

# Quick guide to social media



Children love to socialise and as they get older, they will want to stay in touch with family and friends online. There are lots of social media websites and mobile apps that people use to chat, comment, share pictures and game with their friends.

## What are the risks?

- **Inappropriate content.** Anybody can post and share videos, pictures, or ideas on social media. This means children may see things they don't want to, including sexual or violent content.
- **Inappropriate behaviour.** Children can feel more confident when they are online as they feel protected by the screen. This can result in them, or their friends, saying or doing something they'd be less likely to do offline, including oversharing.
- **Over-sharing.** Social media lets people share information about who they are and what they like doing – with lots of different people. It's easy to share things online that we wouldn't face-to-face. Once something has been shared, you can never be sure who has seen it, saved it, or shared it.
- **Making friends with people they don't know.** It's also easy to set up fake profiles, and some adults may even pretend to be children when they're much older. This makes it hard to tell the difference between someone who's genuine and a fake. Some people online, can also put pressure on children or manipulate them into doing something they don't want to do.

## Keeping your child safe

- **Make sure they are ready.** Remember, most of the popular social media services require users to be at least 13 years of age before they can register. It's also a good idea to check out the social media site or app they want to use with them, look at the privacy settings, age requirements and talk with them about how they can use it safely.
- **Be a great role model.** What you do on social media will influence their online behaviour. Make sure your social media accounts are a good example to your child, by taking some time to check your friendships, privacy settings and the things you that you have posted.
- **Get involved and support them.** The best way you can protect your child is to establish a positive relationship with them around their life online. Let them know you want to support them as they begin to explore, and that they can come to you if they have any worries or problems. Talk about any worries you might have, and why you have them.
- **Talking about safe social media use.** Talk about what it means to be a good friend online, how would they deal with disagreements and how the treat their friends online. Talk about how to share with care by using the privacy settings and reporting systems.

For more information visit

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/is-my-child-ready-for-social-media](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/is-my-child-ready-for-social-media)