



Schools guide to online reputational concerns

07 May 2024

The South-West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) have released guidance for schools on dealing with online reputational concerns.

The organisation offers a helpline for schools, and reports that 46% of those contacting the helpline have concerns around online reputational issues.

Since 2020, there has been a significant rise in teachers and professionals contacting the helpline with concerns around online defamation, with the helpline documenting a rise from 28% of cases in 2020 to 46% in 2023. These concerns, which are predominantly affecting teachers in secondary schools, involve the reputation of professionals, or institutions, being damaged online.

Common queries involve:

- Fake/impersonation accounts purporting to be the school or school staff
- School community groups not managed by the school
- Reviews on dedicated sites or Google
- Negative discourse about the school online
- Local/national news outlets covering stories about the school and/or teachers
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse.

The guidance is intended to support school leaders, governors, federations, and trust leaders within schools in England. The guidance helps schools to navigate online reputational issues whilst giving a better understanding of what resources they have available to help manage these situations including information on:

- Responding to online posts
- Online reputational issues that can be successfully reported
- Other routes to resolution
- Support available.

Access the guidance on the SWGfL website. <https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/new-guidance-released-to-support-schools-with-online-reputational-concerns/>

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