

Keep your child safe

online



a guide for parents

achieving more together

Facebook

In order to be eligible to sign up for Facebook, people must be 13 years of age or older.

They are responsible for their own Facebook account. They should not share their password with anyone else.

On Facebook there are three privacy settings to choose from:

- Friends only
- Friends of friends
- Anyone

Make sure your child's settings are for FRIENDS only. They shouldn't have hundreds of friends – if they have it means they have friends who they do not know personally. This leaves them open to risk.

Only let your child become friends with people that they know well, not just people they know of or have met a couple of times.

Make sure that your child has not included their address or the name of their school in their profile.

Make sure that your child does not make social arrangements on the main Facebook page. This protects them from strangers tracking them in the real world.

Regularly check your child's status, timeline and photographs. There should be no photographs of other children in school uniform or at school, or members of staff in their albums. Girls' photographs in particular should be checked for images that could be viewed by others as being too provocative.

For the latest acronyms that parents should know their child might use, such as POS, meaning parent over shoulder, visit <http://www.netlingo.com/top50/acronyms-for-parents.php>.

What to do if you think your child is being cyber bullied

- Block the person who is causing the trouble.
- Print off a copy of the offensive pages – do not delete them.
- Report them to Facebook or the domain provider and report the offender to the police.
- Do not confront the offender yourself online - this can escalate the problem.
- In England, Wales and Northern Ireland from the age of 10 you are criminally responsible for your actions, including anything you say, do and write. So it is important that you do not let your child respond to any cyber bullying and that they wait to report the matter to the police or other responsible adult.
- Let the school know if there is a problem. Quite often problems on line become problems in school. It is important that the school is aware. Please contact the Assistant Head of Year/Head of Year.



Potential negative impact of social networking on your child's future

More and more organisations such as universities and employers are using social network checks to vet potential students and employees.

Almost half of employers have rejected a potential worker after finding incriminating material on their Facebook pages. A survey of 450 employers for careerbuilder.co.uk found more than 4 in 10 employers had discarded a job seeker's CV after checking their Facebook page.

Many universities now advise students on how to use social networking: 'Be careful how you present yourself on social networking sites as well as with comments you post on forums etc. Many employers "check out" job applicants and could find information about you that you would rather they didn't know. Check your privacy settings carefully!' (University of Manchester).

In today's world of ever increasing social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, what we all say and do online can potentially impact on our lives both in negative and positive ways. So it is vital that your child learns to use them responsibly.

