

## Social Networking and Young People

Young peoples use of the internet has increased dramatically in recent years. Young people use the internet for a wide variety of purposes, from completing school work, communicating with friends and peers to watching video clips and playing games.

Social networking sites have played a huge role in changing the way young people interact with other people online.

However being online can make children vulnerable to many risks and it exposes them to experiences which they may find upsetting. These risks could be:

- Online bullying (cyberbullying)
- Sharing too much information
- Vulnerability to predatory adults
- Exposure to age inappropriate material
- Sharing photos or videos that they later regret
- Risk of identity theft.



## Social Networking and Parkside School

We believe it is our responsibility to prepare pupils for their lives in the modern world, and ICT is an integral part of that world. At our school we are committed to teaching pupils to use the ICT effectively and appropriately in all aspects of their education.

### Teaching safe use of the Internet and ICT

We think it is crucial to teach pupils how to use the Internet safely, both at school and at home, and we use the Kidsmart safety code to support our teaching in this area. Kidsmart has been developed by the Childnet charity, <http://www.kidsmart.org.uk>

The main aspects of this approach include the following five **SMART** tips:

- **S**afe - Staying safe involves being careful and not giving out your name, address, mobile phone no., school name or password to people online...
- **M**eeting someone you meet in cyberspace can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents'/ carers' permission and then when they are present...
- **A**ccepting e-mails or opening files from people you don't really know or trust can get you into trouble - they may contain viruses or nasty messages...
- **R**emember someone online may be lying and not be who they say they are. If you feel uncomfortable when chatting or messaging end the conversation...
- **T**ell your parent or carer if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried.

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## Parent and Carer Social Networking Guidance



This leaflet offers some insight to parents and carers around the dangers of social networking and the appropriate use of social media.



# What is Social Networking?

Social networking is a platform to build social networks or social relations among people who, share interests, activities, backgrounds or real-life connections. These online communications and social media include software, applications, e-mail and websites, which enable users to interact, create and exchange information online. This content may include text, pictures or video and sometimes combinations of all three. Increasingly these sites and services are accessed and updated through mobile devices rather than desktop or

## This guidance aims to:

- Encourage social networking sites to be used in a beneficial and positive way by parents;
- Safeguard pupils, staff and anyone associated with the school from the negative effects of social networking sites;
- Safeguard the reputation of the School from unwarranted abuse on social networking sites;
- Clarify what the School considers to be appropriate/inappropriate use of social networking sites;
- Set out the action the School will consider taking if inappropriate use is made of social



# What can you do to keep your child safe online?

## Ground Rules

- Discuss together as a family how the internet will be used in your house. Consider what information should be kept private (such as personal information, photos in school uniform etc) and decide rules for making and meeting online friends. Make sure your child uses strong passwords to protect their online accounts. It is important they know they need to keep their passwords safe and not share them with anyone or use the same password for several accounts.
- Consider locating your child's computers and laptops in a family area but be aware that children access the internet on mobile phones, games consoles and tablets so use can't always be supervised.

## Online Safety

- Install antivirus software, secure your internet connection and use Parental Control functions for computers, mobile phones and games consoles to block unsuitable content or contact from unknown people. to you, your child and the technology in your home. Visit [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org) and [www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/a-parents-guide](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/a-parents-guide) for safety information and advice about parental controls on consoles and devices and how to report concerns.
- Make sure you read any parental guidance and safety recommendations (including age requirements – most popular social networking sites and apps are only for users aged 13+) for any apps or websites before allowing your child to use them - visit [www.net-aware.org.uk](http://www.net-aware.org.uk)

# What can you do to keep your child safe online?

## Listen

- Take an active interest in your child's life online and talk openly with them about the things they do. Talk to your child and ask them to show or even teach you how they use the internet, learn which websites or tools they like to use and why. Learning together with your child can often open opportunities to discuss safe behaviour online.

## Dialogue – keep talking

- Ensure that your child knows that once a picture, video or comment is sent or posted online, then it can be very difficult to remove as other people can forward it and share it with others, without them even knowing. [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) and [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk) has some really useful tips and ideas for parents/carers about starting conversations about online safety
- Always ensure your child knows how to report and block people online who may send nasty or inappropriate messages or content. Encourage your child not to retaliate or reply to cyberbullying and to keep any evidence.
- Make sure your child knows it's important that they tell an adult they trust if anything happens online that makes them feel scared, worried or uncomfortable.



**ZIP IT**  
Keep your personal stuff private and think about what you say and do online.



**BLOCK IT**  
Block people who send nasty messages and don't open unknown links and attachments.



**FLAG IT**  
Flag up with someone you trust if anything upsets you or if someone asks to meet you offline.