

This booklet has been put together as a guide for you, as parents, to give advice on the guidelines and age restrictions for the 4 main social media programs.

As social media is growing in stature and popularity we are aware that some children will want to join these sites and post updates about themselves and their lives. As a school we are now encountering and solving more and more disputes based around social media on a day to day basis.

We hope that this booklet will help you to understand why children want to engage on these sites, but also what the recommended guidelines are from the websites themselves.

The majority recommend that children do not encounter these sites until they are at least **13 years old**. Children are not emotionally ready to face the realities of social media and the impact that they have on their lives.

We hope that you take the time to read this leaflet.

Thank you



Top 5 Questions Parents Have About Snapchat

1. Why do kids love Snapchat?

They love the spontaneity of it. It's been (rightfully) drummed into their heads for years that photos and videos you share are on the Web forever and are really hard to take back, so Snapchat's a relief in a lot of ways. It's playful and "in the moment" – a nice change from the self-presentation and reputation issues in social media services that display photos and videos indefinitely. They don't have to worry about some invisible audience.

2. Does Snapchat have a minimum age?

Yes, the minimum age is 13, in compliance with the U.S. Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). But, when you download it, Snapchat asks for your date of birth, and – if your birthday indicates you're under 13 – you're redirected to the kid version, called "Snapkidz." Snapkidz users can't add friends or share anything, and the app doesn't send any information to the company. Instead, kids' photos and videos are saved just to their devices' "camera roll." But some kids know that means you can take a "Snap" and draw on it in Snapkidz, then share it with friends using another messaging tool, like a texting app, email, Facebook, etc. – or you can just delete Snapkidz and start over with a fictional birth date.

3. What are the risks in using Snapchat?

Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about Snapchat, early news coverage fairly predictably associated disappearing photos sent on phones with "sexting." Many assume Snapchat's biggest draw is the temporary nature of its messages, which encourages people to share racy images without worrying about the repercussions. But most people – including most teens – don't use Snapchat that way. They use it because it's fun.

4. What's the appeal of having your messages disappear in seconds?

Because photos and videos go away and aren't on display anywhere, there isn't the reputation anxiety or image-curation fatigue people feel in other services. The ephemeral aspect also adds a degree of safety, as long as people don't have a false sense of security about it. Images can be saved as screenshots or captured with another phone and shared without the originator's knowledge. If your Snap gets captured by someone you send it to, Snapchat notifies you, but people have found workarounds for that too. So, as always with digital media, 100% safe sharing doesn't exist.

5. What's the best way to help kids stay safe on Snapchat?

As with all social media, respect toward self and others makes us safer. Whether the experience is positive or negative depends so much on how people use the app or service, whether or not they're really friends, and how they treat each other on Snapchat. Friends may kid around, but most kids treat their friends well. It just never hurts to have a conversation (never a lecture) with them about how they use Snapchat just to be sure.

facebook

TOP 4 Questions Parents have about Facebook

1. Why do kids love Facebook?

Children love Facebook because it is an easy way to stay in touch with friends and share thoughts, ideas, comments and pictures about their life. They can also keep up with friends around the world and make links with favourite pastimes and people.

2. Does Facebook have a minimum age?

To be eligible to sign up for Facebook, you must be at least 13 years old, which is in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. When you sign up for a Facebook account it asks for you for your date of birth to confirm this. Creating an account with false info is a violation of their terms. This also includes accounts registered on the behalf of someone under 13.

3. What are the risks in using Facebook?

Social networking can make children the target of cruel jokes from their peers, cyber-bullying and crude language in general. The average Facebook User has 135 friends and each of those has an average of 135 friends. Most don't realise that as a result, simply sharing with your own 'network' (friends and friends of friends) is not safe because it could potentially expose all your posts to tens of thousands of strangers.

4. What's the best way to help children stay safe on Facebook?

Stick to the age guidelines. Children under the age of 13 are not emotionally mature to deal with the consequences of being on Facebook.



Instagram



Top 5 Questions Parents Have About Instagram

1. Why do kids love Instagram?

Because they love media, sharing it and socializing with it on their phones, and Instagram makes all that doable in a simple, eye-catching way. Teens like taking, cropping, enhancing, sharing and commenting on photos and videos. But the commenting isn't just commenting - in effect, they're socializing in mixed-media conversations that include plenty of likes and links too.

2. Does Instagram have a minimum age?

Yes, it's 13, in compliance with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act. But Instagram doesn't ask users to specify their age, and there are many younger children who use the service, often with their parents' permission. Whether Instagram is "safe" depends more on how it's used than on the age of the user, but Instagram will delete underage accounts if they're notified and can verify the users are under 13.

3. What are the risks in using Instagram?

Though there's nothing inherently dangerous about Instagram, the main things parents worry about are typical of all social media: mean behavior among peers and inappropriate photos or videos that can hurt a child's reputation or attract the wrong kind of attention. Parents are also concerned that people their kids don't know can reach out to them directly. Kids can learn to manage these risks, which is why we wrote this guide.

4. What's the best way to help kids stay safe on Instagram?

As with all social media, being respectful of ourselves and others makes us safer. Our posts and comments reflect on us and others in our photos and videos. Whether serious or silly, they become part of our public image. Respecting others in how media is shared, tagged and commented on reduces risk. While most kids are smart about this, it doesn't hurt for parents to be sure kids aren't posting provocative images or having inappropriate interactions with people they don't know, which leads to the next question...

5. Should my child's profile be private?

For many kids, part of the fun of Instagram is developing a big following - a good thing for parents and kids to talk about. Having a public account on Instagram means anyone can follow you. A private account means that you have to approve anyone who wants to follow you, so many parents have their kids start using Instagram with a private account. But there's no guarantee your child won't be seen on Instagram or any other photo-sharing service, because people post photos of each other. *Even not having an Instagram account can't ensure a child won't appear in a photo there.* How positive or negative a young person's experience is on Instagram or anywhere online depends as much on the person and his or her friends as on the app.

TOP 4 Questions Parents have about YouTube

1. Why do kids love YouTube?

Children love YouTube because they can watch videos from people all over the world. They can share their comments and thoughts on videos and access it at any time of the day. Children can learn new skills including cooking and how to create the latest hairstyle.

2. Does YouTube have a minimum age?

Be aware that YouTube is only for teens 13 and up, and what the site considers age-appropriate may not match your values. But YouTube offers a filter called Safety Mode that limits the inappropriate content. Simply scroll down to the bottom of any YouTube page. See where it says "Safety"? Click it on. (It will remain on for logged-in users on the same browser.)

3. What are the risks in using YouTube?

YouTube is an easy way for children to access anyone around the world. This can be an amazing feature, but this is also its biggest risk. Uploading a video onto YouTube means that anyone from all over the world can access what your child is uploading and watch it repeatedly without any monitoring. This puts the children at risk every day.

4. What's the best way to help children stay safe on YouTube?

Stick the age guidelines. Children under the age of 13 are not emotionally mature to deal with the consequences of being on YouTube. Reading negative comments about themselves and their videos could affect them on a day to day basis.

Highfield Primary School

Guide to

facebook



Instagram



Social Media

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