



Mosaicic
JEWISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Social Media Policy

Written:	February 2020	Reviewed:	
Approved:		Review Due:	February 2021

Introduction to the Policy

The school is aware and acknowledges that increasing numbers of adults and children are using social networking sites. Some with the widest use are Instagram, What's App, TikTok, Facebook and Twitter. The widespread availability and use of social networking application bring opportunities to understand, engage and communicate with audiences in new ways. It is important that we are able to use these technologies and services effectively and flexibly. However, it is also important to ensure that we balance this with our reputation.

This policy and associated guidance is to protect staff and advise school leadership on how to deal with potential inappropriate use of social networking sites. For example, our use of social networking applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults. The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support innovation whilst providing a framework of good practice.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

- ✿ That the school is not exposed to legal risks
- ✿ That the reputation of the school is not adversely affected
- ✿ That our users are able to clearly distinguish where information provided via social networking applications is legitimately representative of the school.

SCOPE

This policy covers the use of social networking applications by all school stakeholders, including, employees, Governors and pupils. These groups are referred to collectively as 'school representatives' for brevity. The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social networking applications which are used for any school related purpose and regardless of whether the School representatives are contributing in an official capacity to social networking applications provided by external organisations.

Social networking applications include, but are not limited to:

- ✿ Blogs, for example Blogger
- ✿ Online discussion forums, such as netmums.com
- ✿ Collaborative spaces, such as Facebook
- ✿ Media sharing services, for example YouTube
- ✿ 'Micro-blogging' applications, for example Twitter

All school representatives should bear in mind that information they share through social networking applications, even if they are on private spaces, are still subject to copyright, data protection and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in-line with the School's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Use of Social networking sites in worktime

Use of social networking applications in work time for personal use only is not permitted, unless permission has been given by the Head teacher.

Social Networking as part of School Service

All proposals for using social networking applications as part of a school service (whether they are hosted by the school or by a third party) must be approved by the Head teacher or a member of the SLT first. Use of social networking applications which are not related to any school services (for example, contributing to a wiki provided by a professional association) does not need to be approved by the Head teacher. However, school representatives must still operate in line with the requirements set out within the policy. School representatives must adhere to the following Terms of Use. The Terms of Use below apply to all uses of social networking applications by all school representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, public facing applications such as open discussion forums and internally facing uses such as project blogs regardless of whether they are hosted on school network or not. Where applications allow the posting of messages online, users must be mindful that the right to freedom of expression attaches only to lawful conduct. Mosaic Jewish Primary School expects that users of social networking applications will always exercise the right of freedom of expression with due consideration for the rights of others and strictly in accordance with these Terms of Use.

Terms of Use

Social Networking applications:

- ❁ Must not be used to publish any content which may result in actions for defamation, discrimination, breaches of copyright, data protection or other claim for damages. This includes but is not limited to material of an illegal, sexual or offensive nature that may bring the school into disrepute.
- ❁ Must not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures or personal campaigns
- ❁ Must not be used in an abusive or hateful manner
- ❁ Must not be used for actions that would put school representatives in breach of school codes of conduct or policies relating to staff.
- ❁ Must not breach the school's misconduct, equal opportunities or bullying and harassment policies
- ❁ Must not be used to discuss or advise any matters relating to school matters, staff, pupils or parents
- ❁ No staff member should have a pupil or former pupil under the age of 18 as a 'friend' to share information with
- ❁ Employees should not identify themselves as a representative of the school
- ❁ References should not be made to any staff member, pupil, parent or school activity / event unless prior permission has been obtained and agreed with the Head Teacher
- ❁ Staff should be aware that if their out-of-work activity causes potential embarrassment for the employer or detrimentally effects the employer's reputation then the employer is entitled to take disciplinary action.

Violation of this policy will be considered as gross misconduct and can result in disciplinary action being taken against the employee up to and including termination of employment.

Guidance/protection for staff on using social networking

- ❁ No member of staff should interact with any pupil in the school on social networking sites
- ❁ No member of staff should interact with any ex-pupil in the school on social networking sites who is under the age of 18

- ✿ This means that no member of the school staff should request access to a pupil's area on the social networking site. Neither should they permit the pupil access to the staff members' area e.g. by accepting them as a friend.
- ✿ Where family and friends have pupils in school and there are legitimate family links, please inform the head teacher in writing. However, it would not be appropriate to network during the working day on school equipment
- ✿ It is illegal for an adult to network, giving their age and status as a child
- ✿ If you have any evidence of pupils or adults using social networking sites in the working day, please contact the named Child Protection person in school

Guidance/protection for Pupils on using social networking

- ✿ No pupil under 13 should be accessing social networking sites. See Appendix A (Although these are specific examples of social media websites, this policy is not exclusion to those mentioned below).
- ✿ No pupil may access social networking sites during the school working day
- ✿ All pupil mobile phones must be handed into the office at the beginning of the school day, the Internet capability must be switched off.
- ✿ No pupil should attempt to join a staff member's areas on networking sites. If pupils attempt to do this, the member of staff is to inform the Head teacher. Parents will be informed if this happens
- ✿ No school computers are to be used to access social networking sites at any time of day unless for direct school use (posting school information of the school Facebook page.)
- ✿ Any attempts to breach firewalls will result in a ban from using school ICT equipment other than with close supervision
- ✿ Please report any improper contact or cyber bullying to the class teacher in confidence as soon as it happens.
- ✿ We have a zero tolerance to cyber bullying

Child protection guidance

If the head teacher receives a disclosure that an adult employed by the school is using a social networking site in an inappropriate manner as detailed above, they should:

- ✿ Record the disclosure in line with their child protection policy
- ✿ Schools must refer the matter to the LADO who will investigate via Wandsworth County Council Police Child Protection Team.
- ✿ If the disclosure has come from a parent, take normal steps to calm the parent and explain processes
- ✿ If disclosure comes from a member of staff, try to maintain confidentiality
- ✿ The LADO will advise whether the member of staff should be suspended pending investigation after contact with the police. It is not recommended that action is taken until advice has been given.
- ✿ If disclosure is from a child, follow your normal process in your child protection policy until the police investigation has been carried out

Cyber Bullying

By adopting the recommended no use of social networking sites on school premises, Mosaic Jewish Primary School protects themselves from accusations of complicity in any cyber bullying through the provision of access. Parents should be clearly aware of the school's policy of access to social networking sites. Where a disclosure of bullying is made, schools now have the duty to investigate and protect, even where the bullying originates outside the school. This can be a complex area, and these examples might help:

- ✿ A child is receiving taunts on Facebook and text from an ex pupil who moved three months ago: This is not a school responsibility, though the school might contact the new school to broker a resolution.
- ✿ A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook or texts. The pupils are in the school: The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school.
- ✿ A child is receiving taunts from peers. It is all at weekends using Facebook. The pupils are in Y5: This is the tricky one. The school has a duty of care to investigate and work with the families, as they attend the school. However, they are also fully within their rights to warn all the parents (including the victim) that they are condoning the use of Facebook outside the terms and conditions of the site and that they are expected to ensure that use of the site stops. At any further referral to the school, the school could legitimately say that the victims and perpetrators had failed to follow the school's recommendation. They could then deal with residual bullying in the school but refuse to deal with the social networking issues.
- ✿ Once disclosure is made, investigation will have to involve the families. This should be dealt with under the school's adopted anti bullying policy.
- ✿ If parent / carers refuse to engage and bullying continues, it can be referred to the police as harassment
- ✿ This guidance can also apply to text and mobile phone cyber bullying.
- ✿ If a parent/carer is making threats on-line against a member of school staff – this is counted as bullying. The member of staff must inform the Headteacher immediately and the parent/carer spoken to. Should the situation not be resolved, the police and LA should be informed.

Extremism

The school has obligations relating to radicalisation and all forms of extremism under the Prevent Duty. Staff will not support or promote extremist organisations, messages or individuals, give them a voice or opportunity to visit the school, nor browse, download or send material that is considered offensive or of an extremist nature by the school. We ask for parents' support in this also, especially relating to social media, where extremism and hate speech can be widespread on certain platforms.

Breaches of this policy and of school AUPs (Acceptable Use Policies) will be dealt with in line with the school behaviour policy (for pupils) or code of conduct (for staff).

Further to this, where an incident relates to an inappropriate, upsetting, violent or abusive social media post by a member of the school community, MPJS will request that the post be deleted and will expect this to be actioned promptly.

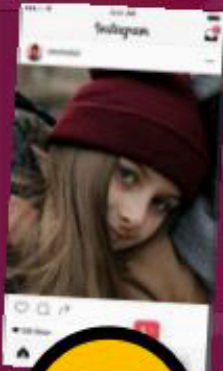
Where an offending post has been made by a third party, the school may report it to the platform where it is hosted and may contact the Professionals' Online Safety Helpline (run by the UK Safer Internet Centre) for support or help to accelerate this process. The police or other authorities may be involved where a post is potentially illegal or dangerous.

If parents have further questions, they can contact Mrs Garbrah at the school; the NSPCC has a parent online safety helpline which can help with general issues that are not school specific.

Staff should speak to a member of SLT in the first instance.

Instagram

Parent / Carer Advice



What is Instagram?

Instagram is a social media platform which focuses on the creation and sharing of images, providing users with a range of filters and special effects popular among younger users.

Despite requiring users to be 13 or older, a study in January 2017 indicated that 43% of 8-11 year olds in Britain are using Instagram.

Reasons for concern



Privacy settings

A key concern regarding children's use of Instagram is the fact that the default privacy setting for accounts is 'public'. As such, unless a child actively alters their privacy settings, all of the pictures they post to Instagram will be available to anybody. This could result in their images being seen by inappropriate individuals and might lead to receiving unwanted communication.



Follower lists

In a world where celebrity success is measured by numbers of social media followers, it is understandable that children might want to grow their own list of followers. A child's non-private account can quickly grow with followers, some of whom might not have entirely innocent motives.



Terms and conditions

Instagram's 5,000-word terms and conditions states that users agree that Instagram can use and sell their images for others to use (without paying or further consent). Instagram also retains the right to store, use and share the personal information and direct messages of their users.



Grooming

In 2019 the NSPCC reported that Instagram was involved in more online grooming cases than any other online platform. Where the police recorded the method of communication, Instagram was used in 32% of cases, in contrast to Facebook at 23% and Snapchat at 14%.



Mental health issues

A report by the Royal Society for Public Health found that Instagram rated as the worst social media platform when it comes to its impact on young people's mental health. Being image-centred the RSPH claimed that Instagram (along with Snapchat) appears to be driving feelings of inadequacy and anxiety in young people.

Safety Tips



As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use Instagram, the importance of not 'oversharing', and any issues they have faced.



It is safest to change the default privacy settings in your child's account from public to private. If your child is older and you agree for them to have a public account, you should discuss strategies for coping with negative feedback and for blocking users. You should also monitor messages they receive.



Given Instagram's reported impact on young people's mental health, keep an eye out for early warning signs of such issues with your child. Seek professional support or consult online services



such as Shout at the earliest point of concern.



Regularly spring-clean your child's Instagram account with them by removing any posts and images you agree are inappropriate and blocking any concerning contacts. If you have any concerns that somebody might be trying to groom your



child you should immediately contact CEOP.

Snapchat

Parent / Carer Advice



What is Snapchat?



13

Snapchat is one of the image-based social media platforms which is incredibly popular with children. One of the key features of Snapchat is that, by default, messages sent through Snapchat disappear seconds after they are viewed by the recipient. The minimum age to use Snapchat is 13 but it is a popular and widely used platform among children younger than this.

Safety Tips



As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use Snapchat, the importance of not 'oversharing', and any issues they have faced.



The default privacy setting of 'My Friends' prevents children from sharing 'snaps' with users unknown to them. However, children may change this setting and make their posts public. Ensure your child is aware of the importance of maintaining strong privacy settings and check the settings your child has selected.



In the settings options, ensure your child has Snapmap set to 'ghost mode'. This will ensure that nobody can see their current location.



Ask your child if they know how to report or block a user who sends them anything that upsets them. This can be done by going to the friends list, selecting the person creating the issue and then selecting the gear icon.



Remind your child that although Snapchat automatically deletes images once seen, somebody can copy the image and share it with others.

Reasons for concern



Abuse and bullying

As messages disappear shortly after being read, Snapchat has become a popular tool for abuse such as online bullying as abusers feel they will not be held to account for messages posted once they are deleted. This is supported by the fact that if somebody takes a screenshot of a message posted on Snapchat then the person who posted it is informed that this has happened, making it more uncomfortable for people to take evidence of abuse they have suffered or witnessed.



The Snap Map

The Snap Map allows users to see the live location of their friends on a map. Cartoon-style avatars are used to represent people in a move that was clearly designed to be popular with younger users. This feature can result in children sharing their location (including effectively their home address) with individuals.



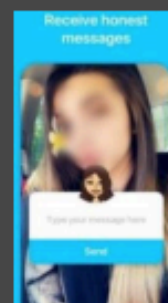
Addiction-inducing features

Children are naturally more prone to addictive behaviour than adults. As such, the inclusion of features such as 'Snap Streaks' (where two users share pictures with each other on consecutive days) encourages addictive behaviour. Snapchat rewards longer streaks with special emojis. This can result in children increasing their daily usage of the app.



Risk of secondary apps

Snapchat allows users to link to secondary apps that can be used inside Snapchat. A recent concerning example is YOLO which allows users to offer people the opportunity to anonymously ask them questions. Such apps have led to online bullying and hate crime.



WhatsApp

Parent / Carer Advice



What is WhatsApp?

WhatsApp is a free messaging app. It allows you to send text and multimedia messages (video, images and voice recordings) to people in the contact list on your phone. It also allows users to set up group chats where the administrators can invite up to 256 people to share messages and images publicly within the group. Although the age limit for WhatsApp was recently raised to 16 it is popular with primary age children and above. So what are the risks?

Safety Tips

- ! As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use WhatsApp and any issues they have encountered.
- ! With your child, look through the groups they are members of and discuss any areas of concern you have. You may agree that it would be best to leave the group.
- ! Go to the settings (by pressing the three dots in the top right of the screen) and ensure your child's profile is set to 'contacts only'.
- ! To leave a group: Open the group in WhatsApp. Press the three dots in the top right of the screen and select 'Group Info'. Scroll down to 'Exit group'.
- ! If an admin adds your child back into a group they have left, your child can ask them not to do this. If they keep adding them then you can prevent it by blocking the admin. To do this, WhatsApp provide the following guidance:

1. Go to the group in WhatsApp, then tap or click the subject of the group.
2. Tap or click the phone number of the admin you wish to block.
3. If prompted, tap or click Message (phone number) or Send Message.
4. A blank chat with the admin will open up. Tap or click the phone number at the top.
5. Tap or click Block > Block.

Reasons for concern

- ! Group administrators can invite people your child does not know into group chats. Some of these people may not have innocent intentions or may be older and post age-inappropriate messages.
- ! Some WhatsApp groups can contain images and messages which can cause distress to children. These might include violent images or videos, abusive messages and sexual content.
- ! Chain messages are often shared through WhatsApp. These pressure children to post them on to their contacts, e.g. by claiming that failure to do so can result in the child or a family member dying. Many children find such messages distressing but also feel they must share them with others due to fear of the threat.

and killed him. A girl named Loran got this message. She laughed and deleted it. I later came to her house and killed her and buried her in a desert. A boy named
- ! WhatsApp does not allow users to decide whether to join a group. Your child will be automatically added to any groups that their contacts add them to. If your child leaves the group the administrator can add them straight back in.
- ! Your child may be in WhatsApp groups in which huge numbers of posts are made. The alerts this generates can be an unnecessary distraction and can disrupt sleep.
- ! WhatsApp's default privacy settings are that anybody can see your child's profile photo and when they were last online.
- ! WhatsApp 'dare games' have become popular with children. These involve the child making a quiz about themselves to share with others and this can lead to oversharing of personal information which can be publicly available.
- ! Children can add and then remove other children from groups as a form of exclusion and bullying.

TikTok

Parent / Carer Advice



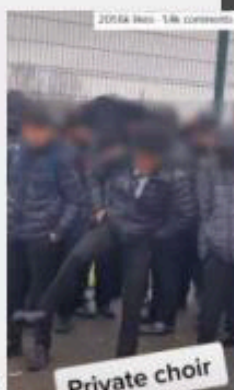
13

What is TikTok?

TikTok is a social media app where users share short video clips of 15 seconds duration. It started out as an app named 'Musically' and was used to share videos of dancing and lip-syncing to music. Much of the content on TikTok still reflects these origins, but popular videos now also include pets, makeup, magic tricks, fashion, art, people reacting to situations, etc. According to OSA research, TikTok is now as widely used by 11-14 year olds as Snapchat and Instagram.

Safety Tips

- ! As with all Internet activity, talk to your child about how they use TikTok and any issues they have encountered.
- ! Discuss whether it would be best to change your child's account to private to avoid interactions with non-friends. If you agree to keep the account public you should discuss strategies for coping with negative feedback and for blocking users.
- ! Help your child to spring clean their account from time to time by removing videos you agree to be inappropriate.
- ! Ensure your child knows not to post videos in their school uniform. Also discuss how recording videos at school might break school rules and what the consequences could be.
- ! The TikTok settings allow you to set a time limit for how long each day you want your child to be able to use the app. This can be password protected to ensure they stick to the limit.



Reasons for concern

- ! TikTok has a minimum age rating of 13 and anybody under 18 should have parental permission to use the app. However, new users simply enter a date of birth to indicate their age and there are no verification steps. As such, children of any age can create an account by using a false date of birth.
- ! New users will be shown a range of video clips the app feels may be of interest. Many of these will quickly expose users to offensive language which will be inappropriate for children.
- ! The clothing worn and the type of dancing in some videos could be deemed sexualised and therefore something that might be inappropriate for younger users to be exposed to.
- ! The default privacy settings in the app are concerning. Although only friends can send users direct messages, the videos posted by users can be seen by anybody and anybody can like / comment on the videos. New users are also available for anybody to perform a musical duet with. Such default settings can leave children vulnerable to unwanted communication from others.
- ! Many children in the UK are posting videos to TikTok where they are wearing their school uniform, making it possible for strangers to identify their location.
- ! The nature of videos children are posting to TikTok (singing, dancing, etc) can leave them vulnerable to receiving negative comments which can have an impact on mental health.
- ! The company that owns TikTok is facing legal issues and stands accused of illegally collecting data on children (when it was Musically) and the app has been deemed a 'potential security risk by the FBI'.

Twitter is a social networking site where users can post 'tweets' or short messages, photos and videos publicly. They can also share 'tweets' written by others to their followers. Twitter is popular with young people, as it allows them to interact with celebrities, stay up to date with news, trends and current social relevance.

AGE RESTRICTION
13+

What parents need to know about Twitter

TWITTER TROLLS

A 'troll' is somebody who deliberately posts negative or offensive comments online in a bid to provoke an individual for a reaction. Trolling, can include bullying, harassment, stalking, virtual mobbing and much more; it is very common on Twitter. The motive may be that the 'troll' wishes to promote an opinion or make people laugh, however, the pragmatics of what they post could be much more damaging, posting anything from racial, homophobic to sexist hate. Trolling can lead to devastating consequences for some victims.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Twitter gives users the opportunity and freedom to post their personal thoughts and opinions, meaning they can pretty much post anything they want despite restrictions on the platform. Swearing and inappropriate language is allowed if it does not violate the rules. If your child sees any inappropriate content, they might feel the need to replicate it at home or amongst their peers. Additionally, there are also a number of unofficial pornographic profiles on the platform that can easily be found and viewed without restrictions.

FAKE PROFILES

Fake Twitter accounts are made to impersonate a person, celebrity or public figure. As the accounts are not endorsed by the person they are pretending to be, they can often be used to scam or take advantage of young people who think that they're the real deal.

FAKE NEWS

The speed in which 'tweets' are shared on Twitter can be unbelievably fast, meaning that fake news can often be circulated across the platform very quickly. Fake news articles and posts can often be harmful and upsetting to young people and those associated with the fake news. In addition to this, it's very easy for people to quickly and unexpectedly retweet a tweet posted by your child, meaning there is no going back.

HIJACKED HASHTAGS

One of the most commonly used aspects of Twitter is the hashtag (#) - these allow users to easily search for specific trends, topics or subjects. However, due to the astronomical number of Twitter users, many hashtags can have 'different' intentions. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag, and before you know it, hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that your child shouldn't be exposed to. This is common with 'trending' tweets, as people know that their tweet will be seen by a greater number of people.

MEMES NORMALISING RACISM, SEXISM AND HOMOPHOBIA

Twitter is a popular platform for sharing Internet memes, helping to make concepts or ideas go viral across the Internet. However, despite most meme's being innocent and harmless, some often include sexist, racist or homophobic messages. Although they are typically sent as a joke, this type of content is contributing to the normalisation of topics including racism, sexism and homophobia.

PROPAGANDA, EXTREMISM & RADICALISATION

Social media offers a continuous stream of real-time coverage of extremist activity. Twitter is one of the many platforms that is exploited by extremist groups to help promote violence, radicalise and recruit people to support their cause. These groups cleverly target vulnerable victims, often young people, and find a way to manipulate them into supporting their beliefs.

EVERYONE HAS ACCESS

Twitter has over 335 million monthly active users across all age groups. When a user signs up, tweets are public by default, meaning anyone can view and interact with posts instantly. Your child may change their mind about a tweet they have posted but even if they delete it, there's always a chance that someone can screenshot, retweet it or post it onto another platform.

Top Tips for Parents

CHECK ACCOUNT SETTINGS

We strongly advise that you thoroughly check your child's privacy settings. To take away some of the fear of your child's tweets being shared by anyone, you can always make their account protected. This means that anyone who wants to view what your child has posted, it requires approval from them. In addition to this, you can change the settings so that they cannot receive 'direct' messages from anyone on the platform and that their location is not shared.

BLOCKING & REPORTING

If a particular account is causing your child trouble on Twitter, whether it's cyberbullying or upsetting content, you can simply block and report them. Blocking them will help to prevent them from viewing, messaging or following your child, and vice versa. Reporting an account will alert Twitter to investigate the profile.

MUTING ACCOUNTS

The 'mute' feature allows your child to remove an account's tweets from their timeline without unfollowing or blocking them. This means your child will stop getting notifications about a particular conversation but can still view it in their timeline. This can be useful if they are friends with someone but don't really like what they share. The other user will not know that they have been muted.

Twitter Trolls & The Law

From 2016, the CPS were able to exercise new laws that could see those who create 'derogatory hashtags' or post 'humiliating' photoshopped images jailed. They also announced the launch of a hate crime consultation, issuing a series of public policy statements centred on combating crimes against disabled people, as well as racial, religious, homophobic and transphobic hate crime. It's important your child knows about building a positive online reputation, as well as showing respect for others online and offline.

SENSITIVE CONTENT

By default, if Twitter has found a tweet that 'may contain sensitive content', Twitter will hide the content in the news feed and you will be shown a warning that states the content is sensitive. You then have the option to view it or not. This gives a chance for you to moderate potentially harmful images/videos before your child sees them. Unfortunately, some content may slip through the cracks and will be shown in the news feed. So, if you do see any sensitive content, you can report it. Twitter should then inspect the tweet and decide whether they deem it to be 'sensitive'.

MUTE HASHTAGS & PHRASES

Within the account settings, you have the ability to block certain words, hashtags or phrases from your child's timeline or notifications (e.g. swear words, inappropriate phrases, emojis, etc.).

TURN OFF VIDEO AUTOPLAY

'Autoplay' is a feature that automatically starts playing a new video seconds after another one ends on the platform. To avoid your child going from watching something innocent and harmless to something much more graphic or disturbing, you can turn this feature off in the settings and easily moderate the videos your child watches before they see them.

CONVERSATION & MONITORING

We always promote that you have regular open conversation with your child about their online activity, ensuring that they understand what healthy relationships are, what respect is, and how to be sensitive towards others' feelings. It's also important to monitor what they're doing online, including what they use the platform for, who they are talking to, and if they are viewing/taking part in anything that they shouldn't be. Discuss the dangers of the online world, such as fake news and online bullying - why do people involve themselves in these activities and what your child can do to prevent them.

TWITTER LISTS

Twitter lists allow your child to create other feeds besides the main timeline that only include certain accounts - this is a great way to segment followers based on common topics and interests.

SOURCES: Sources: <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/blocking-and-unblocking-accounts> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/twitter-location-services-for-mobile> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/managing-your-account/two-factor-authentication> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/advanced-twitter-muteoptions> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/how-to-make-twitter-private-and-public> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/public-and-protected-tweets> | <https://www.statista.com/statistics/493795/twitter-most-retweeted-posts/> | [Smallbiztrends.com: 'What is Hashtag Hijacking?'](https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html) | <https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html> | [Christiededman.com: '5 things you should know about hashtags and your kids'](https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html) | <https://christiededman.com/5-things-you-should-know-about-hashtags-your-kids/>

National Online Safety

A whole school community approach to online safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com
 Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061



Facebook is an online social media platform that has over 2 billion users across the globe. It was initially for university students but soon expanded out and since 2006, anyone over the age of 13 is able to join the platform. It is available on all devices from your desktop and laptop computer to smartphones and tablets. Users can add photos and videos, update their status, interact with others and catch up with the latest news. Despite requiring users to be over 13, there are no age verification measures and children can easily create an account. It's therefore important that parents familiarise themselves with the main features of the platform to ensure their young ones remain safe if and when they use it.



What parents need to know about FACEBOOK



ADDICTIVE NATURE

Facebook can be hugely addictive as it offers a physiological high and a quick reward cycle which comes from the likes and comments on shared posts. Communication is so instant now that teenagers are always checking, and it can sometimes feel like self-worth. This keeps children going back, encouraging them to post things and also increases the Fear Of Missing Out (FOMO) that is commonplace today. On the flip side, because of the way teenagers interact these days through Facebook and Facebook Messenger, they can seem addicted even when they're not.

CYBERBULLYING

Around a quarter of children have experienced online abuse, according to Ofcom's 2019 'Online Nation' report. Figures show that 23% have been cyberbullied, 39% subjected to abusive language and a fifth have been trolled. On Facebook, teenagers can receive communication in a number of ways, from private messages in Messenger to public comments on profiles, pages and posts to pages or groups set up just to torment a victim. Exclusion from pages or groups to cause the victim to feel left out has also been seen.

FUTURE IMPACT

Regardless of age, anything that's posted on Facebook, or other social media platforms, develops a personal brand and leaves a digital footprint that is there forever. It can be difficult to explain the consequences but many universities (and employers) look at Facebook before making a decision on accepting people. It is therefore wise to always think twice before posting anything online you wouldn't want people to hear or see offline.

STRANGERS/FAKE PROFILES

Generally, people are who they say they are online. That said, much like the real world, Facebook isn't free of malicious users and children have received friend requests from people they don't know, including individuals who may look to take advantage of young and impressionable children.

OVERSHARING

Facebook encourages you to share "what's on your mind" but children need to be aware of what they're revealing about themselves online. Facebook allows users to share their location, create live videos and much more. Some photos can be traced using file data, too, so it's important to keep a tight group and share only with people you know.

INAPPROPRIATE ADS

While Facebook is getting ever stricter on the content of ads and who they are targeted to, there is still the chance that children could be subject to ads during their experience on the platform. This could be innocuous but is worth bearing in mind when using the app.

LIVE STREAMING

Facebook Live provides users with the ability to stream video live-time to their friends and followers or watch other people's broadcasts live. During the video, people can react and comment and it's difficult to moderate the content given everything happens in real-time. This could mean your child is exposed to inappropriate material or worse still, could be cajoled into doing something online by others which they wouldn't normally do.

PRIVATE MESSAGING

Facebook Messenger is closely linked to your Facebook profile and provides the ability to share private messages away from friends and family. It is therefore important that parents ask their children who they are communicating with and ensure that the only people they are exchanging messages with are people that they also know in real life.



Safety Tips For Parents

MAKE PROFILES PRIVATE

Within the settings of a Facebook account, you can choose whether a profile is public or private. Make sure that your child's setting is switched to private. This way they will only be able to interact with friends and people they know within the platform.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Show your children how and why you use Facebook. This will help to demonstrate that it can be used safely when used in an appropriate manner and help to reduce the risk of them encountering harmful content.

SHARE DEVICES

Depending on the age of your children, it's worth considering letting them use Facebook from a general family iPad or laptop. This allows them to use it without being constantly connected everywhere they go and may give you more reassurance around what they are doing on the app.

REPORT VIOLATIONS

On Facebook you're able to hide people or groups and report things that are harmful. Make sure you spend some time to show your children how this works and why it's important to do so before they start spending serious time on the platform.

RESPECT BOUNDARIES

As with anything, there are potential risks and dangers on Facebook but once you've talked about the ideas of safety on the platform, give children some space. Trust them to make smart choices but always be open to talking about social media.

CHECK-IN

Once they've had some time to use the platform, don't be afraid to check in and see if there's anything on Facebook they'd like to discuss. This isn't always easy but being open with your children is the best way to deal with any issues head on.

Meet our expert

Alex Wright is a former Facebook employee and social media expert with over 15 years' experience working in digital media. He has worked with some of the biggest organisations in the world and has a wealth of knowledge in understanding how social media platforms work and how they engage their audience.



SOURCES: <https://facebook.com>, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/social-media-addiction-young-children-under-five-youtube-instagram-a8953411.html>, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/cyberbullying-social-media-children-online-abuse-facebook-research-ofcom-ico-a8936366.html>, <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/how-social-media-affects-our-ability-to-communicate/>, <https://www.care.com/c/en-gb/stories/427515-dangers-of-social-media-to-discuss-with-you/>

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