

Social Networking Advice for Parents & Carers

The following information neither condones the use of social networking by children nor does it criticise parents / carers who allow their children to have a social networking profile, especially if they are under the recommended age of 13.

The information is purely to give parents / carers an informed view of the risks and what they can do to help keep their children safe when using social networking sites. The information may well be relative to keeping safe when using any Internet features which involve communicating with others and would certainly also apply to children over the age of 13.

The list is not exhaustive and Parents / carers would be advised to look at further advice and guidance on the following websites:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

<http://www.facebook.com/clickceop/>

<http://www.childnet.com/kia/parents/>

<http://www.connectsafely.org/pdfs/fbparents.pdf>

Risks:

- Social networking sites use “age targeted” advertising and therefore your child could be exposed to adverts of a sexual or other inappropriate nature, depending on the age they stated they were when they registered
- Children may accept friend requests from people they don't know in real life which could increase the risk of inappropriate contact or behaviour
- Language, games, groups and content posted or shared on social networking sites is not moderated, and therefore can be offensive, illegal or unsuitable for children
- Photographs shared by users are not moderated and therefore children could be exposed to inappropriate images or even post their own
- Underage users might be less likely to keep their identities private and lying about their age can expose them to further risks regarding privacy settings and options
- Social networking sites could be exploited by bullies and for other inappropriate contact
- Social networking sites cannot and does not verify its members therefore it is important to remember that if your child can lie about who they are online, so can anyone else!
- Inappropriate content will never truly disappear

Advice:

- Always keep your profile private
- Never accept friends you don't know in real life
- Never post anything which could reveal your identity
- Be careful what you post, it says a lot about you.
- Never agree to meet somebody you only know online without telling a trusted adult
- Always tell someone if you feel threatened or someone upsets you

If you are at all worried about what your child is doing online talk to someone. CEOP have a report abuse button on their website which gives lots of help and advice and allows you or your child to make a report if they see anything online which upsets them.

Alternatively talk to the head teacher at your child's school.