by staff or pupils and parents? How will this apply to accidental misuse?
8. Is a process in place for checking if content is approved for publication or will this be down to the designated individual?

Are appropriate policies in place?



Policies and guidelines will need to be in place and approved by the governors to ensure there are clear rules for what can and cannot go onto the site and to ensure the site is regularly monitored with at least one person with distinct responsibility for monitoring and accepting or rejecting comments. While this may seem onerous, ultimately it will help protect the pupils, staff and the school.

The eSafeguarding policy will need updating to reflect the use of social media and to ensure that all stakeholders have clarity on publishing and use.

We would also strongly recommend that the school develops a separate Social Media policy that is shared with the whole school community and clearly outlines the guidelines and rules on the use of the page. Ideally both policies will be shared with parents via the school website.

All Acceptable Use Policies will need to take the practice around staff and students using social media on behalf of the school into account. In particular it is vital that policies reflect any measures that would be taken should deliberate misuse occur.

Finally you will need to update your Home School Agreement or develop a new agreement for parents that states expectations in relation to comments, complaints and use of the site. A letter explaining the rationale behind using social media and the safeguards along with the rules that parent and carers need to adhere to before accessing the group may be useful. This should include a statement related to the school stance on underage users.



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Using photographs

Schools using Facebook are advised to modify their parental permission for photographs to explicitly state that pictures may be used on social media. You may also need to advise parents on publishing images on their own Facebook accounts. Many parents will question why images can be published on the school Facebook page and not their own individual page and it is important that you have a clear response for this.

Underage Users

It is inevitable that some pupils in school will have set up Facebook accounts, even if they are underage. As a school you need to make a decision about whether you will accept 'likes' from pupils under the age of 13. You will also need to outline your school stance in a statement to parents.

Facebook terms and conditions to be aware of

Facebook has a number of terms and conditions that you are expected to follow upon creating an account. Stretching to a little over 4,500 thousand words these are detailed under the following headings

1. Privacy
2. Sharing your Content and Information
3. Safety
4. Registration and Account Security
5. Protecting Other People's Rights
6. Mobile and Other Devices
7. Payments
8. Special Provisions Applicable to Social Plugins
9. Special Provisions Applicable to Developers/Operators of Applications and Websites
10. About Advertisements and Other Commercial Content Served or Enhanced by Facebook
11. Special Provisions Applicable to Advertisers
12. Special Provisions Applicable to Pages
13. Special Provisions Applicable to Software
14. Amendments
15. Termination
16. Disputes
17. Special Provisions Applicable to Users Outside the United States
18. Definitions
19. Other



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Key points

Sharing your content and Information

'For content that is covered by intellectual property rights, like photos and videos (IP content), you specifically give us the following permission, subject to your [privacy](#) and [application settings](#): you grant us a non-exclusive, transferable, sub-licensable, royalty-free, worldwide license to use any IP content that you post on or in connection with Facebook (IP License).'

Essentially this means that any content you post can be used by Facebook unless you have restricted access to certain users (this is only possible via the user/group solution).

Registration and Account Security

'1. You will not provide any false personal information on Facebook, or create an account for anyone other than yourself without permission.'

Technically by choosing a username 'YHGfL School' it could be argued that this breaches point 1. However it would also be possible to argue that this is not false personal information.

'2. You will not create more than one personal account.'

If you already have an existing personal account it could be argued that a school account breaches point 2.

'8. You will not share your password (or in the case of developers, your secret key), let anyone else access your account, or do anything else that might jeopardize the security of your account.'

In this document we recommend that you have more than one person responsible for the account and that the account details are stored securely. A solution could be to create a page and have more than one admin person but be aware that this can very easily get quite complicated.

As previously stated it is important to remember that Facebook is primarily designed for individuals to use in a personal capacity and therefore the terms and conditions are written with this in mind.

As a school you will need to make a decision based on everything discussed in this document, a comprehensive risk analysis and with an understanding of the terms and conditions of the site.



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Facebook settings

There are three different options that schools can take when setting up a Facebook page. All options require a basic Facebook account. The different options and their pros and cons are outlined below.

The school as a standard user

In this instance a user account is created in the name of the school in the same way that a personal account is used. Parents would need to send a 'friend' request to the school and if accepted they would have access to the timeline. This is not recommended as an appropriate route by Facebook. The Facebook terms and conditions state that you must use your real name when establishing a Facebook account therefore to create a school account you would be in breach of the sites terms and conditions.

Pros

- You can control who views any content

Cons

- The school user would be able to see everything a parent writes, for some parents they may feel this is an invasion of privacy
- It relies on parents signing up
- How will the school verify parents? What about other family members e.g. grandparents, aunts etc

The school as a page

An existing Facebook account is used to create a Fan page about the school. The content of the page is publicly available and users like the page to follow any updates or new posts. This is the Facebook-recommended route for schools wishing to have a social media presence.

Pros

- Anyone can 'like' the page to follow it without giving access to their timeline
- It is searchable so parents can easily find it
- Users can be blocked from viewing the page if they are causing problems

Cons

- Anyone can see the page content
- Anyone can like or comment on content



Guidance for schools using Facebook

The School as a group

There are 3 types of group available on Facebook, Open, Closed and Secret. All groups require a Facebook account first. The recommended option would be a closed group as you can then control who sees the content.

 **Open:** Anyone on Facebook can see and join the group. Open groups will appear in search results and all content that members post (ex: photos, videos and files) is visible to anyone viewing the group. People may see who joins or is invited to an open group, such as in news feed or search. [Learn more.](#)

 **Closed:** Anyone on Facebook can see the group name, its members and people invited to join the group; but only members can see posts in the group. To join a closed group, a member needs to add users, or you can ask to join. People may see when someone joins or is invited to a closed group, such as in news feed or search. [Learn more.](#)

 **Secret:** Non-members can't find these groups in searches or see anything about the group, including its name and member list. The name of the group will not display on the timelines of members. To join a secret group, you need to be added by a member of the group.

Pros

- You can control who views the content
- You don't have to be 'Friends' with the parents as you can email them an invite
- You can see who has viewed each post you make

Cons

- Limited control over posts made by others



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Creating your account, page or group

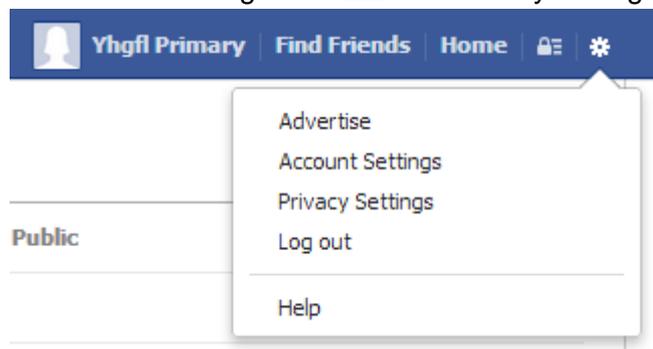
In this section you will find detailed screenshots showing how to set up each of the types of page possible. If you decide to have a page or group you will still need a user account.

Creating a school Facebook account

It is important that the master school account is not personally owned by a member of staff for both safeguarding and continuity purposes. Regardless of how you choose to use Facebook, you will need to set up an account. It is a good idea to tie this account to a generic school email, e.g. admin@

1. Go to www.facebook.com
2. Register using the name and email you have chosen
3. Fill in the Sign Up page
4. Before clicking the 'Sign Up' button take a screenshot (this will be useful if you forget your details)

5. Choose the settings icon >>> Privacy settings



6. Set 'Who can see my stuff?' to 'Friends'



Guidance for schools using Facebook

7. Ensure that you have 'Use Activity Log' and 'Limit Past Posts' selected.

Privacy Settings and Tools

| | | | |
|------------------------------|---|----------|------------------|
| Who can see my stuff? | Who can see your future posts? | Friends | Edit |
| | Review all your posts and things you're tagged in | | Use Activity Log |
| | Limit the audience for posts you've shared with friends of friends or Public? | | Limit Past Posts |
| Who can look me up? | Who can look you up using the email address or phone number you provided? | Everyone | Edit |
| | Do you want other search engines to link to your Timeline? | On | Edit |

8. Choose Timeline & Tagging from the menu on the left.

9. Ensure all the options are on or set to 'Friends' or 'Only me'

Timeline and Tagging Settings

| | | |
|--|--|-------------|
| Who can add things to my timeline? | Who can post on your timeline? | Friends |
| | Review posts friends tag you in before they appear on your timeline? | On |
| Who can see things on my timeline? | Review what other people see on your timeline | |
| | Who can see posts you've been tagged in on your timeline? | Friends |
| | Who can see what others post on your timeline? | Friends |
| How can I manage tags people add and tagging suggestions? | Review tags people add to your own posts before the tags appear on Facebook? | On |
| | When you're tagged in a post, who do you want to add to the audience if they aren't already in it? | Only me |
| | Who sees tag suggestions when photos that look like you are uploaded? (this is not yet available to you) | Unavailable |



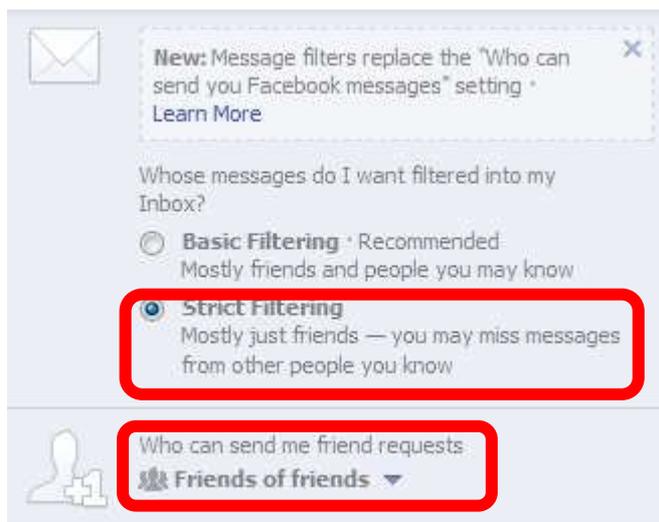
Guidance for schools using Facebook

Finally, if you are only using this account to manage a page, it is a good idea to prevent people messaging you or adding you as a friend.

1. Choose **Privacy shortcuts >> Who can contact me?**



2. Set the options to **'Strict Filtering.'**
3. Set the option to **'Friends of friends'**





Guidance for schools using Facebook

Creating a school Facebook page

1. Log in to Facebook using your school account.
2. Choose 'Create a page' from the bottom right of the screen.
3. Select '**Company, organisation or institution**' and then choose '**School**' from the drop down.
4. Type in the name you would like your page to be called, e.g. 'Yhgfl School' and, after reading the term and conditions, choose '**Get started.**'
5. Facebook will now take you through a page wizard to upload a profile picture and some basic information. The school logo often makes a good profile picture.



You now have a basic school page. The next step is to review your '**admin settings**'

1. Choose '**Edit page**' from the menu bar >>> '**Manage permissions**'
2. Uncheck the boxes to ensure that your settings do not allow users to post to the page.



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Page visibility Unpublish page (only admins can see this page) [What is this?](#)

Country restrictions [What is this?](#)

Only show this page to viewers in these countries

Hide this page from viewers in these countries

Age restrictions [What is this?](#)

Posting Ability Everyone can post to Yhgfl Primary School's timeline

Everyone can add photos and videos to Yhgfl Primary School's timeline

Post Visibility Show the box for "Recent Posts by Others" on the top of Yhgfl Primary School

Default visibility of posts by others on Yhgfl Primary School's timeline: [\[?\]](#)

Tagging Ability People can tag photos posted by Yhgfl Primary School

Messages Show "Message" button on Yhgfl Primary School

Moderation blacklist [\[?\]](#)

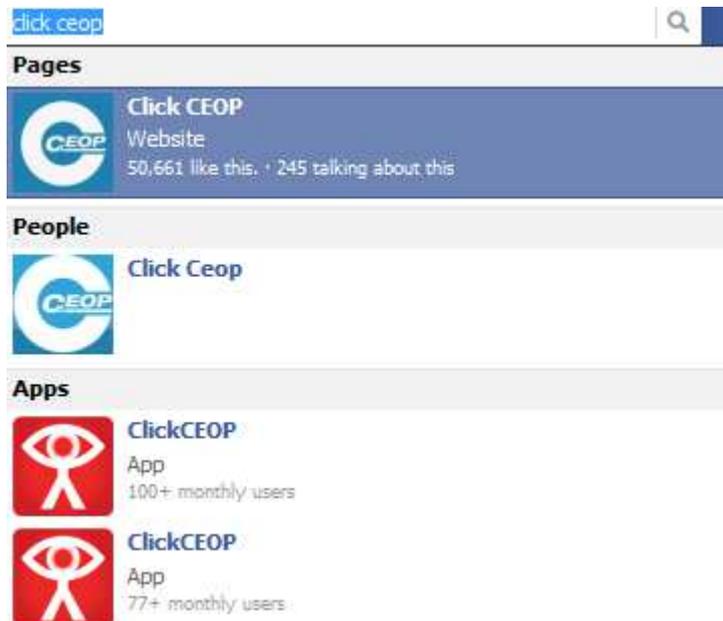
Profanity blacklist [\[?\]](#)

Post privacy gating Allow me to control the privacy of new posts I make on my Page. [\[?\]](#)

[Delete Page](#) [Permanently delete Yhgfl Primary School](#)

Finally, it's a good idea to ensure that your page has a direct link to CEOP. This will enable anyone visiting to know exactly where to go to report any problems.

1. Search for Click CEOP in the search bar.





Guidance for schools using Facebook

2. Choose the ClickCEOP App and 'Like.' You will now be able to add this to your school page by choosing to your 'Fanpage'



The CEOP link will now appear under the cover photo on your school page.





Guidance for schools using Facebook

Creating a school group

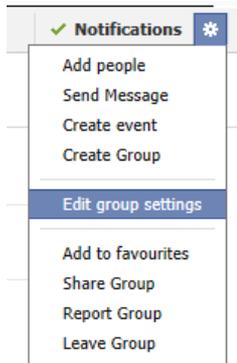
To create a group you will need a Facebook account with a minimum of one 'Friend.'

1. Choose **Create group** from the menu on the left

GROUPS

Create Group...

2. Type the name of the school and choose at least one friend to add to the group. You may need to use a personal account here, however once the group is up and running you can delete this person.
3. Decide on **Open**, **Closed** or **Secret** then choose **Create**
4. Choose an icon for your group. You can skip this process if you wish as this will just select the default icon.



5. Set the privacy settings of your group. Choose the gear icon next to **Notifications**. Then select **Edit group settings**.

6. We would recommend the following settings are enabled for the group
 - **Any member can add members, but an admin must approve them**
 - **Only administrators can post to the group**
 - **All group posts must be approved by an admin**



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YHGfL School [About](#) [Events](#) [Photos](#) [Files](#)

Group name

- Privacy**
- Open**
Anyone can see the group, who's in it and what members post.
 - Closed**
Anyone can see the group and who's in it. Only members see posts.
 - Secret**
Only members see the group, who's in it and what members post.

- Membership Approval**
- Any member can add or approve members.
 - Any member can add members, but an admin must approve them.

Group Address [Set Up Group Address](#)

Description

Potential members see the description if privacy is set to open or closed.

- Posting permissions**
- Only members can post in this group.
 - Only administrators can post to the group.

Post Approval All group posts must be approved by an admin.

[Save](#)



Guidance for schools using Facebook

7. You can now start adding members to the group and updating the content. Choose invite by email from the right hand side.

8. You can now copy and paste a list of emails to send invites to the group. This removes the need to be **'Friends'** with parents.

9. The parents will receive an invite similar to the one below.

PLEASE NOTE: You must collect the email addresses of your parents specifically for this purpose rather than use existing addresses on file. A good idea would be to send a letter home, explaining the purpose of the group and inviting them to sign up.



Guidance for schools using Facebook

School Facebook checklist

| | Yes | No | Comments |
|---|-----|----|----------|
| Clear rationale for use | | | |
| Approval from Head/SLT | | | |
| Governing body aware | | | |
| eSafeguarding policy updated to reflect use | | | |
| Social Media policy | | | |
| All AUPs include Facebook/social media use | | | |
| All staff made aware of privacy settings guidance | | | |
| Member(s) of staff designated to manage page | | | |
| School account established for page/group management | | | |
| Username and passwords for account management registered to admin address and stored securely in the office | | | |
| Photograph/video permissions form updated to include Facebook use- this includes for staff. | | | |
| Letter to parents including advice on privacy settings, under age users, use of images/media, inappropriate use of page and expectations around school updates. | | | |
| Updated risk register | | | |



Guidance for schools using Facebook

Useful links

<http://www.facebook.com/safety/> (Facebook settings)

<http://www.ednfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Facebookguideforeducators.pdf>

(A useful guide related to using Facebook in education- UK focused)

<http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/> (Educational resources from CEOP)

<http://www.out-law.com/page-4051> (personal face book pages and EU law)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/teacher-network/2012/jul/26/social-media-teacher-guide> (a guardian article on social networking)

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Social_Media_Guidance.pdf

(Government guidance for the civil service)

http://www.heppell.net/facebook_in_school/ (Advice on using Facebook groups with students)

Primary schools using Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/BrumbyJuniorSchool?fref=ts>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Selby-CP-School>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Little-Harrowden-Primary-School>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Ashbrow-School/>

Secondary schools using Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/invenioacademy>

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Winterton-Community-Academy>

Secondary departments using Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Mrs-Jupps-Citizenship-Page>

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If you do amend and/or adapt this document, we would be really interested to see it, so please send a copy of your new document to [us](#).

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