Social Networking



In this second instalment of our articles promoting E-Safety we want to share some facts and provide guidance on social networking sites and applications.

## What are social networking sites and user-interactive services?

Social networking sites allow users to create their own content and share it with a vast network of individuals and potentially with the world.

**What are the risks?**

Although young people may use anonymity websites and apps for harmless reasons they can also pose risks, including:

- **Cyberbullying**
  Users can post anonymously using these apps, children may feel particularly scared if they don't know who is bullying them.
- **Inappropriate content**
  Because they're anonymous, it's very difficult to hold users to account. So it can be easier for children to access content that may be upsetting or unsuitable for their age.
- **Inappropriate behaviour**
  Children may be drawn into saying and doing things they would never do offline, because the behaviour of other users and the anonymity makes it seem OK. For example, things can get out of hand when children are using the site in groups and giving each other dares.

Facebook is the fastest growing social networking site in the world today with up to 250,000 new users being added every day. But sharing information has lots of risks including your name which can be accessed by others and your profile can be viewed. Anyone can get valuable information and private photos from your profile

**Did you know it is illegal to have a Facebook account if you are not 13?**

- If your child has a Facebook account. Then they have lied about their age when they set it up.
- If parents set up accounts for their children then it is their responsibility to supervise their children at all times when using the account

Remember that people online may not be who they say they are. Online friends are still strangers even if you have been talking to them for a long time.

- Don't share personal information online including your full name, photos, addresses, school information and telephone numbers.
- Don't share information e.g. places you like to spend time.
- Make sure you have privacy settings to restrict access to personal information.
- Never give out your password.



**How it works**

WhatsApp Messenger is a cross-platform mobile messaging app which allows you to exchange messages without having to pay for SMS (texts). WhatsApp Messenger is available for iPhone, BlackBerry, Android, Windows Phone and Nokia.

In the UK you must be 16 or over to have a WhatsApp account.



**Twitter** is an online social networking service that enables users to send and read short 140-character messages called "tweets". Registered users can read and post tweets, but those who are unregistered can only read them. You need to be 13 or over to have an account.

# Six easy steps to help keep your children safe online

Controls aren't a single solution to staying safe online. Talking to your children and encouraging responsible behaviour is critical.  However, controls are a vital first step to helping to protect your child online.

- **Set up home broadband parental controls**

  These allow you to control what content is seen on any device connected to your broadband router or hub.

- **Set controls on your search engine**

  Encourage your child to use child-friendly search engines and activate lock safe search settings.

- **Make sure every device is protected**

  Controls should be installed on every device your child uses – mobile phones, tablets and games consoles.

- **Privacy settings**

  Activate safety measures offered by different sites. Sites like Facebook have settings that help prevent your child seeing unsuitable advertising.

- **Block pop-ups**

  If you're worried about your children accessing inappropriate content through clicking on pop-ups, BBC Webwise (www.**bbc**.co.uk/**webwise**) has advice on how to stop these.

- **Keep talking**

  Parental Controls are a really useful part of your toolkit to keep your children safer online, and can be adjusted as your child grows, but it's vitally important to remember to talk regularly to your children about what they are doing online.

Where can I find out more information on keeping my child safe online?

**Police:**
http://safe.met.police.uk/internet_safety/get_the_facts.html

**NSPCC:**
https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/

**Think You Know:**
https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/

**The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre:**
**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_o8auwnJtqE**

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?

## Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

**13**

Twitter
Facebook
Instagram
Pinterest
Google+
Tumblr
Reddit
Snapchat
Secret

**14**

LinkedIn

**16**

WhatsApp

**17**

Vine
Tinder

**18**

Path

**18 / 13 with parent's permission**

YouTube          Keek          Foursquare
WeChat           Kik           Flickr

Age specified in the platform's terms of service as of 09/2014.

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