STAYING SAFE ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. The most popular social networking sites for young people are Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Whatsapp. It's a good idea to try out these sites so you have some idea of what your children are doing.

2. The minimum age to have an account on Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat is 13, and for Whatsapp is 16. Children sometimes lie about their age to get an account, which means strangers will think they are older than they are.

3. Child-friendly social networking sites exist, e.g. Club Penguin, Yoursphere. Having said that, children will want to be on sites that make them seem cool, such as Facebook and Instagram.

4. The biggest concerns regarding children using social media are: privacy, cyber-bullying, cyber-stalking, age-inappropriate content, online grooming, identity theft and emotional impacts.

5. Help your child feel confident within the online community. Websites like Facebook and Instagram have a heavy emphasis on number of likes, so children need to be reassured that these aren't positive sources of self-esteem.

6. Encourage your children to never use their full names online. Also make sure they aren't giving out other personal details such as addresses, phone numbers or photographs.

7. Never post any times or dates that your house will be empty – even just to your friends list.

8. Teach your children how to create strong passwords – with numbers and both upper and lowercase letters.

9. If your child tells you they have seen something online that made them feel upset or uncomfortable, it's important to be supportive and non-judgmental – reacting angrily or indifferently can mean your child won't tell you if they have troubles in the future. If your child is being cyber-bullied, don't delete the messages as they may be needed as evidence if the situation escalates at all.

10. Remember, anyone can be anyone online. The 10 year old girl who lives in America can be a 50 year old man from down the street.

11. Make sure your child's Facebook is Friends only and Instagram is private, and encourage them to only accept friend requests from people they know. Have a good look at the security settings and make sure you understand who will be seeing the things you and your children post.

12. Never post anything you wouldn't be comfortable saying to a complete stranger – you never know who's reading your posts.

13. Remember that once you or your children post something online, it can be shared widely and it might not be possible to delete it. Your friends can share your photos to their friends, and their friends can see their comments on your posts. People can also copy and paste or screenshot social media posts.

14. Lead by example – if your children see you posting inappropriate content or private information online, they'll think it's okay to for them to.

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STAYING SAFE ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES: A GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

1. There are lots of great websites that only children can use, such as Club Penguin and Yoursphere. You have to be 13 to get a Facebook, Instagram or Snapchat account, and 16 to get a Whatsapp account.

2. Remember, anyone can be anyone online. The 10 year old girl who lives in America can be a 50 year old man from down the street.

3. If anyone says anything to you online that makes you feel upset or uncomfortable, block the user and tell an adult.

4. Never use your full name online. You also mustn't give out personal details such as your address, phone number and photographs.

5. If you have Facebook, make sure it's set to Friends rather than Public and your Instagram is set to private.

6. Remember that once you post something online, it can be shared widely and it might not be possible to delete it. Your friends can share your photos to their friends, and their friends can see their comments on your posts. People can also copy and paste or screenshot social media posts.

7. If you wouldn't want your parents to see something you post online, then don't post it – even if you don't have them as friends they could end up seeing it.

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