

USING SOCIAL MEDIA – A GUIDE FOR PARENT GROUPS

Social media can be a great way of communicating with parents/carers at your school.

- It can help reach more parents, including those who can't always make it along to meetings.
- Lots of different people can contribute.
- It can support communication between parents and the school.
- It can be used to advertise events, spread the word about campaigns and share news.
- It's free and easy to use!

General Do's and Don'ts

Do set up a generic email address. You can do this easily and for free via gmail.com or outlook.com eg *ParentCouncilname@gmail.com*. Using a generic email address, you can set up social media accounts that won't be permanently linked to your own email/social media accounts. This will help with the handover of social media accounts to new committee members. You could also ask your school if they can set one up for you under the school's domain name eg parentcouncil@anytown-primary-school.sch.uk

Don't use your personal passwords for generic accounts. Make your PC/PTA email and social media passwords generic eg *parentcouncilname1* and easy to remember. Make sure your PC/PTA Chair, Secretary and Treasurer know the passwords.

Don't make profile or cover photos of yourself or any individual person as this will not represent your PC/PTA.

Do assign two Administrators for each social media account, page or group. Sharing the responsibility works as long as each Administrator understands the Social Media Policy and there is consistency in the way it is managed and used.

Don't use photos of anyone on ANY social media channel without explicit (written) permission to do so; this includes photos or videos from the school or events.

Do draft a Social Media Policy. This will help your users understand how your page will be run, how users are expected to conduct themselves and the actions that will be taken if the rules are broken. For more guidance on this, check out Connect's *Social Media Policy template* and *Social Media Glossary*.

Do consider the difference between a Facebook Page and a Facebook Group. A Page is a public-facing platform and is always visible to everyone.. A closed Group is best for discussion amongst a limited number of people with a common interest. You'll need to manage your privacy settings carefully to achieve what your Parent Council/PTA wants from Facebook.

Some parent groups set up their Page so only parents/carers from the school can access it – this can be complicated to manage in a larger school as it may be hard to know who is/isn't a parent at the school. Others have a more community-based closed group eg Mums and Dads in Blackhall – this group is not just for parents/carers at a school and does not represent the Parent Council/PTA. However, it is easier to manage as no-one needs to be removed from the group eg when their child leaves primary school. Parents are always parents!

You can make the whole page public-facing, but this means it has to be even more carefully moderated (checked) and that anyone can access the information on it.

Don't be afraid of social media. It has evolved over the years and users have a lot more control over their accounts than you might realise.

Do follow Connect on Facebook @ConnectScot and on Twitter @connect_scot

Facebook Page

Don't use your personal Facebook profile to set up your PC / PTA's Facebook page. If you do this it will then be permanently linked to your personal profile.

Do log out of your personal Facebook profile to create your PC/PTA page using your generic email address.

Don't set up a Facebook profile for your PC/PTA. Facebook will deactivate this account because profiles are for individuals only. If you have already done this, there are instructions on Facebook for how to convert your profile to a Page.

Do go to facebook.com/business to create a Page. Select Cause/Community and follow further instructions for setting up your PC/PTA's Page. Before you do this, you will need to log out of your personal Facebook account (if you have one).

Do 'pin' your Social Media Policy to the top of your Page. You do this by uploading your policy to a post, click the three dots on the top right of the post, then click **Pin to Top of Page**.

Do think about Page settings. Your Page settings allow you to set up Page Administrators, set where the Page is visible and set banned words and profanity filters. **Tip:** There are six Page Roles, but you really only need Administrators and/or Moderators.

Do make your Page known. Make sure parents know about it, put it on all your literature, publicise it at all events and to other parent groups in the area.

Facebook Group

Do create a Group from your Facebook Page. This will mean Administrators of your Page can post as your PC/PTA, rather than as individuals, when required.

Don't create a Facebook Group using a personal Facebook account. That person will be the owner of the Group and everything that person posts about the PC/PTA will come from them personally. While other Administrators can be assigned/removed, ownership of a Group cannot be transferred, even if that person leaves your PC/PTA.

Do think about your Group's privacy settings. When you create a Group, you can choose three privacy settings:

	Public	Closed	Secret
See Group name and description	Anyone	Anyone	Anyone
See Group membership and post in your Group	Anyone	Group members	Group members
Who can find and request to join your Group	Facebook users	Facebook users	No-one

Do 'pin' your Social Media Policy to the top of your Page. You do this by uploading your Policy to a post, click the three dots on the top right of the post and then click **Pin to Top of Page**.

Do be aware that if you want to create a new Administrator, they have to be your Facebook Friend to do so. You can Unfriend each other when the new Administrator is set up.

Twitter

Do use your PC/PTA's generic email address to open your Twitter account. This will help with any handover of responsibilities for your PC/PTA. The email address you use to set up the account will be permanently linked to it, so be sure not to use your personal email address.

Don't enter your own name when asked to fill in the Full Name. This is the name that will appear on the account, so set it to the name of your PC/PTA eg *Anytown PS Parent Council*.

Note: on Twitter, you will have a name *and* username which should both be your PC/PTA's name. You can change this at any time.

Do use a generic password. Don't use a password that is personal to you. A Twitter account cannot have more than one administrator. If you want more than one person to Tweet on behalf of your PC/PTA, you will have to share the same login and password.

Do think about using a free social media management tool eg Hootsuite. This will enable you to schedule posts in advance and if you share the logins for this account, you can view and agree each other's posts before they go live.

Do take the time to go through your account settings. Here's where you set your privacy, safety, notification preferences and more. You can change your settings at any time.

Do decide if you want to receive Direct Messages from any Twitter user. If you choose to enable the *receive messages from anyone* setting, incoming messages from people you don't follow will appear as *Requests* in the Messages tab. You can then accept or deny the request.

Do click 'no thanks' when asked to Find Friends. This feature uses your address list on Outlook or Gmail to find out which of your contacts has a Twitter account and is not necessary or desirable for the purposes of setting up a PC/PTA account.

Do decide if you want to protect your Tweets. When you sign up for Twitter, your Tweets are public by default. If you protect your Tweets, you'll receive a request when new people want to follow you, which you can approve or deny. You can protect your Tweet through your accounts settings.

Don't be afraid to block. Blocking helps you in restricting specific accounts from contacting you, seeing your Tweets, and following you. This can be anyone who behaves contrary to expectations set out in your Social Media Policy.

Do choose to follow other organisations with a common interest. This is a great way to view tweets from your local authority, other parent groups and organisations – like @connect_scot

Do increase your following by checking your contacts and their followers, and following them – you're likely to find others who share the same interests!

Don't forget to get written permission for using photos of anyone, including the parents of children and vulnerable adults on ANY social media channel – this includes photos or videos from the school or PC/PTA events. Be careful not to use copyrighted images from the internet. It may be best to create your own bank of images eg event stalls, photographs of posters for events, seasonal images – then you know there won't be infringements!

Do register for Connect's online Social Media Information Sessions. Contact the office for more information by emailing: training@connect.scot

Find a list of our leaflets and resources at <http://bitly/ConnectLeafletsResources> or you can search by name/topic at <http://bitly/connectresources>.

About Connect

We offer our Members a wide range of benefits including:

- membership-linked insurance
- free Information sessions, both face-to-face and online
- our Backchat termly newsletter and regular eNewsletters
- access to the Members'-only section of Connect's website
- Connect's Annual Lecture
- advice and support by email and telephone
- a wide variety of leaflets and other resources.

You are welcome to use information from this leaflet. However, if you do, please acknowledge Connect.

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Connect, Mansfield Traquair Centre, 15 Mansfield Place, Edinburgh, EH3 6BB

Tel: 0131 474 6199

Email: info@connect.scot

Website: www.connect.scot



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@connect_scot