E-SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Social Media is one of the most popular aspects of the internet, and with the amount of apps available for download increasing constantly, keeping young people safe online has never been more important.

But what exactly do we need to know about the age restrictions and safety on these apps in terms of internet safety?

APPS AND THEIR AGE RATINGS

13+
- Facebook
- Snapchat
- Instagram
- Twitter
- TikTok
- Kik
- YouNow
- Yubo
- House Party
- Monkey

16+
- WhatsApp

17+
- Sarahah
- YOLO

18+
- MeetMe
- LiveMe

Why are a lot of social media apps 13+?

As you can see from the above, many social media apps have an age rating of 13+. This relates to data processing policies that social media companies need to adhere to. Under the COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) Law, social media companies are prohibited from collecting and storing any personal information about any persons under the age of 13, unless they have permission from their Parents/Carers.

What age do you recommend to begin social networking?

This is going to be different for everyone. However, if the age rating were to do with content, it may be higher. It's always a good idea to gather as much information as possible before proceeding to download any social media app. We recommend checking out _**Common Sense Media.**_ They give an overview of the app and also a rating based on opinions from experts, Parents/Carers and children and young people too.

What about privacy settings?

Privacy settings certainly allow for a greater sense of security when using social media apps. We advise that these are used collaboratively with children and young people, and are set up at the same time as downloading the app. Certain apps have different content available depending on your age. For example, if you are over 13, but under 18, you may be restricted as to what content you can see on the platform. However, it is possible to falsify your age and receive access to the platform in it's entirety, so check in regularly to see what your young person is seeing on the apps they may be using.

**Internet Matters** have excellent online safety guides available for Parents/Carers on popular apps, games and devices.

What if they see something upsetting?

It is now strongly advised that through Internet Safety Training, young people develop digital resilience to help them stay safe online. Training young people in internet safety and resilience online is now more important than ever before. Discuss the importance of critical thinking online, speaking up if they ever see something that they find upsetting or worrying, and online conduct regularly. *__Thinkuknow (Powered by CEOP)__*, have excellent resources available to train young people in digital resilience.

A key part of keeping young people safe online is talking about their online experiences regularly. Opening up a consistent, non-judgemental conversation goes a long way in providing a stronger level of online safety for young people, particularly on social media platforms.