

MANAGING A FACEBOOK PAGE

A Facebook page can help build a strong relationship with potential adopters. However, the emotive subject matter can often provoke negative comments and discussions.

This is a quick guide to ways of dealing with unwanted, unnecessary and unconstructive comments.

1. **Establish a policy**

It's important to be clear from the outset what your Facebook page will and will not tolerate. At First4Adoption we have drawn up a list of guidelines outlining posting policy and designed to encourage constructive discussion amongst those who visit the page. The First4Adoption Facebook posting policy is published on our page and reads as follows:

When posting comments please:

- respect other people, comments should not be malicious or offensive in nature, and should not constitute a personal attack on a person's character
- don't incite hatred on the basis of race, religion, gender, nationality or sexuality or other personal characteristic
- don't include swearing, hate-speech or obscenity
- don't reveal personal details, such as private addresses, phone numbers, email addresses or other online contact details
- don't break the law, this includes libel, condoning illegal activity, and breaking copyright
- be reasonably concise, and don't constitute spamming of the channel
- don't advertise commercial products and services, you can mention relevant products and services as long as they support your comment
- don't impersonate or falsely claim to represent a person or organisation
- write in English, unfortunately, we do not currently have the resource to moderate comments in other languages
- stay on-topic, please don't post messages that are unrelated to the topic of the web chat
- avoid party political discussion

2. **Block trigger words**

Blocking certain negative trigger words will act as a filter to remove offending comments and posts. When Facebook detects these words, it marks them as spam, and they will be automatically hidden from the page. Blocking certain words and phrases upfront will mean you can spend

less time moderating the page. You can find the official Facebook instructions on how to block words at on.fb.me/14mFRuc.

3. **Ban abusive users**

If, after highlighting your tolerance policy, the same user persists in posting negative comments, you may feel it necessary to permanently block them. You can find the official Facebook instructions on how to ban users at on.fb.me/1AEfDQC.

4. **Disable all posts where necessary**

It's useful to check activity on your Facebook page at regular intervals (particularly after you've posted some new information or if adoption has been in the news). If this proves difficult because of other work commitments – or perhaps during a holiday period – it's possible to prevent anyone from posting on the page. Instructions for disabling posts can be found at on.fb.me/1xE84rT

5. **Different types of post and how to deal with them**

With the appropriate measures in place, Facebook pages can be mostly self-regulating and it can be gratifying to watch people who visit begin to form an on-line community. Before you choose to respond (or not) it may be helpful to place comments on your page into the following categories:

1. **Posts that require a public reply**

These can include positive responses to your posts, extra information and anecdotes, constructive and other criticism. It's important to remember that most people who have taken the time to engage with your page in a polite and measured way will expect and welcome a public response. In some cases e.g. grievances, this may involve a public acknowledgment of the message and an invitation to continue the conversation privately.

2. **Private response**

Some comments are best dealt with on a one-to-one basis where possible. As in the 'real' world, disagreements are best resolved away from the public gaze. Abusive users should be reminded of your Facebook policy while those with genuine grievances can be referred to a line manager or appropriate colleague. On a positive note, Facebook can also promote offers of help which need to be followed up via emails or telephone calls.

3. **Likes and thanks**

It's common for conversations to develop between people posting on Facebook. When this happens it's often enough to endorse these by "liking" those comments. This can also be a positive way of responding to statements where a specific reply is unnecessary.

4. **No further action**

In some cases there's no need to respond at all. These might include: negative but inoffensive or irrelevant comments and discussions or debates that are resolved naturally amongst visitors to your Facebook page.