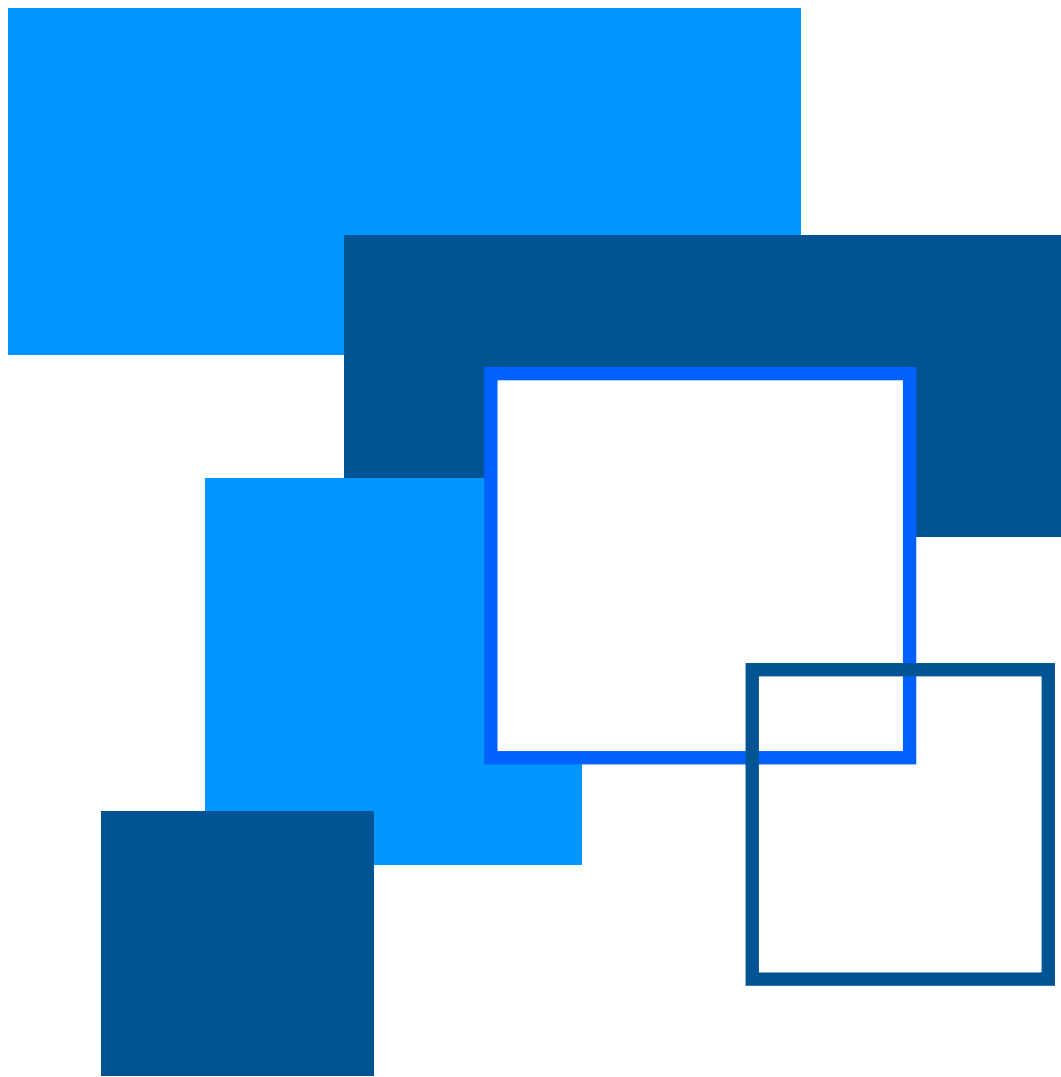


Social Networking - A Guide for Parents



This booklet is designed to highlight the important issues for parents and children surrounding Internet Safety when using social networks.

Social networking and user interactive services offer many positive opportunities for children and adults to communicate, interact, and share content and interests.

The sites provide opportunities to

- Chat
- Play games
- Post and browse through photos and videos
- Blog
- Post an online profile

However, it is important that these sites are used in an appropriate manner

All references to parents within this booklet should be taken to include guardians and others who have parental responsibility for a child/young person.

Protecting Yourself, Protecting Your Children

★Check the age restrictions that are in place for social networking sites

- Facebook 13+
- Bebo 13+
- MySpace 14+
- Club Penguin 8 – 14

★Ensure children use computers and laptops in a family area where you can monitor use - not in the bedroom.

★Remember, children can access the internet using mobile phones and gaming devices (eg Nintendo Wii, X Box, Interactive TV)

★Set clear rules – consider having a family contract for on-line safety

★Because the internet is anonymous, online communications allow children and adults to feel freer to do things online they would never do anywhere else

★Talk to your children about the way they use the internet – ask them to show you what they have been doing

★Discuss and look at the chat rooms and instant messaging sites they visit

★People often think of these sites as their private domain, in much the same way as they would a personal diary and address book.

Help your children understand what information should be private.

e.g. addresses, telephone numbers and school name

★**Use privacy settings to restrict who can access and post on your webspace.**

Profiles should be restricted to people that are known and trusted

★**Remember, most sites are set to 'public profile' by default – you need to ensure the settings are changed to private**

★Only post images and information you are happy to share

★Be aware that any information or images posted online can be freely passed on and it is impossible to take them back

★It is not acceptable for parents/children to make inappropriate comments about school establishments, members of staff or members of the school community on any online networking site (e.g. Facebook)

★Be aware that permission should be sought before posting images of other people online

★Cyberbullying is bullying or harassment that happens online. It can happen in an email, a text message, an online game, or comments on a social networking site. It might involve rumours or images posted on someone's profile or passed around for others to see

★While there is not a specific criminal offence called cyberbullying, activities can be criminal offences

★**Any incidences of cyberbullying should be reported immediately to the police and/or the school**

★**Remember you can use the 'report abuse' button on social networking sites if you see anything that makes you feel uncomfortable**

★Activity on the Internet can be traced back to the person responsible

★Pupils are able to use the 'Report Portal Misuse' button if they see anything that makes them feel uncomfortable

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Further Information

<http://www.ceop.gov.uk/> <http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk> <http://www.safesocialnetworking.com/> www.dcsf.gov.uk/ukccis/downloads/socialnetworking.pdf
www.bullying.co.uk
www.kidsmart.org.uk
www.becta.org.uk
www.childnet-int.org
<http://www.digizen.org.uk/>
http://esafety.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/vtc/esafety/web_leaflet_english_master.pdf
<http://www1.k9webprotection.com/>

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