

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES – FAMILY PROCEEDINGS

This is intended as a guide for all parties involved in children cases who also use social media, texts or emails. It also applies to parties involved in divorce proceedings and financial proceedings arising from the breakdown of a relationship.

Before posting anything on social media relating to your case, please consider:-

- Would you want your child(ren) to see what you have written, either now or in the future? A post can be deleted by a user but images of it may remain online and could be located via a search engine. Offensive or abusive posts about the other parent could prove emotionally damaging to your child(ren)
- Could your post inflame an already emotional situation? If the answer is yes, please reconsider posting about the topic
- Could your post potentially be used by the other party as evidence for their case?
- Posting of photographs can be a sensitive issue, especially of those containing children. Would the child(ren)'s other parent potentially be upset by this?
- Some information and photographs must be kept private. Posting about private matters on social media can be considered airing your dirty laundry in public
- You may wish to consider amending your privacy settings so that only approved persons can view the content you place online
- Content or images of Court documents or reports must not be placed online; this includes court orders, judgments and Court Welfare reports, these documents are confidential to the Court. Their disclosure can be treated as contempt of court which is extremely serious and can result in those concerned in the disclosure being imprisoned or fined.

The Court expects all parties in a children case to act in a sensitive manner and put the welfare of the child(ren) involved first. Please do not think that your case is an exception.

The Court takes a dim view of parents seeing their case as a 'battle', with 'winners and losers'. Social media posts that reflect this attitude or boast about the outcome of cases are counter-productive, as parents have to communicate for potentially many years to come regarding their child(ren)'s welfare.

Above all, please consider your child(ren) first and the far-reaching consequences that emotional or impulsive social media postings may have.

ABUSIVE, AGGRESSIVE OR THREATENING LETTERS, POSTINGS, TEXTS OR EMAILS ADDRESSED OR COPIED TO THE COURT, MEMBERS OF COURT STAFF, ADVOCATES, COURT WELFARE OFFICERS, SOCIAL WORKERS OR EXPERTS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND ARE VERY LIKELY TO AFFECT THE COURT'S DECISION