

2nd October 2023

Dear Parent/Carer,

You will be aware how much influence social media has on your child/children. This includes group messaging on various social platforms with large groups of children either in their school or in their community. Some research has suggested that young people are receiving more than 50 messages a day via snapchat or other platforms. Some young people are receiving more than 300.

Children use many different social media apps and sites. Like most things, there are positives and negatives. There are risks for children that you should be aware of, to help keep your child safe on social media.

What are the risks?	
Oversharing	Talking to people they don't know
Sharing their location	Sending or receiving inappropriate content
Unrealistic sense of body image or reality	Obsessive focus on likes and comments

We would like to share with you some information and top tips to help you to protect your child from over exposure and ways to help keep your child/children safe:

1. Review the Location settings

Remind them why they should not share their location on posts, or public forums, chats, videos or with people they don't know. Review the location settings on their favourite app or game and talk to them about what they're sharing online. However, there are circumstances where it might be appropriate for your child to share their location with a trusted adult or friend. For example, if they're travelling home alone or arranging to meet a group of friends outside school, then it can be a good way to help keep them safe.

Remember: If children share their location publicly, it could be seen by someone they don't know. This can increase the risk of cyberbullying, unwanted contact (from friends or others) or becoming a target.

2. Get to know the Safety and Privacy settings

Explore the safety and privacy settings on any app to decide which are right to use for your child. Each app has slightly different ways to set up an account, but most have the option to set an account to private, to not allow friend requests, and to hide the user's location. Explain these settings to your child and the reasons for having them in place.

3. Check Age Ratings and Features

Get to know the age ratings of the apps that your child uses. Many have a minimum age of 13 years old to be able to sign up, but you should check the age rating of individual apps to make sure. Don't forget that you know your child best, and you might decide that they need to be a little bit older before it's suitable for them.

Social Media App	Age rating	Main features
Facebook	13+	Share text, photos & videos, instant messaging, marketplace, friends, likes and comments.
Instagram	13+	Photo & video sharing, livestreaming, stories, Direct Messages, hashtags.
Snapchat	13+	Photo & video messaging, snaps, location sharing.
Tiktok	13+	Making & sharing short videos, lip-syncing.
X (formerly known as Twitter)	13+	Tweets (text with restricted character count), photo and video sharing, hashtags.
Wink	13+	Messaging, photo sharing.
Omegle	18+	Talking/video messaging with strangers – avoid.

Use the links below to find out more about keeping safe on social media:

[Childnet — Online safety for young people](#)
[Social media and online safety | NSPCC Learning](#)
[Childline on social media | Childline](#)
[Feeling good on social media | Childline](#)

If you have any concerns about peer issues at school due to social media, please contact your child's school. Headteachers and their teams will support and give advice on managing social media use and signpost to useful resources.

However, if you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999. If you're worried about a child but they are not in immediate danger, you should share your concerns in line with the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2021):

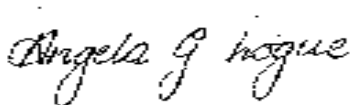
Fife Child Protection Services

For non-emergency calls call Police Scotland on 101 or the Social Work Contact Centre (03451 551503) or email sw.enquiries@fife.gov.uk. Out of office hours (9 am to 5 pm) the Emergency Social Work number is 03451 550099.

Contact the NSPCC Helpline on [0808 800 5000](tel:08088005000) or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk. NSPCC trained professionals will talk through your concerns with you and give you expert advice.

If your concern is about online sexual abuse, you can make a report to the [Child Exploitation and Online Protection \(CEOP\)](#) command.

Yours faithfully,



Angela Logue
Head of Education and Children's Services

Frequently Asked Questions

- **If it's illegal offline, is it illegal online?**

Examples of illegal activity online could be posting threatening, abusive or offensive material or comments. This also includes threats made against you or attempts to force you to pay money. Anything put online may be traced, even if false details are used.

- **I have been hacked. How do I recover my account?**

NCSC have a [step by step guide](#) to help you regain control if your account had been hacked. You can then protect yourself against future attacks.

- **How do I report abuse on social networking sites?**

- If you become aware of anyone acting illegally or behaving in a threatening way, report it to the service provider.
- You can also report to the Police by dialling 101.
- Don't delete the abusive message.
- If you think you are the victim of a crime or are being threatened contact the police.

On Facebook, you can now also download a 'ClickCEOP' button. This allows users to get help and advice from the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre. You can report concerns directly to CEOP if necessary.