Further advice to discuss with your child:

Privacy settings
These settings give the user the ability to control who they share particular content with, for example making a photo you post visible to friends only or to the public. Encourage children and young people to use the privacy tools available on the social networking service to protect their personal information and to keep their passwords private (even from their friends). Information on how to do this can be found at **www.saferinternet.org.uk/checklists**.

Most social networking sites give safety advice and information on their safety tools. Links to this advice and information can be found at **www.saferinternet.org.uk/safety-tools**.

Online Friendship
Remind your child to consider carefully who they add as friends or followers, and what those friends and followers can see once added to a contact list. Your most trustworthy online friends are the people you also know and trust offline.

Geolocation
Young people must be aware of who they are sharing their location with. If they are accessing a social networking services via a smartphone or mobile device, they might be disclosing their location without realising it. Location services can be turned on or off per app within the settings of a device.

Think Before You Post
Emphasise the importance of thinking before you post something online. This can include writing a comment or sharing a picture. It can also include sharing on things that others have posted. Discuss with them what is and isn't okay to say in a post and remind them that sometimes messages online can be misunderstood. What may start out as a harmless joke for one person can be extremely hurtful for another individual and once something is posted online it is potentially there forever. If you are not sure, or if you wouldn't be happy for your Head Teacher to see it, it's probably best not to post it. Your online reputation can also be affected by other behaviour, such as groups you join or clicking 'likes'.

Consider the photos you upload
It's important that children consider the content of the images they share online, and the impact they may have on their own reputation, and the emotions of others. They should always ensure that they ask permission from others before posting pictures of them online.

Know how to block and report
Make sure children and young people know how to report abusive comments or illegal activity on social networking services. Many social networking sites allow you to report a comment or user who is potentially breaking their terms and conditions, by clicking on a report button or filling out an online form. If young people have concerns about cyberbullying then they should speak to a trusted adult as well as save the evidence, and use the tools available to block other users. If you have concerns that your child is or has been the subject of inappropriate sexual contact or approach by another person, it's vital that you report it to the police via the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (**www.ceop.police.uk**).

Security
Make sure your child chooses a strong password, avoiding identifiable words or phrases such as birthdays and pets names. A good password should also include a mixture of upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols. Once your child has finished using a social networking service it is important for them to log out, especially when using a public or shared computer. Make sure they have locked their mobile device with a pin or password, as mislaid devices can mean that others could access their social networking accounts.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q My child is underage, but has created a social networking profile. What should I do?

A Research shows us that a large number of children have created a social networking profile before they are at the required age (usually 13) to do so. It is important to respect the terms and conditions of the site and register with the correct age, as there are additional protections in place for younger users. If the site however discovers that underage users are using the service, they will delete their account. You should discourage underage use of these services as best you can, and be aware of services which cater for younger users by having higher safety features. Details about different services and their features can be found at **www.net-aware.org.uk**.

Before young people start using social networking services it is important that they are equipped with the skills to stay safe online and to use social networking services responsibly. Discussing and agreeing ways that they can use social media positively and safely is a good first step; a family agreement and conversation starters to support these discussions can be found at **www.childnet.com/have-a-conversation**. Sit down together and make sure that you both know how to use the privacy tools that are provided. There are multiple ways in which a social networking profile can remain private that will prevent your child from giving out personal information to strangers. Support your child in ensuring that they only add contacts to these services that they also know and trust offline. One way to keep an eye on how your child uses a social networking site is to connect with them.

Q Can my child limit who accesses their profile?

A It is possible to set profiles to private or friends/followers only, which restricts access only to those who have been granted permission to see it. This is different to a public profile which can be seen by anyone. Depending on the social networking service the privacy settings do differ so it is imperative that users check their settings. Whilst it is possible to limit who can see your child's profile, remember, it is always possible for others to screen shot and share on their content to others. It is important that children should register with their real age so that they are included in the protections made available by default to their age group.

Q Does my child's profile appear in a public search engine (eg. Google)?

A There are ways that you can prevent your profile from appearing in search engine results; most social networking sites allow you to remove your profile from public search results by using the privacy settings. It is also important to review privacy settings regularly and search your name online to check what appears.

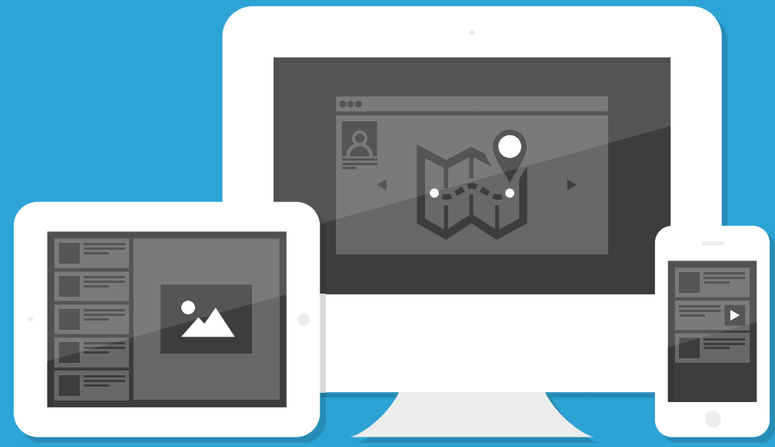
Q How can I report inappropriate behaviour and what happens when I make a report?

A Most social networking services have clear, prominent and accessible places to make a report. Providers should respond promptly to reports from users, and some will acknowledge each report with a confirmation that it has been received and provide indication of the timescale in which the complaint will be managed. Encourage you child to add as much information as possible to any report they make, so that the networks can respond efficiently and effectively. Make sure you talk with your child about these tools and ensure that they know how to use them. Many sites have community standards that outline what is acceptable and unacceptable on their service and becoming familiar with these can help you understand what can be removed by reporting.

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YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SERVICES



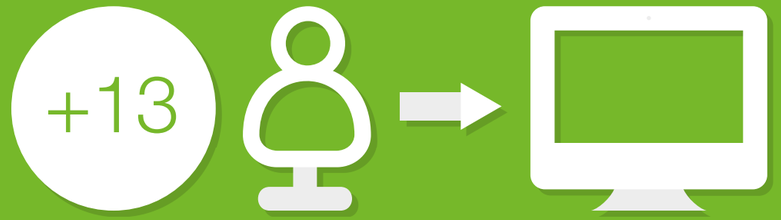
Childnet International

Social networking apps such as **Facebook**, **Twitter**, **Instagram** and **Snapchat** are very popular with young people, even those who are of primary age.

These types of services allow young people to be creative online and keep in touch with their friends, as well as sharing photos and videos. On some social networks, young people can follow their favourite celebrity which means they can access the content they update and share. However, for parents and carers it's important to have a look at these services either by creating your own account to try an app out, or by creating an account together with your child to familiarise you with how it works. Most services stipulate a minimum user age of 13, although some interactive services are designed specifically for younger children.

By understanding these services and their potential risks you can help to support your child in choosing an appropriate service and using it in a safe and constructive way, and be able to help them if they need it.





Most sites stipulate a minimum user age of 13

Social networking and your child's digital footprint

Many things can contribute to your child's digital footprint including what they post and who they interact with. Young people are accessing and using social networking services on a range of devices such as mobile phones, tablets and gaming devices. They use social networking services for many different purposes; to communicate with their friends, to share photos, to play games and to find out new information. You need to remind your child however that they need to be careful about what they're posting online and who can see it. Children can sometimes believe that social networking services are a private space for them and it can be difficult for them to realise that actually what they're posting online may be public and can be spread very quickly and to a large audience. The blur between public and private expression can potentially put a child at risk in two main ways:

Content

Children who create or post inappropriate, offensive or even illegal content in their own or others' pages and feeds could get themselves into trouble with their school, friends, or even break the law, depending on the nature of the material. It's also important that young people understand the longevity of posting something online. Once content is uploaded, it could potentially stay online forever. Regardless of whether the owner takes down the content, anyone who had access to that content could have copied it for themselves, kept it for their own records or distributed it further. Content which is uploaded online can be copied, altered and reposted by anyone and it is very difficult to 'take back' things that may be later regretted. This can damage friendships/relationships, reputations and even future prospects.

Contact

Young people need to be aware that any personal information they upload could potentially reach a much wider audience than intended. If a user of a social networking service doesn't protect their information by enabling the correct privacy settings, they could be exposing their information to strangers and as a result be at risk of online contact and grooming. Posting or chatting about personal details might enable someone to identify and contact your child online or in person. There is also the more likely risk of cyberbullying with young people intentionally harming another person online. Talk to your child about why protecting their privacy online is important and talk through the available privacy settings with them.

It's a good idea to talk to your child about their social networking life online. In the same way that you might ask them about their social life offline, talking about social networking services together is no different. Why not start with a positive conversation about what they like to do online, and why they like the services that they use? You can then ask them whether they know where to go for help, or whether they know how to make their profile private, or even ask them to help you with your privacy settings.

SMART rules

As well as producing some useful conversation starters for parents and children: **www.childnet.com/have-a-conversation**, Childnet has produced 5 key SMART rules which remind young people to be SMART online. It can be helpful to go through these tips with your children.

S – **Safe:**
Keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information when you're chatting or posting online. Personal information includes your email address, phone number and passwords.

M – **Meeting:**
Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous; people aren't always who they say they are. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present.

A – **Accepting:**
Accepting emails, instant messages, clicking on links, or opening files, pictures or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems – they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

R – **Reliable:**
Information you find on the internet may not be true, or someone online may be lying about who they are. It is important to be a critical thinker online by asking questions, checking different websites and comparing information with that in books.

T – **Tell:**
Tell your parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.

Useful Links:

www.childnet.com/have-a-conversation
www.childnet.com/resources/video-chat-and-webcams
www.saferinternet.org.uk/safety-tools
www.saferinternet.org.uk/checklists
www.ceop.police.uk