

Schools & Reputation Management

Overview

- Introductions
- The Importance of managing your school's reputation
- How can social media affect your school's reputation?
- The press
- Legal issues
- Case studies
- Top tips



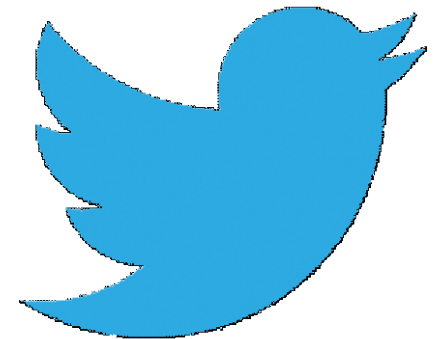
THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGING YOUR SCHOOL'S REPUTATION

- Attracting new pupils - year on year
- Obtaining funding
- Competition
- Your reputation is your brand



How can social media affect your school's reputation?

- Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (and the rest)
- One comment can be shared worldwide in seconds
- You can't control the content that is posted on social media about your school



The Press

Parents argue school's reward system 'shames kids who don't always get it right'

Parents slam school's 'performance' chart showing off high achievers and shaming struggling students

SATURDAY SCHOOL Parents slam headteacher over 'ridiculous' new Saturday morning detentions to boost school performance

Asperger's student slams school after he was 'told to "man up" when his father died of cancer' then expelled when he criticised staff on Facebook

Legal issues

IS A COMMENT DEFAMATORY? LIBEL? SLANDER?

Defamation

You will have a cause of action in defamation if a publication to third parties of words or other matter, convey an imputation capable of causing serious harm to your reputation.

Defences to defamation

Truth

Honest Comment

Privilege

If you issue proceedings for defamation and you are successful, remedies available to you include damages, damages for financial loss, an injunction to stop the acts complained of, and a published apology from the defendant.

Libel

A statement deemed to be defamatory that is in written form is known as libel. This term is interchangeable with a statement being defamatory.

Slander

A statement deemed to be defamatory that is spoken (i.e not in written form) is known as slander.

A claim of slander requires proof of the actual words spoken and also proof of specific financial loss, unless the slander is imputed as a criminal offence or is made about someone in the capacity of their office, profession, or trade.

Case Study 1

- Pupil expelled
- Parent of pupil created a number of public Facebook groups to express disagreement
- A number of parents (and former pupils) posted negative comments on the various Facebook groups
- Comments included very personal comments about the Headteacher
- *“the school doesn’t support children with mental health issues, the head teacher doesn’t care about pupils with mental health issues and in some cases he was called a bully”.*
- The school has a counselling and mentoring scheme in place to help pupils with mental health issues and also asks external support staff to come into the school to provide additional support to those that suffer with their mental health.



Case Study 2



- Comments posted on Mumsnet.com by parents who disagreed with a school's policy.
- The local press were notified of school's new policy .
- Press released a negative article about the school.
- School asked to comment on newspaper article.

Case Study 3



- A school was involved in a dispute with a third party regarding use of shared facilities.
- The third party circulated and displayed leaflets about the dispute, without the school's consent.
- What can the school do?

Top tips

- Put in place a reputation management crisis strategy
- Monitor social media accounts and check Google!
- Remember your brand



Questions?



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