



Boughton Leigh Infant School,
Wetherell Way,
Brownsover,
Rugby
CV21 1LT

Telephone & Fax: 01788 571679
Email: admin2598@welearn365.com

Head Teacher: Mr A Moorcroft
Business Manager: Mrs. W Griffiths

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Dear Parents

Another very busy half term has come to an end with the children continuing to impress with their efforts and achievements. I wish you all a wonderful half term and that you have the opportunity to enjoy some quality time with your families. We will be back at school on Monday 28th February.

Unfortunately, concerns have been raised by parents regarding comments being made on social media. I am sharing some guidance that has been provided by WCC Legal Department that would be useful for all to consider before making comments online.

Inappropriate use of social networking sites by parents

Although social networking sites may appear to be the quickest and easiest way to express frustrations or concerns about the School (and those associated with it), it is rarely appropriate to do so. Other channels, such as a private and confidential discussion with the School, or using the School's formal complaints process are much better suited to this.

The School considers the following examples to be inappropriate uses of social networking sites. (This list is non-exhaustive and intended to provide examples only):

- Making allegations about staff or pupils at the School/cyber-bullying;
- Making complaints about the School/staff at the School;
- Making defamatory statements about the School or staff at the School;
- Posting negative/offensive comments about specific pupils/staff at the School;
- Posting racist comments;
- Posting comments which threaten violence.

Parents should also ensure that their children are not using social networking/internet sites in an inappropriate manner. It is expected that parents/carers explain to their children what is acceptable to post online. Parents/carers are also expected to monitor their children's online activity, including in relation to their use of social media.



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Procedure the School will follow if inappropriate use continues

The School will always try to deal with concerns raised by parents in a professional and appropriate manner and understands that parents may not always realise when they have used social networking sites inappropriately. Therefore, as a first step, the School will usually discuss the matter with the parent to try and resolve the matter and to ask that the relevant information be removed from the social networking site in question. If the parent refuses to do this and continues to use social networking sites in a manner the School considers inappropriate, the School will consider taking the following action:

- Take legal advice and/or legal action where the information posted is defamatory in any way or if the circumstances warrant this;
- Set out the School's concerns to you in writing, giving you a warning and requesting that the material in question is removed;
- Contact the Police where the School feels it appropriate – for example, if it considers a crime (such as harassment) has been committed; or in cases where the posting has a racial element, is considered to be grossly obscene or is threatening violence;
- If the inappropriate comments have been made on a school website or online forum, the School may take action to block or restrict that individual's access to that website or forum;
- Contact the host/provider of the Social Networking site to complain about the content of the site and ask for removal of the information;
- Take other legal action against the individual.

I am sorry to have to share this guidance with all parents. However, for the avoidance of doubt there needs to be clarity over what is considered acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour.

Thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely



A Moorcroft
Head Teacher



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