



25/02/2019

An Open Letter to Parents, Carers, Grandparents, Ex-pupils and Rubery Community Members

From – Headteacher & Chair of Governors

Subject – Use and abuse of Social Media

For good or ill, social media is here to stay. There are many positives about the use of social media but the downside is that it is also open to abuse by those who wish to use it destructively.

Incidents of social media abuse are common and some have devastating consequences, which is why at Waseley we take abuse and bullying perpetrated via social media extremely seriously and incorporate awareness training in our safeguarding processes. Last year we experienced incidents affecting both staff and pupils which lead to a letter being sent to all parents and carers last October, clarifying guidelines for the use of social media. This was reinforced by a change in our 'use of mobile phones' policy implemented in January this year which has been well received.

Most of us are aware of the potential dangers of social media. We will continue to protect our children and help them to understand how they can reduce the risk but the most positive influence must be parents and carers, who are in the best position to identify potential risk and act accordingly.

It was therefore with some disappointment that we noticed a number of inappropriate comments had appeared on a local community Facebook site recently. An apparently innocuous enquiry led to comments and accusations from people, some of whom are parents, which were without foundation and obviously intended as personal attacks on staff. We have a duty of care, not just to our children but also to our staff and where we were able to identify individuals they have been invited into school to discuss the comments made.

We make no claims to perfection and in common with most establishments we sometimes get things wrong. However, we also have well documented procedures in place to deal with complaints at all levels and we do investigate thoroughly. Sometimes the result of our investigations is at odds with the expectations of those making the complaint but we try to be as objective as possible and base decisions and actions on evidence-based facts rather than perceptions.

In none of the issues raised on the Facebook site had any parent followed the procedures to make a complaint to the school. The fact is that if we are not made aware of an issue, we can't deal with it and if we don't agree with the complaint it is because the evidence doesn't support it, not because we are ignoring it.

So please, if you have a genuine grievance or complaint about an incident related to the school, follow the procedure and we will deal with it as objectively as possible. If action is required, we will work with you to agree what needs to be done. Following the correct procedure will speed up the process, reduce the emotional stress and alleviate the need to make inappropriate comments on social media.

In common with many organisations we apply a policy of zero tolerance to instances of abuse of staff, whether verbal or via social media and in extreme instances we will have no hesitation in reporting such incidents to the police.

We know that the majority will understand and comply with our wishes and we thank you for your cooperation.



Mr. A. W. Roll  
Headteacher



Mr. E. Hogg  
Chair of Board of Governors

Headteacher: Mr. A. Roll

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