

Social Media Guide For Parents



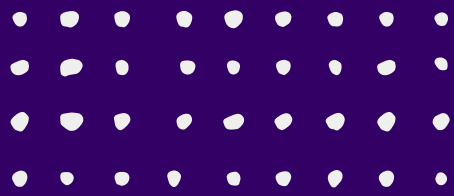
Let's Connect



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 2023

6-12 February 2023





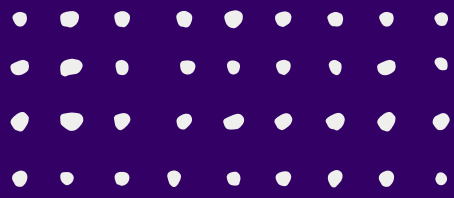
Social Media Guide For Parents

One benefit of social networking is that it allows users to stay connected with friends and family. However like most things, there can be negatives too, particularly for children and young people. T

In this guide we'll highlight some information you should be aware of, to help keep your child stay safe on social media.

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- How Social Media Can affect Children's Mental Health
- Setting Realistic Boundaries
- How to talk to your children about social media
- Popular Social Media Platforms
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- Additional Resources



How Social Media Can Affect Children's Mental Health

Depression and Anxiety - Social media lets you see the carefully selected best parts of everyone else's lives, which you then compare to the negatives in your own life (which only you see). Comparing yourself to other people is a sure path to anxiety and unhappiness, and social media has made this much easier to do.

Cyberbullying - Perpetrators of bullying can use the anonymity that (some) social networks provide to gain people's trust and then terrorise them in front of their peers. For instance, they might create a fake profile and act friendly to a classmate, then later betray and embarrass them online.

FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) - A form of anxiety that you get when you're scared of missing out on a positive experience that someone else is having. This fear receives constant fuel from what you see on social media. With increased social network use, there's a better chance for you to see that someone is having more fun than you are right now. And that's exactly what causes FOMO.



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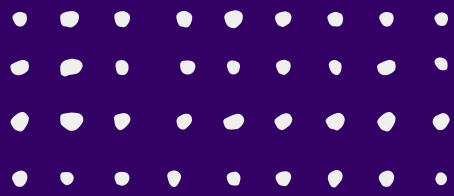
Unrealistic Expectations - Most social media sites have a lack of online authenticity. People use Snapchat to share their exciting adventures, post about how much they love their significant other on Facebook, and load up their Instagram page with heavily staged photos.

Negative Body Image - If you look at popular Instagram accounts, you'll find unbelievably beautiful people wearing expensive clothes on their perfectly shaped bodies.

And to nobody's surprise, body image is now an issue for almost everyone. Of course, seeing so many people who are supposedly perfect (according to society's standards) on a daily basis makes you conscious of how different you look from those pictures.

Unhealthy Sleep Patterns On top of increasing the cases of anxiety and depression, another negative of social media is that spending too much time on screen can lead to poor sleep. Numerous studies have shown that increased use of social media has a negative effect on your sleep quality.

General Addiction Social media can be more addictive than cigarettes and alcohol. It has a powerful draw for many people that leads to them checking it all the time without even thinking about it.



Setting Realistic Boundaries

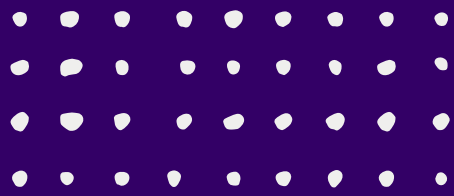
Whatever their age, it's a good idea to sit down together with your child to agree some rules about how much time they spend online to protect their wellbeing.

For example, you might want to agree that they shouldn't go online just before bed or use any devices at night, because this can affect their sleep. You can often set timers on devices to limit internet use – but try to help your child manage this for themselves as well.

Parental Control Apps

Qustodio – supports iOS and Android devices, Amazon Fire tablets, Macs, PCs and Chromebooks. It also lets you set time limits for individual apps and individual devices. This service's location tracking works on both iOS and Android, as do its geofencing and a Family Locator feature that shows you where all your children are at once.

Net Nanny – an excellent web-filtering technology that analyses pages rather than just blindly blocking them and lets you create filters of your own. It can track your child's location, display their location history, and set time allowances and schedules equally well on both platforms. The iOS version lets you block more than 100 apps on your children's phone; the Android one lets you block them all. The built-in App Advisor gives you a heads-up on which new apps you should watch out for.



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Family Time - not only offers screen time limits, but it also lets parents create internet use schedules and encourages children to “save” some of their minutes in a time bank (which parents can then offer up as “fun time” later). It also gives parents the option to lock their child’s device remotely whenever necessary.

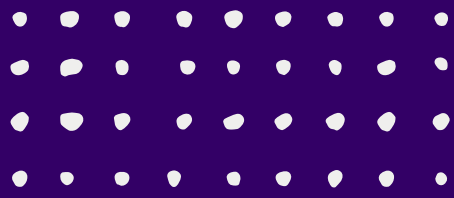
Parental Controls on Smartphones and Tablets

Whether your child has access to an Android/Apple smartphone or tablet, parental controls are available across all of these devices. You can turn off functions like in-app purchasing, social networks, app store access, camera access, Bluetooth and more.

Apple - You can use Restrictions to block or limit specific apps and features on your iPhone, iPad, or iPod touch, including access to explicit content in the iTunes Store.

Android - This useful guide from PC Advisor gives step by step information on setting up parental controls on Android devices: [pcadvisor.co.uk/how-to/Google Play Store- For Android Phones](http://pcadvisor.co.uk/how-to/Google-Play-Store-For-Android-Phones), we also recommend putting in place controls on the Google Play store.

Setting parental controls can be a good way of gaining peace of mind that your child isn’t accessing anything inappropriate or unsafe. It is, however, important to remember that as your child grows up they may learn ways of getting round these. This is why it is so important to be able to talk openly to your children about social media and the risks in order to help them make good decisions for themselves.



How to talk to your children about social media

Be open and calm The more open and calm you can be when talking about social media, the more your child will feel comfortable coming to you if they have seen something harmful or inappropriate. Reassure your child they can come to you about anything they have seen that is worrying them and you won't overreact. Being honest and transparent will help them trust you in any worrying situations.

Encourage positive social media use Not all social media use is created equal and lecturing your child to use it less could make them want to rebel against you. Encourage more active use of social media, such as educational apps like 'DuoLingo' or mindfulness apps like 'Headspace'. Try to encourage them to use social networking sites in a positive manner to connect with their friends, and to avoid mindlessly scrolling.

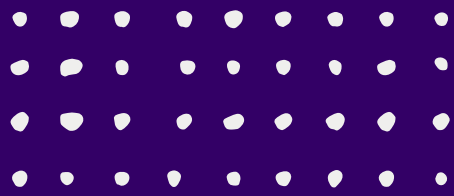
Encourage privacy

By being informed on the ways in which information can be shared online, you can help your child with their privacy settings in order to better protect their safety online.

Talk about 'Fake News'

Most children use the internet to improve and develop their knowledge/ Children should be aware that not all information found online is correct, accurate or relevant.

Show your child how to check information they find by comparing it to alternative sources on the same topic.



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Popular Social Media Platforms

Instagram – a social networking app which allows its users to share pictures and videos with their friends. Instagram Stories allows users to post a selection of photos/videos into one story. The new feature works in much the same way as Snapchat Stories, with stories disappearing after 24 hours.



Snapchat – a mobile messaging application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings, the messages disappear from the recipient's phone after a few seconds. Users can compile photos/videos for all their friends to view and publish them as a Story.

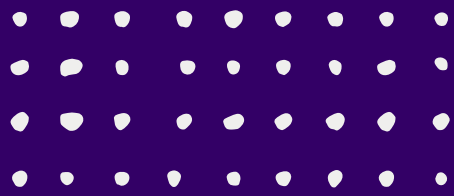


Facebook – is a website which allows users, who sign-up for free profiles, to connect with friends, work colleagues or people they don't know, online. It allows users to share pictures, music, videos, and articles, as well as their own thoughts and opinions with however many people they like. Users send "friend requests" to people who they may – or may not – know.



Tiktok – is a social media platform for creating, sharing and discovering short videos. The app is used by young people as an outlet to express themselves through singing, dancing, comedy, and lip-syncing, and allows users to create videos and share them across a community





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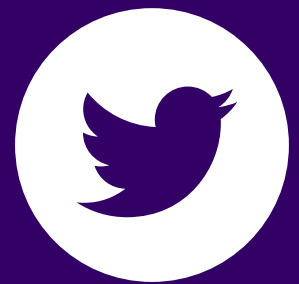
BeReal – a photo-sharing app that lets users share one photo per day to show their followers what they are doing at that moment. Users get a notification saying “Time to BeReal” at a random time once per day. In the app the user has a two-minute time limit in which to take a picture of what they are doing at that moment. Users can only view what their friends have posted after they post their own.



YouTube – a video sharing service where users can watch, like, share, comment and upload their own videos. For many young people, YouTube is used to watch music videos, comedy shows, how to guides, recipes, hacks and to follow their favourite vloggers.

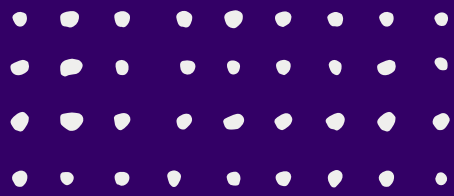


Twitter – a micro-blogging site, posting a message is known as a tweet. People make connections by following other people’s twitter feeds. Once you click follow, anything that person or organisation says will appear on your timeline. You can tweet a person by putting the @ symbol before their username.



Tumblr – a cross between a social networking and a blog. It is often described as ‘microblog’ as people usually post short snippets of text and quick snaps as opposed to longer diary style entries found in more traditional blogs. Young people create a web page that is a collection of all the things they like. They can post images, music clips, text and also re-blog from other Tumblr feeds they find interesting.





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Key Privacy Settings

Location Settings A lot of common social media apps have geo-tags, where your location information can be shared attached to the post. Snapchat has a feature called 'SnapMaps' where your user's avatar can be seen at your exact location on a world map. Instagram, BeReal and Facebook have a feature which tags the location of where you posted your content.

In all phones you can disable the location settings for apps if you go into settings > location > disable / enable. Furthermore you can disable this for specific apps if you go into settings > Instagram > never / ask next time / while using the app.

Not Interested Most social media apps have an option to report harmful content. There are buttons that you can press under the settings of posts that say 'Not interested' and this re-jigs the algorithm into not showing you content that is similar to this. This can be especially important when triggering content appears on a user's timeline, such as content relating to eating disorders, self-harm, abuse, suicide and much more.



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Reporting Harmful Content When you make a report to a social media platform, the platform will review what you have told them and decide whether the content breaks one of their rules.

Each platform has its own set of rules or 'community guidelines' that it expects its users to follow. When you make a report, you usually have to pick which of these rules you think the content or account you are reporting breaks.

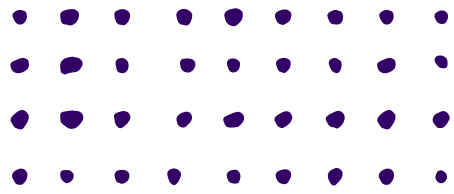
Reporting something doesn't always mean the post or account will get removed. Once the platform has reviewed your report, they will tell you what they have decided and what action they are going to take.

Most of the time when you report something on social media, it stays anonymous so the person you reported won't know who made the report.

Open vs. Closed It is important to remember no matter how private your social media account is, as soon as you post something it is very difficult to have complete control over it. It is so easy to copy and paste and re-share information digitally.

-Open: open networks include Twitter, Instagram, Tiktok, VSCO and Tumblr. These are apps that make it easy to connect with the world and don't make it easy to restrict access to the things you post online.

-Closed: closed networks include BeReal, Whatsapp, Snapchat and to some degree Facebook. These networks are designed to be used just between friends, although it is not readily available to everyone, some of your information is.



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Additional Resources – Click the logo below for more information



Is Screen Time
Guidance Needed?



Online safety



Child Exploitation
and Online
Protection



Safety Resources



CEOP Education



free downloadable tool kit



supporting children with gaming



free app for teenagers
(11+)



fighting for young people's mental health
talk to your children
about social media