

Facebook for teachers

Don't accept friend requests from pupils on social media

10 rules for teachers on Facebook

1. Change your display name - use your first and middle name, use a maiden name, or put your surname backwards instead
2. Change your profile picture to something unidentifiable, or if not, ensure that the image is professional
3. Check your privacy settings regularly
4. Be careful about tagging other staff members in images or posts
5. Don't share anything publicly that you wouldn't be just as happy showing your pupils
6. Don't use social media sites in school hours
7. Don't make comments about your job, your colleagues, your school or your pupils online- once it's out there, it's out there
8. Don't associate yourself with your school on your profile (e.g. by setting it as your workplace, or by 'checking in' at a school event)
9. Don't link your work email address to your social media accounts. Anyone who has this address (or your personal email address/mobile number) is able to find you using this information
10. Consider uninstalling the Facebook app from your phone, The app recognises wi-fi connections and makes friend suggestions based on who else uses the same wi-fi connection (such as parents or pupils)

Check your privacy settings

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

What to do if...

A pupil adds you on social media

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

A parent adds you on social media

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

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

- **Do not** retaliate or respond in anyway
- Save evidence of any abuse by taking screenshots and recording the time and date it occurred
- Report the material to Facebook or relevant social network and ask them to remove it
- If the perpetrator is a current school pupil or staff member, the school's own mediation and disciplinary procedures are usually sufficient to deal with online incidents
- If the perpetrator is a parent or other external adult, a senior member of staff should invite them to a meeting to address their concerns, address any reasonable complaints and/or request they remove the offending comments or material
- If the comments are racist, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or someone from the school should consider contacting the police

- This KeyDoc is featured in our article 'Facebook for teachers: cheat sheet'. To read the article, visit <https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com> and enter the article title in the search box.