What to Consider when Setting Up an Official Facebook Page

With thanks to www.somersetelim.org

Please note this guidance is not exhaustive and is intended to support educational settings in making informed decisions.

Facebook Pages can be created for businesses, brands, organizations and public figures to share their stories and connect with people. 'Pages' can be customized with stories, events and more. People who like a 'page' will then get updates in their 'News Feed'.

More information about setting up a Facebook page can be found here:
https://www.facebook.com/help

Why would a school/setting want a Facebook page?

- A Facebook page can be a useful and free way of publicising your school/setting and promoting activities and useful information
- Facebook pages can be quick and easy to set up and can have significant benefits for learning, communication, engagement and participation.
- It enables you to go to where your parents are: many parents rarely check your official website, but may engage with their Facebook account daily – it's a good way of linking to information you want them to be aware of.
- Many schools and settings have found that Facebook pages have already been automatically created either by well-meaning parents or staff or due to people tagging themselves via geo-location services in status updates or photos. By creating an official page or claiming an existing one then the school/setting will have more control over its digital reputation.
- Advertising - prospective parents may search for your school/setting within Facebook and you will want the top search result to be the 'official' page!
- It is important to note that information on a Facebook page should also be available elsewhere online e.g. school/setting website, Twitter, learning platform, newsletter etc.

What can a Facebook Page offer your school/setting?

- Sharing
  - Sharing links to your website or learning platform.
  - Sharing links to information for parents.
  - Sharing information about what's happening at your school/setting.

- Consultation
  - Schools and settings can use Facebook pages for gathering information e.g. by using polls. They are simple to set up and can give you quick data on key issues..
- Creating an official web presence
  - The school/setting can take ownership of its online identity and maintain an official online presence which is easier to manage than unofficial pages or content.
  - Linking with existing social networks e.g. official Twitter feeds can make it easier to manage a Facebook page – content can be published from the Twitter feed directly to the Facebook page.

What are some of the risks of having an official Facebook Page?

- Facebook Pages are always public and schools/settings cannot limit who can like and access the content shared.
  - All content posted must therefore always be appropriate for a worldwide audience and have appropriate parental consent etc.
- People could post inappropriate comments or pictures for example spam selling/promoting products or threats to members of the community.
- Unknown people could "Like" the page. The setting cannot prevent this but can regularly check and block/report any accounts which concern them.
- Children, parents or staff could be identified as members of the school/settings and could be placed at risk of harm or harassment.
- Underage children (12 or under) could "like" the page.
- The page could be hacked and manipulated.
- Admins could post content which breaches confidentiality or places children or other members of the community at risk.
- The page could be used to complain about the school/setting or to harass members of the community.

What do you need to consider before setting up a Facebook page?

- Be clear about your aims and objectives – know why you want to set up a Facebook Page and how it will benefit your school/setting.
  - How will you know if this has been achieved? For example it will be classed as successful if 25% of parents will "like" the page.
- Start with consulting with your own community.
  - Consider if there is demand for Facebook. For example if parents do not want a Facebook page then there is little point in setting it up!
  - Consider what other options are available and how it can complement existing communication channels.
  - Be aware that using a Facebook account rather than a group or page to promote a "business" is against Facebook's terms and conditions and schools/settings could risk having accounts closed without notice. Using

accounts which "friend" parent or children rather than an official page can also increase the risk of allegations and safeguarding concerns. Therefore the official use of pages and groups is recommended.

- Complete a risk assessment to identity possible hazards and what action can be undertaken to reduce possible concerns.
- Ensure that leaders and managers are engaged with the page and that all members of staff are following appropriate policies e.g. the Acceptable Use, e-Safety and data protection policy
- Consider trialling the page with a class or a year group before whole-school/setting rollout e.g. 'XXXX School Year 6 Parents page'. This will help bring out any issues around content, privacy or settings.

Who should be the Administrators of an official Facebook page?

- It is advisable that the admin is a member of the leadership or management team.
- It is advisable to have more than one admin, as content should be updated regularly and sufficient time will need to be allocated to allow this.
    - o Schools/settings will need to consider how this can be managed.
- An administrator needs to have a separate professional Facebook account (rather than a personal one) and the school/setting page will be linked from this. Check that the other admins have also set up a professional Facebook account to protect against risk and reduce vulnerability for staff.
- The school/setting will need to ensure that all admins have signed an appropriate Acceptable Use Policy and have accessed sufficient training to enable them to manage the page successfully. Admins must be professional at all times and be aware that they are an ambassador for the school/setting.
- Consider how admins will access the page e.g. via a school/setting provided device.
    - o It won't be appropriate for members of staff to use their personal devices if they are uploading photos of children so they school/setting will need to provide appropriate resources and access.
- Ensure the admins use a strong password which is only available to the admin and the leadership or management team in order to reduce the risk of the site being hacked.

Who should we allow to post onto the official Facebook page?

- When setting up the page you will have options to set permissions on your page – who can post and who can comment.
    - o Schools and Settings might wish to consider removing the option for people to comment or post as this may lead to inappropriate responses.
    - o It's a good idea to start off by limiting these permissions initially. If a school/setting ultimately decides it would like to expand the permissions it offers its followers, it's easy to do so. **It's better to become more permissive than more restrictive.**

- o Schools and settings can create and manage lists of blocked words and terms. Schools/settings may wish to add names of staff or local terms/slang which they would prefer not to have posted on the page.
- Be aware that limiting posting ability won't prevent Facebook followers from liking the page or posts.
- Facebook are known for often changing the way privacy and security settings are displayed or administered.
  - o Be prepared to change your settings if Facebook make overall changes – subscribe to the Facebook Safety page to keep updated on any changes.

Can we involve children aged 12 or under in using an official Facebook page?

- Facebook's age limit is for children aged 13 and over, so it is inappropriate to use an official Facebook group to directly communicate or inform children under 13.
- When engaging with children aged 13+ then schools/settings will need to appropriately assess the decision, considering benefits and risks. Schools/settings will need to demonstrate that all reasonable precautions have been taken to reduce the risks of children being identified.
- Schools/settings will also need to ensure that information can be accessed in other ways e.g. Twitter, school website or learning platform for those not wishing to engage with Facebook.

Can we share photographs and videos on the official Facebook page?

- Photos and videos of school/setting activity can be a good way of sharing events with parents.
- Schools should ensure that the correct settings are used to prevent followers from tagging people in the photos.
  - o Schools/settings should also consider storing the photos in a more secure location e.g. the official website or learning platform, and then linking to them from the Facebook page.
- Admins must ensure that they adhere to your policy on publishing children's photos e.g. no names of children published and ensure children are appropriately clothed.
- Schools and settings should ensure that image consent forms are up-to-date and cover the use of social media

What should we avoid posting on an official Facebook Page?

- Admins should consider not mentioning specific details when discussing trips and events etc., as there might be child protection issues around revealing where children or staff are going and when, on a public site.
- Admins must not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school/setting unless they are authorised to do so.
- Leaders must ensure there is a clear procedure for admins to follow if there is a concern, for example reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- o Admins should not engage in public debates if opinions or concerns are raised.
- o Admins should be cautious when deleting comments, unless they contain credible threats or offensive comments. Opportunities to engage with parents/carers and demonstrate that the school/setting listens to the community might be missed if legitimate comments are removed.
- Admins must not engage with any private messaging with children or parents/carers.

How do I claim an unmanaged Page that exists for my School?

A Page may exist for your schools even if you or someone from your school didn't create it. This can happen for a variety of reasons. For example, when someone checks into a place that doesn't already have a Page, an unmanaged Page is created to represent the location.

If a Page is unmanaged, you'll see [⚙ ▼] in the top right of the Page.

To request to claim an unmanaged Page, use an approved (by the school, not a personal account) Facebook account:

- o Click [⚙ ▼] and select "Is this your business"?
- o Follow the on-screen instructions
- o Be aware that you may be asked to provide information to verify your relationship with the school, such an official phone number, email or documents.

You will need to allow up to one week for your request to be reviewed. If your request is accepted, then you'll become an admin of the Page and may also be able to merge the Page with any duplicate Pages (for example official school Pages) that you have.

Note: Unmanaged Pages that represent geographic locations aren't eligible to be claimed and if a Page is managed, then you won't see the option to claim it. You will need to report the Page to Facebook.

How can I merge two pages?

If you're an admin of both Pages, then you may be able to merge them. This option is only available for Pages that represent the same thing and have similar names. If your Pages have physical locations, make sure the addresses are the same.

To merge your Pages:

1. Go to www.facebook.com/pages/merge
2. Select the Page you want to keep from the first dropdown menu, then select the Page you want to merge from the second dropdown menu
3. If your Pages can be merged, click **Confirm**

The people who like your Pages and any check-ins will be combined, but posts, photos, reviews, ratings and the username will be deleted from the Page you merge. The Page you want to keep will remain unchanged, except for the addition of people who like the Page and check-ins that were merged from the other Page. The Page you don't want to keep will be removed from Facebook, and you won't be able to unmerge it.

Note: If you don't see the option to merge your Pages, it means that your Pages aren't eligible to be merged. If you see the option to request to merge your Pages, your request will be reviewed by Facebook.

How do I report a Page?

If you are concerned that a Page has been set up claiming to represent your school then:

1. Go to the Page you want to report
2. Click •••on the Page's cover photo
3. Select **Report Page**
4. Choose the option that best describes the issue 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.

Publishing a Facebook Page

- Once you've created your Facebook page, it doesn't have to be made public until you're ready.
  - Consult management, staff and parents before publishing the page to ensure that it's a good reflection of what's happening in your school/setting.

Evaluating a Facebook Page

- Once your Facebook page is live, ensure you set a timeframe in which to evaluate its success and have clear aims and objectives to help you measure this.
  - If a concern occurs, revisit your training and policies and identify any lessons to be learnt.
  - Involve all members of the community in reviewing the success (or not) of the Facebook Page – have they had a good or bad experience and do they have any constructive comments or views to help inform you?