



St Charles RC Primary School  
E-Safety Newsletter 2

**KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE**  
**SOCIAL NETWORKING**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Our second e-safety newsletter aims to give you information and guidance with regard to social networking. The majority of social networking sites have age restrictions in place, for reasons that will be explained below. However there are some which have no restrictions that many children, including those at St Charles RC, use at home. This newsletter aims to tell you of the risks of social networking, give you tips on keeping your child safe, and resources and starting points to help you talk to your child. While we remind you that children **must be 13 years old** to have a Facebook account, we also understand that rather than risking a child opening an account behind your back, it may be better if you help them do so and monitor their use to keep them safe.

The majority of information in this newsletter is taken from the NSPCC website and [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

**THE STATISTICS**

The NSPCC conducted an online survey, which yielded the findings below:

- 22% of 8 to 12 year olds have social media accounts
- Around 59% of children have already used a social network by the time they are 10 ([knowthenet.org.uk](http://knowthenet.org.uk))
- 43% have messaged strangers online by the age of 12 ([knowthenet.org.uk](http://knowthenet.org.uk))
- Around half of 11 and 12 year olds in the UK have an underage profile.
- 23% of 11 and 12 year olds with a social networking site profile say they have been upset by something on it in the past 12 months.
- 18% of these felt upset or scared about it for weeks or months after the incident occurred.
- 20% experienced something that upset them every day or almost every day.
- 62% of these experiences were caused by strangers or people they only knew online.
- Nearly half (45%) of parents whose child had an underage profile on Facebook were unaware of the minimum age of 13 requirement.

**What is a social networking site?** Social networking sites allow you to talk to other people, exchange pictures or chat to friends. The most popular sites are listed below.

Network	Min. Age	Type
FACEBOOK	13	Sharing information, photos and instant messaging.
INSTAGRAM	13	Sharing and commenting on photographs.
YOU TUBE	13	Sharing and commenting on videos.
TWITTER	13	Sharing and following text updates.
WHATSAPP	13	Instant messaging service.
ASK.FM	13	Asking questions of strangers and messaging service.
SNAP CHAT	13	Video calling and messaging.



**Why is there a minimum age requirement?**

There are several reasons for a minimum age requirement. Much relates to data collection and storage, and has its origins in the USA. There are also valid concerns regarding young children's ability to deal with inappropriate content, cyberbullying, online risk-taking, and grooming. When you sign up for a social networking site you agree to terms and conditions, and in many cases confirm you are over 13 years of age. It is worth noting that while Instagram does not ask for age confirmation, its privacy policy (below) makes it clear children should be over 13. It also has fewer safety controls than Facebook, and can pose a higher risk due to the nature of photographs and less control over who can see them.

**FACEBOOK PRIVACY POLICY:** *"No information from children under age 13. If you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13, please contact us through help page."*

**INSTAGRAM PRIVACY POLICY:** *"Instagram does not knowingly collect or solicit any information from anyone under the age of 13 or knowingly allow such persons to register for the Service. The Service and its content are not directed at children under the age of 13. In the event that we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13 without parental consent, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from or about a child under 13, please contact us."*

## **What are the risks?**

**CYBERBULLYING** - Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place via technology. The effects on children can be devastating. With technologies offering 24 hour access, cyberbullying can affect children in places which were previously safe, for example at home. For victims, it can feel like there is no escape.

**21% of 8 to 11 year olds have been deliberately targeted, threatened, or humiliated by an individual or group through the use of mobile phone or the internet. (Beatbullying, Virtual Violence II)**

### **How to help your child:**

- Offer reassurance or support.
- Tell your child that if they are being bullied to always keep the evidence.
- Block the bullies.
- Report any bullying content to the website it is hosted on.

**GROOMING** - Grooming is a process used by people with a sexual interest in children to attempt to engage them in sexual acts either over the internet or in person. People may target children in a variety of ways, including via social networking, online chatrooms or gaming sites. They can pretend to be someone else, for example a child, to engage in conversation, and show an interest in the children masquerading as a friend.

It is important that children understand that people like this exist and that they should never do anything online or offline that they are uncomfortable with. Grooming behaviour manipulates children in order to gain control over them: it may start by asking a child to engage in things slowly, for example a rude joke, sharing a photo, and progress from that point as the child may feel they have already done something wrong and be more reluctant to speak to an adult for fear of getting into trouble.

**It is vital that as a parent or carer you should be approachable so that if your child is concerned about something, they know they can talk to you.**

**Who is your child 'friends' with?** - It is vital you check your child's 'friends' list. Are these all people your child actually knows? What information are the children publishing online? Look through your child's information feed.

Many children will have indirectly or directly revealed to strangers:

- what school they go to
- who their friends are
- what their interests are
- where they like to hang out with friends
- where they live

All of this information may be readily available on your child's page and leave them open to grooming, putting them at risk.

### **LOSING CONTROL OVER PICTURES AND VIDEO**

*The following guidance is taken from the CEOP 'Thinkuknow' website:*

Pictures and videos can be copied, shared and spread at great speed. What may have started as being posted for a few friends, can very quickly end up in the hands of the entire school and beyond. Some young people have posted or sent sexualised pictures of themselves to a boyfriend or girlfriend and found them shared further – see our film 'Exposed' for more advice and information on this area. Some of the main risks with this type of image being in the hands of someone else include:

Bullying – young people can be bullied by others about the content of pictures

Distress – knowing that other people that they do not know are looking at personal pictures can be very upsetting

Blackmail – if the images end up in the hands of someone with bad intentions, they may be used to attempt to manipulate the child

Reputation – once something is online it is very difficult to remove. Therefore images can become part of a young person's 'digital footprint' and potentially affect them in the long-term, such as if someone searches their name as part of a job interview.

### **How can I talk to my child about social networking and the risks attached?**

Talk to your child about what they're up to online. Which sites are the members of? Are their online 'friends' people they know in the real world or have they added strangers to boost their friend numbers? How are they communicating with people they don't know? What information are they sharing?

Watch Thinkuknow films and cartoons with your child. You can also visit [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/primary](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/primary) for videos on e-safety to watch with your child, and [http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/8\\_10/control/social/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/8_10/control/social/) for further ways to talk to your child about the associated risks of social networking sites.

Keep up-to-date with your child's development online. Children will be developing new skills and it is important you know what they are. If you are helping your child use a social networking site, make sure you monitor it regularly, but bear in mind that most instant messaging services are just that- instant- and you may not be able to see conversations they have had with 'friends' once it has been closed.

Set boundaries in the online world just as you would in the real world. How long is your child online for? Who are they talking to? Where is the computer?

Keep all equipment that connects to the internet in a family space. It is easier to check what your child can see if the computer is in a shared family area. It also reduces the opportunity your child will have for risky behaviour.

## **Social networking is increasingly an everyday part of life for our children, and while we want to encourage them to enjoy what these sites have to offer, it is vital we keep our children safe.**

God bless  
Mrs Campbell



