

# Facebook Safety & Best Practice

Facebook Safety and use is becoming increasingly important as social networking becomes an integral part of everyday life. This guide has been produced to help you through the minefield of privacy settings and best practice in order to avoid possible repercussions.

## Privacy Settings

Facebook privacy settings can be set to limit who can see your information and posts. When in Facebook click on **Account** in the top right then select **Privacy Settings**. You will see the following page.



From here you can set various restrictions about who can access your information.

eg if you select personal information and posts you can control access to the following:

Bio and favourite quotes, Birthday, Interested in and looking for, Religious and political views, photo albums, posts and comments on posts.

On each section there are 3 basic settings to choose from.

**Everyone** – *this will allow anyone on Facebook to see this information, no matter who they are, **this is the most dangerous option to choose.***

**Friends of Friends** – *This allows all your friends to see the information and anyone who is a friend of a friend. This may sound like a safe option but be aware it only takes one friend to add someone they don't know and your information could be compromised.*

**Friends Only** – ***This is the safest option*** as only people you add as friends can see the information, although *this is only safe if you are careful about who you accept as friends.*

There are 5 sections in the privacy settings. It is recommended you spend some time and work through the sections locking down as tightly as you feel is necessary, not only from a professional perspective but also to reduce the risks of online fraud and identity theft. **If you are unsure then lock it down or remove it as it is better safe than sorry!**

It is also recommended that you check your privacy settings regularly. Facebook often make changes which sometimes alters these settings. Facebook founder has announced that there will be changes made soon to simplify your privacy settings (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/10145863.stm>) but it is best to keep a check on this to ensure your continued safety.

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## Best Practice

Below are some tips and advice on the usage of Facebook and social networking.

**Facebook Safety Tip #1: If they're not your friend, don't pretend.** Don't accept friend requests unless you absolutely know who they are and that you would associate with them in person, just like real friends. Working in our profession where there are so many potential safeguarding issues, staff are advised to be cautious about other adult friends on their space who may be on list 99 and are barred from working with children.

**Facebook Safety Tip #2: Post only what you want made public.** Be cautious about the personal information that you post on any social media site, as there is every chance in the world that it will spread beyond your original submission. It may be fun to think that an old flame can contact you, but now scammers and thieves are clambering to access that personal information as well.

**Facebook Safety Tip #3: Manage your privacy settings.** Sixty percent of social network users are unaware of their default privacy settings. Facebook actually does a good job of explaining how to lock your privacy down (even if they don't set up your account with good privacy settings by default). To make it easy for you, follow these steps:

1. Spend 10 minutes reading the [Facebook Privacy Policy](#). This is an education in social networking privacy issues. Once you have read through a privacy policy, you will never view your private information in the same way. At the point the privacy policy is putting you to sleep, move on to Step 2.
2. Visit the [Facebook Privacy Help Page](#). This explains how to minimize all of the possible personal information leakage that you just read about in the privacy policy. Once you understand this on one social networking site, it becomes second nature on most of the others.
3. Now it is time to customize your [Facebook Privacy Settings](#) so that only information you want shared, IS shared. This simple step will reduce your risk of identity theft dramatically.

**Facebook Safety Tip #4: Keep Google Out.** Unless you want all of your personal information indexed by Google and other search engines, restrict your profile so that it is not visible to these data-mining experts.

**Facebook Safety Tip #5: Don't unthinkingly respond to Friends in Distress.** If you receive a post requesting money to help a friend out, do the smart thing and call them in person. Friend in Distress schemes are when a thief takes over someone else's account and then makes a plea for financial help to all of *your* friends (who think that the post is coming from you). As with all matters of identity, verify the source.

**Facebook Safety Tip #6: Information and Wall.** Be aware of who may be able to see the information which you post on your wall, or what other people may post.

**Facebook Safety Tip #7: Students as Friends.** It is very strongly recommended that you do not add or accept friend requests from any current students or former students who are under the age of 18, this includes any student from other organisations. Correspondence can always be taken out of context in the future if someone has an issue.

**Facebook Safety Tip #8: Profile Picture.** Remember your profile picture can be seen by lots of people to make sure it's appropriate

**The academy will not be able to support staff if issues arise as a result of using Facebook where the above advice has not been followed.**