



Daubeney
academy

PART OF:
challenger multi-academy trust

Orchard Street
Kempston
Bedfordshire
MK42 7PS

01234 400111 :T
01234 400112 :F

office@daubeney.bbvlc.com
www.daubeneyacademy.co.uk

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Dear parents/carers,

As you will be fully aware, the internet has become a powerful tool to connect and to share ideas and opinions. In recent years, social networking sites such as Facebook have grown in popularity and many people use them to communicate with family, friends and others.

The vast majority of people who use social networking show respect in their communication with others and we all share a responsibility to show our children that we are positive digital role models. However, like other aspects of society, there are people who disregard the rules set and will use social networking sites to cyberbully, harass or stalk others.

Recently, there has been a great deal of publicity on television and in the press about Cyber Bullying and the huge harm it can do. Teachers and Governors of our school now feel that a clear understanding of Daubeney Academy's views and policy about Cyber Bullying will be helpful.

Daubeney Academy will not tolerate any form of Cyber Bullying by any child or adult whether it is directed at students, teaching staff or any employee, volunteer or governor.

The police definition of Cyber Bullying is: when a person uses technology i.e. mobile phones or the internet (social networking sites, chat rooms, instant messenger), to deliberately upset someone.

If a student of Daubeney is found to have indulged in Cyber Bullying the Academy will take the fullest measures available under our Disciplinary Policies against the perpetrator/s.

For adults I would draw your attention to a BBC article "Social media and libel" as it describes how easy it is to become the subject of a libel action on social media.
(www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/0/22718822)

I paraphrase the legal advice from that BBC article:

An online comment, such as a Tweet or a Facebook post, is potentially libelous in England and Wales if it damages someone's reputation. It is a civil offence (rather than a criminal one) so you won't go to prison, but you could end up with a large damages bill.



These rules also apply to a Retweet - which is when you share or forward someone else's message on Twitter, or when you share a post on Facebook. You may not have made the original allegation, but retweeting or forwarding it could be seen as an endorsement. You could be accused of making a defamatory statement, and you could be sued. You can also be sued even if you do not name a person in a defamatory statement. Basically, if the person you are talking about can be identified from what you have said, then you could be sued.

In a court of law it would be down to you to prove that what you've said is true. Please don't think that if you delete a defamatory post then you can't be sued - you could be. Once a comment is out there, you can't always take it back. Any material published in the UK - including online content - is subject to defamation, privacy and contempt laws.

You do need to think before you post. The only way to be completely safe is to avoid posting gossip. You must have absolute certainty that you could prove in court any statement you post on Facebook, Twitter or any other social media site.

If you would like to discuss any concerns that you may have about your child's academic progress or wellbeing, please contact the appropriate member of staff at school and we will be happy to engage in purposeful discussion so that improvements can be made.

Yours sincerely

Steven Miles
Head teacher