Social Networking for Carr Hill Parents and Carers

A guide for parents and carers whose children are using social media

Social networking is hugely popular.

Many young people are sophisticated in the way they use social media apps and websites, tailoring their communication for different audiences, and accessing them from a range of devices including smartphones, tablets, and games consoles.

But social media, like all forms of public communication, comes with some risks. Not all of these risks turn into actual problems; and if children never face any risks, they never learn how to deal with them. By helping your child understand what the risks are, you can play a big part in preventing them from turning into problems.

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Understand the risks many children need to deal with whilst online

What they could see or do:	Who they might meet:	How this could affect them:
Seeing or sharing of violent, sexual and pornographic content	People who might bully, intimidate or frighten	Fear of missing out leading to excessive use or exaggeration
Inaccurate or false information and extreme views	People posing behind fake profiles for:	Getting upset by things they have seen and being uncertain about what to do
Promotion of harmful behaviours including self-harm, anorexia and suicide	– Mischief-making	Engaging, or being pressured into engaging in more risky behaviour either by accident or by design
Over-sharing of personal information	– Sexual grooming and stalking	Developing unrealistic, and perhaps depressing ideals of body image and gender
Actively or unintentionally getting involved in bullying or hurtful behaviour	– Blackmail and extortion	Becoming subject to peer pressure or interactions that are intense or too difficult to handle
	– Identity theft and hacking	Creating an online reputation that may create problems for them in the future

Practical tips to help minimise the risks your child might face

It's good practice for apps and websites to have safety advice and well-designed safety features which can make a real difference to how safe your child will be when using them.

Work through safety and privacy features on the apps that your child is using or might use. Make sure they understand the point of these and how to use them. Don't be put off by believing your child knows more than you: the tools are actually quite easy to manage.

- **Ask them to show you** which social media apps they use and what they like about them. Talk about how they use them and what makes them so engaging.
- **Explain how you can use privacy settings** to make sure only approved friends can see posts & images.
- **Check if any of their apps have 'geo-location' enabled**, sharing their location unintentionally.
- **Show them how to report offensive comments** or block people who upset them.
- **Check 'tagging' settings** so that when others are posting or sharing photos online, your child's identity is not revealed. Also, get people's consent before sharing photos.
- Encourage your child to **come and talk to you** if they see anything that upsets them.

Keep talking and stay involved

In a mobile age, children can't be completely protected, even by the best privacy controls; another child may use different settings.

So, it's important to keep talking to your child about the implications of social media.

Getting a sense of what they think is a useful place to start; you may be surprised by how much thought they may have given to the issues Encourage your child to think carefully about the way they, and others behave online, and how they might deal with difficult situations.

- People may **not always be who they say they are online**: how can this create problems?

- Why is it **unwise to meet** anyone in the real world that you've only ever met online?

- Even if you think your messages are private, remember that words and images can always be **captured and broadcast**.

- People **present themselves differently online** - do they really look like that? Are they always having that good a time?

- Be aware that screens, and especially being anonymous, can lead people to say things they **wouldn't say to someone's face**.

- What does **being a good friend and a likeable person** online look like?

- There can be **pressure to be part of a particular group** online or to be seen to be **following a certain set of ideas**. How can you take a step back and make your own decisions?

The following guidance gives user and safety information on popular social media apps and gaming programs.

There is an **age** rating for these – issued by the apps/games themselves and associated privacy setting links.

Please talk to all members of your household so you can all understand the risks.

Children in our school have been targeted by online predators using Roblox, WhatsApp, TikTok and Snapchat in recent years.

TikTok (13+)

You can choose to have a public or private account. If you set your account to private, then only those you accept as friends can see your videos. To do this go to your profile, tap the settings icon (three dots), tap Privacy and Safety and turn on Private account.

TikTok have introduced new tools to **try** and promote kindness on their platform. The new 'Filter All Comments' feature means that you can choose which comments will appear on your videos. https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en- us/new-tools-to-promote-kindness

Report inappropriate content: you can report an account, video, comment and message. Follow the instructions here: https://support.tiktok.com/en/privacy- safety/report-inappropriate-content-en

Family Pairing

- You can use Family Pairing to link your own TikTok account to your child's account. This will give you access to additional controls such as:

- **Screen Time Management:** Control how long your child can spend on TikTok.

- **Direct Messages:** Limit who can send messages to them or turn off direct messaging completely. Direct messaging is automatically disabled for registered accounts between the ages of 13 and 15.

- **Restricted Mode:** Restrict the appearance of inappropriate content.

- **Find out more here:** https://www.tiktok.com/safety/resources/for-parents? lang=en&appLaunch=web

Snapchat (13+)

When you set up your account, it is automatically set so only friends you've added can contact you or view your story.

Unfriend: Go to a chat with that friend, tap the button at the top left and then tap Remove Friend.

Block a friend: Go to a chat with that friend, tap the button at the top left and then tap Block Friend.

Blocking: If you want to stop somebody from adding you as a friend or sending you a message then block them. Select settings, blocking and enter the name of the person, click block, select that person and click block and block.

Location settings: This feature allows your friends to see where you are (including when you are at home) when you have the app open. **It is so important that you check your child's settings for this feature.** Your location won't be shared on the map until you open it for the first time, at which point you can choose:

- **Ghost Mode (Only Me):** your location won't be visible to anyone else.
- **My Friends:** your location will be shared with all of your friends
- **My Friends, Except …:** your location will be shared with your friends, except the friends on this list.
- **Only These Friends …:** choose specific friends to share your location with.

Find out more here:

https://support.snapchat.com/en-GB/article/privacy-settings2

Facebook (13+)

- Included in Facebook's setting are the ability to set who can see your posts, who can contact you and the ability to review all posts before appearing on your timeline (Timeline Review).

- **Unfriend:** go to their profile, hover over Friends and select Unfriend. **Blocking:** If you don't want somebody to add you as a friend or send you a message then block them. Select Settings & Privacy and then settings, click Blocking and enter the name of the person,

- click Block, select the correct person and click block and block.
  Facebook Privacy Check up: this helpful tool helps you review your settings. Select Settings, Privacy Shortcuts and review.

- Find out more here:

https://en-gb.facebook.com/help/

Instagram (13+)

- When you set up your account, it is automatically set as public. To change your profile to private (so only people you approve can follow you) go to your profile, tap Settings, tap Account Privacy and tap to toggle Private Account on.

- **Remove a follower:** Go to your profile and tap followers, tap to the right of the person and select remove.
  Blocking: If you want to stop somebody from liking or commenting on your posts, you can block them. To do this, tap their username, tap on the 3 circles in the top right and select block.

- **Turn off commenting on a post:** Tap above your post, select Turn Off Commenting.

- Find out more here:

https://help.instagram.com/196883487377501

WhatsApp (16+)

- By default, WhatsApp sets your privacy settings to allow any WhatsApp user to see your read receipts, last seen, about and profile photo.
- To change any of these settings, go to settings, account and privacy.
- **Reporting:** When you receive a message from an unknown number for the first time, you will be given the option to report the number. This report will then send the most recent messages in the chat to WhatsApp. You can also report any issues direct to WhatsApp within the app by going to settings, help and contact us.
- Find out more here:

 https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/general/

Twitter (13+)

- When you set up your Twitter account, you can choose whether you would like to keep your tweets public or protected (private). To keep them private, go to Settings and Privacy, select privacy and safety and select protect your tweets,
- **Unfollow somebody:** Click the arrow icon next to their tweet and select unfollow. **Blocking:** Click the arrow icon next to their tweet and select block.
- **Location:** To keep your location private (so followers can't see the location you are tweeting from), go to Settings and Privacy, select privacy and safety and ensure precise location is disabled.
- Find out more here:

https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/twitter-privacy-settings

Roblox (7+)

Roblox is an online game and app where you can create your own games or play games that other users have made. There's the option to chat to other players, but you can change this to private or friends only.

Like any online multiplayer game, there is little to no control over the types of people or age limits of those playing the game. Despite the fact that strict chat filters can be activated - blocking inappropriate words and phrases - children are still susceptible to being targeted by online predators.

Roblox has a Parents, Safety, and Moderation section on their website which you might want to explore.

Their information on safety is particularly useful which includes advice on:

- chat, privacy and filtering
- account restrictions
- reporting
- blocking

Explore and discuss these features with your child and take time to set them up together.

Fortnite: Battle Royale (12+)

Fortnite is a popular survival action game where up to 100 live players can fight each other to be the last one standing. The game includes **heavy** violence but with little blood or gore. You can talk to other players using public, private and voice chat.

Talk to your children about who they are talking to?

- Most gaming platforms allow you to chat with other players whilst you play the game. This can take place in chat boxes, both privately and publicly, or via voice or video call.

- Make sure you check in with your child regularly about who they're talking to on their favourite games. Remind them that conversations should only be about the game, and if someone starts asking them other questions or suggests they speak using another app like Snapchat or Instagram they should tell you.

- Explore safety settings together like block, report and mute so your child knows how to stop unwanted contact or end an online chat if it's not about the game.

Fortnite has a range of parental tools which let you control things like filters on mature language and disabling voice chat.

You can read more about parental controls on Fortnite.

Take the time to explore these with your child, talking about the different features and why you might to use them.

For more information and to make a report

You can find out more about how children use social media, the apps they use, the risks they face, how to use privacy settings, and advice and tips about how to talk to your children at:

- childnet.com/sns
- internetmatters.org
- nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety
- net-aware.org.uk
- parentzone.org.uk
- thinkyouknow.co.uk/parents
- askaboutgames.com

To make a report

Concerned about online grooming or sexual behaviour online? Contact CEOP: ceop.police.uk

If you stumble across criminal sexual or obscene content on the internet you should report it to the Internet Watch Foundation: iwf.org.uk