

**Force Disclosure Unit**

Wiltshire Police HQ

London Road

Devizes

Wiltshire

SN10 2DN

Tel 101 ext 62005

www.wiltshire.police.ukdisclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk

XXXXXX – by E Mail

Date: 19th July 2022

Your ref: FOI

Our ref: FOI 2022 / 570

Reply contact name is: Nick Penny

Dear XXXXXX,

I write in connection with your request for information dated 14th July 2022 concerning Social Media Abuse in Schools.

I am required by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to handle all requests in a manner that is blind as to the identity and motives of the requestor. Any information released as a response to a request is regarded as being published and therefore in the public domain without caveat.

Your request for information has now been considered and – having consulted our Business Performance Team - I am now able to respond as follows.

You wrote:

Under the Freedom of Information act, please can you provide the following data:

1. The number of reports of social media abuse (I believe this would fall under 'harassment' or 'malicious communications') that have been reported to the force which are linked to schools over the following calendar years: 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022.

*For 'linked to schools', if you're unable to check records by education establishment, could you locate this information by searching for "school" or "academy" in location premises name

** For the incident, if the above is not searchable please search for incidents that refer to 'TikTok', 'Instagram', 'Snapchat'.

2. Please provide a brief description of the allegation, to include when it happened, which social media site it is in relation to and what the outcome of the report was. Also, please also provide the age and gender of the victim(s) and aggressor(s).

I am aware any information that could potentially identify those involved will need to be redacted from descriptions.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Our response:

All of the Crimes that are reported to Wiltshire Police are recorded under specific crime classification codes as directed by the Home Office.

However, it is not fair to say that any instances of Social Media Abuse will simply be recorded either as Harassment or Malicious Communications. Depending on the nature of the crime or incident reported it could also be recorded under a number of other crime groups such as Violence Against The Person, Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society and so on.

There is not currently a specific Home Office crime recording code under which all instances of abuse via social media are recorded, let alone by location.

Wiltshire Police would not normally provide an FOI response to an applicant based on the use of a wildcard or free-text search for individual words, however in this case you have specifically requested that the words "School" and "Academy" are used to search the address of the incident reported and the words "Tiktok", "Instagram" and "Snapchat" are used to search the description of the incident.

Please refer to the excel spreadsheet provided for the results found using this method, but also note the following caveats in relation to the integrity of the results produced :-

- a) Wildcard or free-text searches can only be run against the abbreviated (short) summary description of a crime or incident (which comprises something in the region of 200-300 characters). They cannot be run against the whole crime log of a given offence. As a consequence, if the word "Instagram" is not mentioned in the summary description but is mentioned in the much longer crime log, then it will not be returned in any search results. This means that results provided using this method are most likely understated.
- b) Whilst we can run wildcard or free-text searches against the address of an incident as we have done here for the words "School" and "Academy" it needs to be noted that this will not return ALL results at those establishments as - in many instances - the teaching establishment concerned does not necessarily have the name "School" or "Academy" in its' official name or address OR it has not been recorded when the crime or incident log has been created.
- c) It also needs to be appreciated that whilst an incident or crime of this nature may be directly related to a school or academy, if it happened outside the premises (eg at home or on the street) it would not be picked up in any results as the criteria used for these searches has been strictly limited to the keywords "School" or "Academy" in the occurrence address.
- d) It also needs to be appreciated that abuse of an individual via the means of social media could happen via a number of other platforms in addition to "Tiktok", "Instagram" and "Snapchat" such as – but not limited to – the following :-

Facebook	Microsoft or other Messenger service
Twitter	Chat rooms
E mail	Any one of various dating platforms
- e) Where the Offender or Victim Age or Gender is showing as blank, it is because the data is either not known or what not recorded.

I am satisfied that all the relevant information has been passed to me and been considered in the light of your request within the time constraints applicable under the legislation.

Wiltshire Police would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in the Force.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Penny
Disclosure Decision Maker

Wiltshire Police offers a re-examination of your case under its review procedure.



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Wiltshire Police HQ, London Road, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2DN
Telephone 101 ext 62005

Freedom of Information Request Appeals Procedure

1. Who Can Ask for a Review

Any person who has requested information from Wiltshire Police, which has been dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act, is entitled to complain and request an internal review, if they are dissatisfied with the response they received.

2. How to Request a Review

Requests for review of a Freedom of Information request must be made in writing to the:

Force Disclosure Unit
Wiltshire Police Headquarters,
London Road, Devizes,
Wiltshire,
SN10 2DN

Email at disclosure@wiltshire.pnn.police.uk.

The reference number, date of the request and details of why the review is being requested must be included. Requests for review should be brought to the attention of the Force Disclosure Unit within 20 working days of the Force's response to the original Fol request.

3. Review Procedure

Receipt of a request for review will be acknowledged in writing to include confirmation of the reasons for the review. The review will be conducted by another Decision Maker, who is independent from the original Decision Maker. The Force Disclosure Unit will set a target date for a response. The response will be made as soon as is practicable with the intention to complete the review within twenty working days. In more complex cases the review may take up to 40 working days.

The Independent Decision Maker will conduct a review of the handling of the request for information and of decisions taken, including decisions taken about where the public interest lies in respect of exempt information where applicable. The review enables a re-evaluation of the case, taking into account the matters raised by the complaint.

4. Conclusion of the Appeal

On completion of the review the Independent Decision Maker will reply to the complainant with the result of the review. If the complainant is still dissatisfied following the review they should contact the Information Commissioner to make an appeal. The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the following details:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
Tel: 01625 545 700
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk