

Inappropriate use of social media websites

It has been recognised that at times schools have needed to deal with issues arising from a negative use of social media websites, where inappropriate comments regarding the school or members of its community have been made and, as a result of the meeting, all schools agreed to write to their parents regarding this issue.

It is natural that parents may, occasionally, be concerned about an aspect of their child's education or welfare at school. This could include issues concerning the school's approach to aspects of the curriculum, homework, behavioural problems or any other issue. Should you have any concerns regarding your child we encourage you to meet with your child's class teacher and then with me should the problem continue. On these occasions please contact the school office in order that an appointment can be arranged for a mutually convenient time. A copy of our Complaints procedure can be found on our school website or by asking for a paper version at the main school office.

We would urge all our parents to refrain from posting negative comments about individuals or the school on social media websites, as it has detrimental effects on the school community which is continually striving to provide the very best learning and nurturing environment for our pupils and staff. Likewise we would urge you to closely monitor any social media sites your children are using - bearing in mind that children under the age of 13 should not hold their own Facebook account. Although used out of school, issues regarding the bullying of children via social media sites come to school and affect the relationships of pupils and their learning.

As a result of this, Boreham Primary School's Governing Body have agreed that in the event that any pupil or parent/carer of a child being educated in our school is found to be posting libellous or defamatory comments on Facebook or other social network sites, they will be reported to the appropriate 'report abuse' section of the network site. All social network sites have clear rules about the content which can be posted on the site and they provide robust mechanisms to report contact or activity which breaches this. The school will also expect that any parent/carer or pupil removes such comments immediately.

In serious cases the school will also consider its legal options to deal with any such misuse of social networking and other sites. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly is the issue of cyber bullying and the use by one child or a parent to publicly humiliate another by inappropriate social network entry.

The Essex definition for cyber bullying;

'Actions that use information and communication technologies to support deliberate repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm, hurt, upset or embarrass another person.'

We will take and deal with this as a serious incident of school bullying. We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying. Thankfully such incidents at our school are extremely rare.

Can I remind you that the online safety tab on our school website has lots of information to support parents and children staying safe online.

Finally as our website statement says;

'You are always welcome at the school, whatever your reasons for coming in. The doors of our 'friendship' school are open to you.'

Thank you for your continued support

Yours sincerely

Mr I Bowyer

Head teacher