

# SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

# Managing social media for your school or trust



# CONTENTS

- 03** Introduction
- 04** Twitter
- 08** Facebook
- 11** Instagram
- 16** LinkedIn
- 17** Choosing the best times to post
- 18** Increasing your social media engagement
- 20** Dealing with comments and negative interactions

# INTRODUCTION

The world has changed over the last 20 years and as a consequence, **all** of your students and **most** of your parents will now be ‘**digital natives**’. This means that they will have been born into or grown up in an environment where technology, such as the internet, smart devices and social media platforms, are a prevalent part of everyday life.

As a school or trust, this means that your marketing strategies will need to adapt to accommodate a wider and more technologically savvy online audience than ever before.

Social media marketing is a key avenue for engaging with parents, promoting school events and raising awareness of your brand, but it’s also a two-way channel, meaning you’ll need to know the types of content to promote and how best to deal with any responses, feedback or criticism you may receive.

This guide explains the basics of each of the ‘main’ social media channels for schools and trusts, how you can use these platforms to connect with your community and the different types of content you could post. We’ll also discuss monitoring engagement levels and the best times to post.



**Before you start working on a social media strategy, it’s important to check any policies you have within your school or trust.**

Make sure you know what you can and can’t post, who you can and can’t feature and any internal guidelines you have to follow regarding data protection for your students, for example image permissions.

You may choose to add a caveat to your profile bio that says your account is unmonitored and that you will not reply to parental enquiries via this channel, or that sharing third party content does not necessarily signify endorsements.

You may also wish to make your profile ‘private’ so that you can manually approve any followers to be sure they are members of your local community and restrict the information shared on a public basis.



# TWITTER

**Twitter is a fast-flowing social network that allows you to post 280 character messages called 'tweets' which are published on your profile and shared with your followers.**

Followers are individual user accounts who have chosen to actively follow your profile, and who will see your content within their own unique homepage feed on the Twitter website or mobile app.

Tweets are text-based messages but can include up to 4 images, a video or a gif alongside the written content. You can include emoticons (also known as emojis) as part of your character count as well as [#hashtags](#) which are clickable links to other content using the same reference.

You can also tag other users and accounts using the @ symbol. When you log into your account, you will be able to see a list of 'trending' topics across your country, as well some tailor made trends that are relevant to your account and the types of content you interact with.

You can take advantage of trending hashtags and events to encourage bursts of engagement, but you'll also want to nurture and grow your following organically by posting consistently and regularly.



Due to the instantaneous nature of Twitter, it's important that your tweets are [topical](#), [interesting](#) and [engaging](#) and that they either have an instant purpose or encourage emotion and interaction. Ideally you want to be sharing a mixture of fun, informational and educational posts that will appeal to a wider range of people.

Awareness and charity day posts are a great way to encourage follower engagement as are posts about sports days, open events, class trips, class stories, thoughts from the headteacher and any moments inside school that you feel parents would like to see or resonate with.

You can also share your curriculum highlights, tips from CPD days and any awards you receive to interact with the wider educational community who are active on Twitter.

## How to use your Twitter account to promote an awareness day within school - an example

World Book Day is the ideal opportunity for you to share photos of your staff and students in costume, showcase book-themed bake-offs and talk about the reading sessions or book discussions that have happened during the day.

Tag official accounts, such as the main World Book Day twitter account or the National Book Tokens account and utilise trending hashtags, such as [#worldbookday](#), [#WBD](#) and [#shareastory](#) to encourage your posts to show to a wider audience.



# Twitter Engagement

Engagement can be monitored through the following metrics and can be viewed in more detail via the Twitter analytics panel within your account.

## FOLLOWERS

The number of users following your account

## LIKES

The number of users who have clicked the heart button to say that they like, agree with or wish to convey a positive response to your tweet

## PROFILE VISITS

How many users have visited your profile in the last 28 days

## MENTIONS

The number of times your account has been @mentioned in a post

## ENGAGEMENT RATE

The percentage of users who have engaged with your tweet (clicks, likes, replies) divided by the number of users who have viewed your tweet (impressions)

## LINK CLICKS

The number of times that links within your post have been clicked

## RETWEETS

When a follower or user has shared your post (without an additional comment) to their own audience

## QUOTE RETWEETS

When a follower or user has shared your post but quoted it with their own commentary as part of a new tweet

## REPLIES

The number of comments you receive on your posts



Your individual goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will determine how useful these statistics are to your school and how you wish to report on them, but we recommend you do not use individual statistics in isolation – instead you should draw across them as a whole to get a wider picture.

If you're using Twitter to drive admissions enquiries, then you will need to also monitor your website analytics to see if traffic has been acquired through social media and if the enquiries from this avenue are 'warm'.

However, if you are just using Twitter to generate awareness and for informative purposes, then the number of likes / retweets / comments will show you on a basic level, how successful each individual tweet has been.

Regular posting on Twitter (and all social media) is key for engagement – if you stop posting or go inactive for a period, then your audience will not view your feed as an up-to-date or reliable source of information.



Plan to tweet once or twice a week – ideally more if possible – and engage with appropriate content in your own feed, such as with other schools in your trust, local events or educational sources.

It will help you to gain followers, but also gives you additional content that you can retweet, if there is nothing relevant within your own school to mention that day.



# FACEBOOK

Facebook is a more personal social network whereby most users are using their own names and connecting with their real-life friends, family and colleagues. Users 'like' and 'follow' pages or join groups to interact with other individuals and businesses.

For schools and trusts, Facebook is the perfect social media platform for connecting with your parental community. You can set up an official business profile page with contact information, posts, photo albums and more, all in an easily accessible format.

Posting on Facebook allows you to share updates on trips and lessons, highlight your achievements and notify parents of any changes to events or the school day (i.e. snow closures).

Engagement rates on this platform are often higher than others because existing parents will have a vested interest in your organisation and may follow you if they know there will be regular updates and the opportunity to see what's going in their child's class or year group. If their child is featured in a post, they may well then share this with their network of friends and family. You may also get some older students engaging with your posts for the same reason.



We would recommend that your posts are [image-led](#), [personal](#) and [relevant](#) to encourage the most organic engagement from your parental community. You can use similar topics to those mentioned for Twitter, but without the restrictions of character count you can tailor your messages to be more detailed, personalised and share more information on the event.

In terms of attracting engagement from users who do not follow your page, Facebook (without paid advertising) can be quite a difficult market to break into. This is because it uses algorithms to put the information it thinks users want to see and have engaged with recently, directly in front of them, rather than showing posts from businesses or organisations they haven't interacted with.

To try and encourage followers from outside your target market (without paying for advertising) try and make your posts as 'shareable' as possible – this will then show your content to a wider audience and may encourage them to find out more about your school or trust, especially if they are in your target demographic.

## How to drive engagement through Facebook sharing word-of-mouth - an example

You share a post of children enjoying an exciting lesson about the ocean and sea creatures. An existing parent sees this post and notices a photo of their child having a great time, so they share it with their network. This catches the eye of their friend whose child is looking to start school next September. The friend then decides to follow your account and check out your school to see if you'd be a good fit for their child.



# Facebook Engagement

Facebook engagement can be measured through the following metrics:

## INTERACTIONS

The number of responses that use the like, love, care, haha, wow, sad and angry buttons (these can mean different things depending on the context of the post)

## COMMENTS

The number of comments you receive in response to your posts

## SHARE

The number of times your post is shared by a user

## PEOPLE REACHED

The number of user accounts that have seen (but not necessarily interacted or read) your post in their feed

## ENGAGEMENT

The number of people who have clicked, liked, shared or commented on your post

## PAGE LIKES AND FOLLOWS

How many people have liked and follow your page (the two are not mutually exclusive so may not always be the same)

## PAGE CHECK-INS

How many people have 'checked in' to your location or shared a post stating they have visited your school



**Aim to post once or twice a week to keep your page on the radar and encourage your community to keep checking back.**



# INSTAGRAM

Instagram is owned by Facebook and can be managed via your business Facebook account. It is a completely visual platform and is great for showing an interactive, authentic snapshot of life at your school.

Users access and interact with content through the mobile app as there is limited accessibility for accessing (and none for posting) via the desktop version.

The type of posts you can create on Instagram are:

## FEED IMAGES

Static square photos or images with the option to add filter effects

## REELS

Multi-clip videos of up to 30 seconds that can include text, filters and audio

## STORIES

Quick moments of image or video that are captured on your profile for 24 hours and can include audio, text, gifs and filters

## HIGHLIGHTS

Stories that you wish to keep for longer than 24 hours can be added to your profile as 'highlights'

## IGTV

Long form immersive video that is longer than 1 minute and can take over your whole screen

## INSTAGRAM LIVE

A live interactive feed for broadcasting in real time

Instagram is a **personal and creative** form of social media and is especially popular with independent schools as it's all about highlighting your school, what you offer and what it's like to attend.

It's also a great way to advertise to prospective parents as your posts can give a broader look at life behind the scenes that isn't limited to the content shared on your school website or in your prospectus.

Your Instagram feed will likely be followed by your existing parents and older students who are hoping to see a glimpse of people they know but you can also increase external engagement outside of your school community by using relevant hashtags and linking to other accounts where appropriate.

## How to drive traffic to your Instagram by engaging with other accounts - an example

If you have a local author come in to talk about a book or a local business owner visit to share their experiences for career day, when you share an image of the event, you can tag their official account in your posts. The individual may then like, engage or share this post with their followers which will increase traffic to and engagement with your own channel.



We would recommend that to capture attention and cause interaction, your posts and feed need to be **engaging, vibrant and exciting**.



The opportunities on Instagram for content are endless, but here's a few examples to get you started:

### **THE GROUNDS AT DIFFERENT TIMES OF THE DAY AND YEAR**

autumnal trees and leaves, an early frosty morning, sunny skies and children playing on green fields, snowy playgrounds with children building snowmen

### **LESSONS AND EVENTS**

science lessons with Bunsen burners, whole school assemblies, reading corners, plays and productions, drama classes, GCSE artwork, exam halls, music lessons, football games, netball tournaments or dance lessons

### **THE SCHOOL BUILDING**

artwork around the school, new buildings, architecture, students in classrooms or assemblies and your sports field or facilities

### **STAFF AND STUDENTS**

friends walking around the school, lunch time in the canteen, staff on INSET days or in training sessions, workshops, author visits, presentation ceremonies, staff & student meetings, end-of-year events or your year 11 prom

# Instagram Engagement

Instagram engagement can be measured through the following metrics:

## LIKES

How many users have clicked the heart button or double tapped on your post

## FOLLOWERS

How many users follow your account

## SHARES

How many users have shared your post

## SAVED

How many users have saved your post to revisit at a later date

## COMMENTS

How many users have commented on your posts

## PROFILE VISITS

The number of users who have visited your profile and looked at your image grid

## IMPRESSIONS

How many users have seen your post in their feed (even if they haven't interacted)



Whilst Instagram can be useful for increasing engagement, we would advise that your school website and communication tools or other platforms like Twitter or Facebook are used for sharing time-sensitive or important updates (e.g. school closures)

There is no harm in posting visual representations of the announcement on your Instagram as well for additional coverage, but in times of crisis, users are likely to revert to more traditional means of communication for reassurance and updates.



# LINKEDIN

**LinkedIn is predominantly used as a networking channel for engaging with industry professionals, connecting with colleagues and engaging new talent through recruitment.**

For this reason, the way you use LinkedIn as a school or trust will be very different to how you would use more public channels such as Twitter or Instagram. Your approach with this format will be to showcase how your school operates as a business - to inspire other schools, connect with the professional education community and attract new employees.

Your main audience will be other professional bodies and individuals within your sector, although you may also gain some followers from parents who used LinkedIn and prospective employees as well. You may wish to encourage your employees to connect with your business page and share your posts to their own feed - this will encourage a wider reach and increase the likelihood of people clicking through to your website links.

LinkedIn is great for sharing thought-leadership, industry advice and experience. If your school has achieved an award, participated in a national competition, been awarded an excellent inspection report then this is an ideal place to share news and encourage responses and suggestions from other industry experts. Alternatively, there is the opportunity to post long form content as articles if you have a more detailed topic to discuss and want to position your insights in a more structured manner.

## **Content you could share on LinkedIn with other education professionals - an example**

If you have managed to increase your admissions through, managed on a very limited budget or taken your school out of special measures then share your story! An inspirational article or blog is a great way to engage other education-based professionals.

Not only will it be extremely beneficial to other headteachers or members of SLT, it will also position your school or trust as a forward-thinking organisation.

# LinkedIn Engagement

LinkedIn engagement can be measured through the following metrics:

## REACTIONS

How many users have used the like, love, insightful, curious, support or celebrate reaction to your post

## FOLLOWERS

How many accounts follow your account

## SHARES

How many users have shared your post

## COMMENTS

How many users have commented on your post

## IMPRESSIONS

How many users have seen your post in their feed

## CLICKS

The number of times that links within your post have been clicked

## CLICK-THROUGH RATE

The percentage of users who have clicked through

## ENGAGEMENT RATE

The percentage of users who have engaged with your post

As LinkedIn is a more professional based platform, the content of your posts will be different to that of other platforms. It's better to post when you have something that will appeal to your educational networks rather than everyday updates.

Users will likely not be following your LinkedIn profile to see classroom updates, preferring to see instead teaching techniques, best practice ideas and topics around leadership, management and in the case of trusts, the potential for growth and compliance.

# CHOOSING THE BEST TIME TO POST

The below suggestions are based on third-party research from Sprout Social 2021\*

	BEST TIME	BEST DAY	WORST DAY
	Monday 6-9pm & Thursday 10am	Monday	Sunday
	Wednesday & Thursday at 10am	Tuesday & Wednesday	Sunday
	Friday 4-5am & Thursday at 2pm	Friday	Sunday
	Tuesday to Thursday between 9am and 12pm	Tuesday & Wednesday	Sunday

Whilst we offer these as a starting point, we recommend that you experiment with different timings to see what resonates best with your own audience on your own channels.

Once you start posting frequently, you will see which times of day have the best engagement and you can then tailor your posts to match when you know your audience will be available to see them.

Use either in-built scheduling tools or free/paid for third-party services to pre-schedule some of your content in advance, especially if you are testing late evening or weekend posts. These tools can also offer insight into engagement and sometimes sentiment too (which is the positive/negative reaction to your posts).

\*<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/best-times-to-post-on-social-media/>

# INCREASING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Increased social media engagement can lead to more followers and a greater reach for your posts, which in turn can lead to enhanced visibility with your sector, the potential to be positioned as an authority on topics and increased click through traffic to your school or trust website.

However, you need to remember that you also want your followers to be relevant to your school and to be genuinely interested in the information you're sharing.

The likelihood is that most of your audience will be parents, prospective parents, employees, fellow education professionals and possibly, in the case of secondary schools and colleges, students. This is not a bad thing – if anything it means your audience is already primed and ready to respond to your content. By appealing to them and creating posts that they want to read and engage with, you're increasing the chance of them sharing it to their network and, in time, growing your own network organically.

To promote your social media presence and encourage parents to follow you, especially if your accounts are new, we suggest linking to them from your school website, in your school newsletter and within your email signature.

Parents may be wary of unofficial pages, so by sharing your social media handles (account names) in your official correspondence with them, they will gain confidence that your account is legitimate.



To further increase your social media engagement, you could also build social media feeds into your website homepage. This has the added benefit of giving both your accounts and your website 'authority' in relation to the search engines and helps to position them as official communication channels for your school.

If you have multiple accounts; either on a school/trust basis or within school for different classes or subjects, then you can retweet or reshare each other's content to increase engagement on both channels. You could also follow accounts that your school is connected to such as local businesses and charities, schools you're partnered with or your local authority or council. These profiles may follow you back and reshare your content to their audience, if they feel it is relevant.

## SCHOOLS & TRUSTS WITH GREAT SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDS

### ST GABRIEL'S NEWBURY

[www.stgabriels.co.uk/storywall](http://www.stgabriels.co.uk/storywall)

@StGabrielsNews

### TCES

[www.tces.org.uk](http://www.tces.org.uk)

@TCESgroup

### BRYANSTON

[www.bryanston.co.uk](http://www.bryanston.co.uk)

@BryanstonSchool

### GREENSHAW LEARNING TRUST

[www.greenshawlearningtrust.co.uk](http://www.greenshawlearningtrust.co.uk)

@GreenshawTrust

### LEICESTER HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

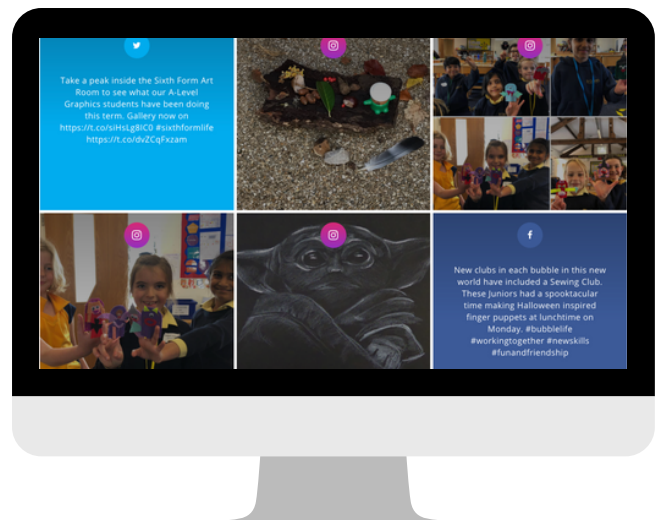
[www.leicesterhigh.co.uk](http://www.leicesterhigh.co.uk)

@LeicesterHigh

### GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

[www.greenwoodacademies.org](http://www.greenwoodacademies.org)

@GreenwoodAcad



# DEALING WITH COMMENTS & NEGATIVE INTERACTIONS



**The final topic to discuss on social media marketing is how to deal with comments and negative interactions on your social media accounts.**

If you are not planning on monitoring your social media channels regularly and do not wish to receive messages from parents via this medium, then you state clearly in your bio or on your 'about us' section that this is the case. You can then direct them to the usual channels of the website, telephone or email for communicating about issues and absences.

On some platforms, you can set up an auto-reply to any messages which directs contact elsewhere meaning you could have your account automatically respond to say: "Thank you for your message. This is an unmonitored inbox so if you need to contact our school please visit our website, call xxxx or email xxxx. We hope to hear from you soon." You may even be able to add a hyperlink or button link which takes the user directly to the contact page on your website for more information.

Whilst the hope is that you will not encounter negative comments and feedback on social media, the reality is that there is always the chance this could happen.

# DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS

If you receive any complaints on social media, we recommend you act using the following 4 steps (or in line with any internal policy you may have regarding complaints or social media):

## 1. TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Social media is a very public place so think before you type.

## 2. ACKNOWLEDGE THE MESSAGE

Be polite and acknowledge the message without aggravating the situation. Whether their complaint is justified or not, you don't want to be seen to be ignoring it. You should try to respond as soon as possible so that things don't escalate.

## 3. TAKE IT OUT OF THE PUBLIC EYE

In your response, ask if you can move the conversation to a private line of discussion such as a telephone call, meeting, email or direct message.

## 4. ESCALATE INTERNALLY

If it is a query about safeguarding or anything else that threatens the reputation of the school, ensure you have a policy in place internally to escalate the complaint to the SLT as soon as possible.

If you receive 'trolling' comments or contact from inappropriate spam accounts, remember that you do have the ability to report content and block users.

If you receive abuse via your accounts, you should report this to the platform involved as soon as possible.

# WANT TO KNOW MORE?

**Creative Design | Innovative Technology | Exceptional Service**

At e4education. part of Juniper Education, we are experts in school website design, with over 20 years of experience and 2,000+ customers.

If you'd like to learn more about our creative solutions for schools and trusts, or need help with your social media marketing, contact our team for a free consultation.

## GET IN TOUCH

**Visit our websites**

[www.e4education.co.uk](http://www.e4education.co.uk)

[www.junipereducation.org](http://www.junipereducation.org)

**Send us an email**

[enquiries.e4e@junipereducation.org](mailto:enquiries.e4e@junipereducation.org)

**Give us a call**

0333 344 9984

**Follow us on social**

@e4education

@JuniperEd



e4education part of **Juniper**