

# A Guide to Facebook's Family of Apps for Schools



# A GUIDE TO FACEBOOK'S FAMILY OF APPS FOR SCHOOLS



Welcome! This short guide aims to provide advice and guidance to school leadership on how to help staff use Facebook's family of apps in a safe, professional and positive way.

In some schools, staff might choose to use Facebook's WhatsApp service to help them stay in touch with each other or the school might use their official Facebook Page to communicate to the wider community of parents and carers.

When using digital platforms for any school-related communications that are usually used for personal engagements, it's important to remind staff to keep to the same safeguarding measures and level of professionalism as they would in a school setting.

In this guide, we will focus on two use cases of Facebook services and share which safety implications school leadership needs to consider for each:

1. Broadcasting important school messages to a wider audience through an official school channel such as a Facebook Page.
2. Communication for internal purposes between smaller groups of people (including 1:1 conversations) through school-sanctioned or unofficial channels such as WhatsApp and Facebook Groups.

## Please note:

This guide does not cover educators communicating with students and young people using digital channels. It's important that school leadership adheres to school policy when working out how best to communicate with your students digitally.

## Who is this guide for?

This guide has been designed for schools, school leadership and school staff. It will be most useful to those who are already managing internal school communications and external social media on behalf of the school.

We are aiming to provide guidance and support to those who are familiar with and are already actively using Facebook's family of apps and services.

## What does this guide cover?

We will cover **safety and behavioral guidance for school staff** using the following Facebook products and services in a professional capacity:

1. Facebook Pages (page 5)
2. Facebook Groups (page 6)
3. Facebook Live (page 7)
4. Messenger (page 8)
5. WhatsApp (page 9)

Please note that this guide relates to internal communication with and between staff and externally with the parental community. It does not cover educators communicating with students and young people using digital channels. It's important that your school policy clearly defines how to communicate with students digitally.

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A few key points when using Facebook's services and products in a safe and professional way:

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Please remind staff to always consider **their own and your organisation's professional reputation** when using any online channels.

While Facebook Pages can be used as an official organisation account by the school, it's helpful to bear in mind that Facebook apps and services (Messenger, Groups, Pages) **require staff to use their personal Facebook accounts**. This means e.g. that Group members will see certain information such as the profile picture and cover photo as that is always public. Remind staff to check their privacy settings so that they aren't giving away too much personal info.

To use WhatsApp a **mobile phone number is required and will be seen by all WhatsApp users staff engage with** in direct messages and group chats.

Please make your staff aware of the relevant privacy policies of services they use and ask them to **check their personal privacy settings**. This puts every individual in control of what they want to share with whom and who can contact them. Blocking and reporting tools as well as "private account" settings are available. We recommend everyone using our platforms to carefully consider who can see their personal information.

Navigating social media tools in an informed way allows your staff to **protect the line between their personal and professional lives**. This is essential to keep your school, your staff and your students safe.

Just like with any personal social media use, it is important to **think carefully about the things that are shared online** as well as whom they are shared with - and being mindful that even things shared privately can be shared on by others.

Always using **considered and careful language** is recommended and it's good to be aware that colleagues or the wider school community can see what has been posted.

If broadcasting in a school capacity (e.g. through the official school Facebook Page) please ensure that **personal data (e.g. full name) about your students is not shared**.

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## A quick checklist for staff using their personal Facebook profiles

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- Always use the same professional language and tone as you would in person
- Always think carefully before sharing posts, pictures or other information
- Never talk about individual students
- Don't accept friend requests by students
- Enable login alerts so you can get an alert when someone tries logging in from a device or web browser we don't recognize.
- Use Security checkup ([facebook.com/help/799880743466869/](https://facebook.com/help/799880743466869/)) to review and add more security to your account.

### Privacy:

- Run the privacy checkup tool ([facebook.com/privacy/checkup](https://facebook.com/privacy/checkup)) to make sure that you're sharing with who you want to share with.
- Always check the audience for your posts. You can set the default audience for future posts as "friends only" from your settings menu.
- Enable tag/timeline review ([facebook.com/help/168229546579373](https://facebook.com/help/168229546579373)) if you want to approve or dismiss tags that people add to your posts or photos.

### Security:

- Set strong passwords and enable two factor authentication so only you have access to your account.

### Safety:

- Choose an appropriate display name (it may be seen publicly, even if you are using it to communicate in a private group, or if your profile is set to private)
- Choose an appropriate profile picture (same reason as above)

### Other:

- Use your authentic name
- Profile pictures and cover photos on Facebook are always public. Always use appropriate images as these are visible to everyone

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## GDPR

The [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR), which went into effect 25 May 2018, creates consistent data protection rules across Europe. It applies to all companies that process personal data about individuals in the EU, regardless of where the company is based. Processing is defined broadly and refers to anything related to personal data, including how a company handles and manages data, such as collecting, storing, using and destroying data.

## GDPR & Schools

Your own school will have policies around GDPR – please make sure you take this into consideration.

Please involve your Data Protection Officer and make use of a Data Protection Impact Assessment. A risk assessment might cover the following:

- Inclusion of technologies, tech services and platforms within school policy documentation and scope
- The extent to which information is shared and with whom (e.g. Facebook services should not be a replacement for official communications nor be used to share personally sensitive data, especially that relating to students)
- Use of staff personal devices/profiles/ phone numbers and avoiding the potential mixture of personal and school information
- Capability of staff to manage data protection risks together with the potential for information to escape (e.g. where staff are also parents)

## GDPR & Facebook Services

Data protection is central to the Facebook Companies (Facebook and Messenger, Instagram, Oculus and WhatsApp). We comply with current EU data protection law, which includes the GDPR and are committed to the following:

### Transparency

Our Data Policy defines how we process people's personal data. We'll provide education on our Data Policy to people using Facebook Company Products. We'll do this through in-product notifications and consumer education campaigns to ensure that people understand how their data is being used and the choices they have.

### Control

We'll continue to provide people with control over how their data is used including a control centre to make privacy settings easier to understand and update.

### Accountability

We meet regularly with regulators, policymakers, privacy experts and academics from around the world to keep them apprised of our practices, get feedback and continue to improve how we protect personal information.

## Who has collaborated on this guide?

Facebook has partnered with leading UK Safety Experts SWGfL and Childnet to provide the guidance in this booklet.

If you want more information on online safety please see the 'More Information' section at the end of the guide.



One-to-many



Public

Facebook Pages are public and can be seen by anyone who searches for or follows them. People who 'like' a Page will get updates in their News Feed as they are created and shared by the page owner.

## Schools and Facebook Pages

A Facebook Page can be an official channel used by organisations to broadcast messages to reach a wider audience.

Schools may want to use their Facebook Page

- to keep their community informed on latest school announcements and information, e.g. when the school is open and for who or updates on planned events.
- to showcase the school's work, activities and achievements.
- to engage with the school community by posting useful information for parents and carers.

***Please be aware that not everyone you might need to reach will have access to this service. For important messages using additional channels is recommended. Please refer to your school policy.***

### Please consider the following when your school is using a Facebook Page:

1. Check that school policy allows for a Facebook Page to be used.
2. Review your Page regularly, and familiarise yourself with the functions and safety tools.
3. Make sure the Page Account has a strong secure password that is changed regularly, and stored securely.
4. Keep the Page Account safe by reminding staff with access to always log out of the account when not in use.
5. Review assigned Page roles regularly (e.g. who has Admin access, who can post).
6. Have clear guidelines and best practices in place for all employees who will be using the platform for the school (professional language and tone, school ethos and values online, good practice around child naming etc).
7. Encourage Admin and anyone authorised to post on the page to think about the appropriateness of any image or information being liked, shared or posted.
8. Always have consent for any image/video content from the child and the parent and adhere to school policies (e.g. only mention first names) before sharing.
9. Have appropriate copyright in place on any images/video/content.
10. Remind Admin and anyone authorised to post regularly to exercise caution when posting content, especially with regards to warnings (it might be a hoax or misinformation, see <https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/digital-ghost-stories/>) and announcements of event locations and timings as this is publicly accessible.
11. Consider whether you allow comments and have rules of engagement in place for staff with Page access.
12. Remind all staff with Page access of the moderation tools and filters available (e.g. profanity filter, how to remove and block people, how to report abusive comments)
13. All Page admin profiles need to be real accounts (using their real identities). Facebook doesn't allow the use of second accounts or accounts with made-up names.

More information on using Facebook Pages:

<https://bit.ly/3eotDFI>

# FACEBOOK GROUPS



Many-to-many



Public



Private

A Facebook Group is a place for group communication and for people to share their common interests and express their opinion. Groups let people come together around a common cause, issue or activity to organise, express objectives, discuss issues, post photos, and share related content.

## Schools and Facebook Groups

Facebook Groups can be public (open) or private and can be used in many different ways.

Before going ahead and setting up a Facebook Group, it's important to consider whether this is the right platform for your school or staff needs as it requires participants to use their personal Facebook profile.

- Facebook Groups can be used for internal school communication between staff members to share resources, activities and achievements.

*Please be aware that not everyone who would benefit from the interactions in a Facebook Group will have access to this service. For important messages using additional channels is recommended. Please refer to your school policy.*

### Please consider the following when your staff is using Facebook Groups:

1. Check that school policy allows for Facebook Groups to be used.
2. Public or Private? Most school-related Groups will want to be 'closed' (private). Please check the settings for any school-related Groups.
3. Be clear on roles and responsibilities to manage a Group (e.g. who is the Admin and who should post). Assign roles to help you moderate: There are two roles for people who manage groups: admins and moderators. Keep in mind, once you make someone an admin, they'll be able to remove

members or admins, add new admins and edit the group description and settings.

4. Establish and share clear Group community rules (e.g. who and what the group is for, access, policy around bullying and harassment).
5. Keep the group to a manageable size (e.g. by only allowing people you know into the Group).
6. Staff should be cautious before sharing personal information especially if they don't know everyone in the Group.
7. Remind staff to think about what is shared in the Group in general, as it could be copied and shared by other members with a wider (unintended) audience.
8. All staff with Group access need to be familiar with the available moderation tools and filters (e.g. profanity filter, how to remove and block people, how to report abusive comments or Group violations).

### More information on using Facebook Groups:

<https://www.facebook.com/community/getting-started-with-groups/>

<https://www.facebook.com/community/getting-started-with-groups/facebook-privacy-settings-for-groups/>

# FACEBOOK LIVE

(Broadcasting from Pages and Groups)



One-to-many



Public  
Live from  
Pages



Private  
Live in a  
closed group

Facebook Live is a broadcasting feature that can be used to host live online events and to stay connected with communities.

Facebook Live allows unlimited numbers of viewers to join and interact with the broadcast via reactions and comments. The live content can be recorded (and posted) for later use.

Facebook Live is available on both Facebook Pages (anyone can join) and Facebook Groups (if used in a closed Group only members can join).

Live is an easy-to-use tool but use should be carefully considered and planned as it is (as the name suggests) a live broadcast - so there's no option to edit.

## Facebook Live and schools

Facebook Live can be used by schools and staff to broadcast to an unlimited number of participants and allows for interactivity through comments.

Any staff wanting to host a Live session needs to make sure they are well prepared (it's live!) and have thought through any safety considerations before going ahead.

This tool should not be used to reach pupils.

Schools/staff may want to use Facebook Live

- internally for headteacher Q&As broadcasted to staff,
- to host virtual coffee mornings with parents (via the school's Facebook Page)
- to engage the wider school community (via the school's Facebook Page) with school updates and question time

## Please consider the following when your staff is using Facebook Live:

1. Encourage staff to ask themselves if Facebook Live is the best channel to use for the purpose or objective of their communication.
2. It's live broadcast and is visible to anyone who follows the Page or is a member of the Group where the Live is broadcast.
3. Confidential and personal information (especially relating to pupils) must never be shared.
4. Staff should carefully consider the environment and backdrop they are filming in to avoid personal data being disclosed.
5. In-depth preparation is crucial for Lives, from safety consideration of topics to management of the conversation/comments during the session.
6. Consider having an additional person available to assist during the Live (e.g. to manage questions/comments or for troubleshooting).
7. Always have explicit consent of all parties appearing in a Live.
8. Discuss and decide on management and availability of the recording after the event.
9. Legal requirements: NO MUSIC! Even playing a famous song in a live performance infringes copyrights.

### More information on using Facebook Live:

<https://bit.ly/3c7EbYv>





Many-to-many



1:1

Facebook Messenger is a messaging service for text, audio and video calls that also allows file transfers.

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Messenger can be used to connect individually as well as through audio and video calls with smaller groups (up to 8 people). It can also be a useful tool for a larger group chat (unlimited participants), with a designated group admin.

### Schools and Facebook Messenger

As more and more schools are asked to transition to a remote working model, many conversations and collaborations are now taking place online. Facebook Messenger can be a useful tool for internal communication between staff but it is important to remember that Messenger links to the personal Facebook profile and all participants need to be made aware of this.

It should also not be used for communication with pupils or parents.

Schools/staff may want to use Facebook Messenger

- for group check-ins within departments
- for 1:1s with colleagues
- as an alternative to WhatsApp for group chats and sharing of files

*Please be aware that not everyone who would benefit from the interactions on Facebook Messenger will have access to this service. For important messages using additional channels is recommended. Please refer to your school policy.*

### Please consider the following when your staff is using Facebook Messenger:

1. Ensure that school policy allows for Facebook Messenger to be used.
2. Be clear on roles and responsibilities to manage a Messenger group (e.g. who is the Admin and who should post).
3. Encourage staff to establish and share clear Messenger community rules (e.g. who and what the group is for, access, policy around bullying and harassment).
4. Remind staff to uphold the reputation and professionalism of the school at all times
5. Make staff aware that consent will be required to use any digital images or video that are shared through Messenger.
6. Ensure adherence to good practice on naming of children (i.e. first name only), especially with regards to naming children in images.

More information on using the service:

Learn more about Messenger:

<https://www.facebook.com/help/messenger-app>



Many-to-many



1:1

WhatsApp is a free messaging service owned by Facebook which allows you to connect with your contacts reliably and securely, via text messages, audio messages, voice and video calls.

WhatsApp can be used for 1:1 conversations, group messaging (up to 256 participants) and facilitates voice and video calls for up to eight people.

## Schools and WhatsApp

WhatsApp can be a helpful communication tool for staff and school leadership might witness an organically driven use of this platform in their school.

Using WhatsApp requires a mobile phone number, and it's important that staff are aware that any person they communicate with via WhatsApp (whether in a group or a 1:1 chat) will be able to see their number.

In a school context, it is therefore advisable that WhatsApp is not used for communication between staff and students/parents.

Schools/staff may want to use WhatsApp

- for group check-ins within departments
- for 1:1s with colleagues
- as an alternative to Facebook Messenger for group chats
- to share information and files quickly and securely

***Please be aware that not everyone who would benefit from communications shared through WhatsApp will have access to this service. For important messages using additional channels is recommended. Please refer to your school policy.***

## Please consider the following when your staff is using WhatsApp:

1. Ensure that school policy allows for WhatsApp to be used.
2. Be clear on roles and responsibilities to manage a WhatsApp group, e.g. who is the Admin and who can or should post within a group.
3. Encourage staff to establish and share clear WhatsApp community rules (e.g. who and what the group is for, access, policy around bullying and harassment).
4. As per school policy, remind staff to uphold the reputation and professionalism of the school.
5. Make staff aware of school policies relating to consent that will be required from parents/student, to use any digital images or video that are shared through WhatsApp.
6. Remind staff to still use school safeguarding reporting mechanisms, WhatsApp should not replace these.
7. Ensure adherence to good practice on naming of children (i.e. first name only), especially when associated with their image.
8. All staff using WhatsApp need to be familiar with the available Admin controls and reporting tools (e.g. how to remove and block people, how to report something in a group chat or 1:1).

## More information on using WhatsApp:

<https://faq.whatsapp.com/>



# WHATSAPP

(Continued)



Many-to-many



1:1

## A quick checklist for staff using WhatsApp

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- Ensure professional standards at all times
  - **England:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards>
  - **Wales:** <https://hwb.gov.wales/professional-development/professional-standards/>
  - **Scotland:** <https://www.gtcs.org.uk/professional-standards/professional-standards.aspx>
  - **Northern Ireland:** <https://gtcni.org.uk/regulation/rules-policies>
- Have community rules (e.g. what content should and shouldn't be shared, include sanctions for breaching)
- Be clear on who and what your group is for
- Articulate expectations of group members e.g. timings (when it's appropriate to send messages) and response
- Ensure to have a minimum security standards on your device, for example mobile phone (i.e. pin code, 2 factor authentication)
- Never grant pupils access to your device
- Always use the same professional language and tone as you would in person
- Always think carefully before sharing information, pictures or videos
- Check your privacy settings (e.g. profile pic to be seen, "last seen" status, 'read' receipts disabled etc)
- As admin, make sure you're familiar with all features available (e.g. only Admin can send messages to group)
- Make sure you've read the Terms of Service carefully

# MORE INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Below are a selection of other resources we have created in collaboration with universities, education specialists, and other experts, which may be of interest.

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## Facebook Safety Centre

They can all be found in the Facebook Safety Centre:

<https://www.facebook.com/safety/>

### Facebook Youth Portal

The Youth Portal is a universal user guide about Facebook: general tips, information on data protection and safety—plus everything else that young people need for a positive experience on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/safety/youth>

### Not without my consent

This is where users can find out which organizations and resources are available to them and what action they can take to remove pictures from Facebook that have been posted without their consent.

<https://www.facebook.com/safety/notwithoutmyconsent>

### Privacy Shortcuts

This is home to all the Facebook tools that can be used to maintain control over their privacy and security on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/help/395495000532167>

### Get Digital

Get Digital is Facebook's signature digital citizenship and wellbeing program. These resources are designed to be used by educators and families both in the classroom and at home.

<https://www.facebook.com/fbgetdigital>

## Digital Literacy Library

The Digital Literacy Library is where Facebook keeps all the teaching materials designed by Swiss education specialists. The aim of these is to equip young people with the skills they need to navigate around the digital world safely, to evaluate information critically, and to share content responsibly.

<https://www.facebook.com/safety/educators>

## Additional Resources

### Support with Reporting

ReportHarmfulContent - where users can report legal but harmful content.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/report-harmful-content>

### Professionals Online Safety Helpline

POSH helps all members of the community working with or for children in the UK, with any online safety issues they, or children and young people in their care, may face.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/helpline/professionals-online-safety-helpline>

### Safety & Safeguarding Policy

If schools are considering using various digital tools, it's strongly advised to review their online safety and safeguarding policy.

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/online-safety-policy-templates/#downloads>