PARKLANDS JUNIOR SCHOOL

PARENT/CARER GUIDE TO SOCIAL NETWORKING

Popular social networking sites

The following are some of the many social networking sites that may be accessed by your children. Children will need to disregard or provide inaccurate information on their age in order to access these sites. The following sites are most popular with children of primary school age but none of these sites are endorsed by Parklands Junior School as being appropriate for primary aged children

- Oovoo
- WhatsApp
- Instagram
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Snapchat

Oovoo

Oovoo is a free video, voice, and messaging app. Users can have group chats with up to 12 people for free and it's common for children to log on after school and keep it open while doing homework.

What parents need to know

- You can only chat with approved friends. Users can only communicate with those on their approved contact lists, which can help ease parents' safety concerns.
- It can be distracting. Because the service makes video-chatting so affordable and accessible, it also can be addictive

WhatsApp

WhatsApp lets users send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.

What parents need to know

- It's for users 16 and over. Lots of younger children seem to be using the app, but this age minimum has been set by WhatsApp.

- After you sign up, it automatically connects you to all the people in your address book who also are using WhatsApp. It also encourages you to add friends who haven't signed up yet.

Instagram

Instagram lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos, either publicly or with a private network of followers. It unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos. It also lets you apply fun filters and effects to your photos, making them look high-quality and artistic.

What parents need to know

- Children are on the lookout for "likes." Similar to the way they use Facebook, children may measure the "success" of their photos by the number of likes or comments they receive. Posting a photo or video can be problematic if children are posting to validate their popularity.
- Public photos are the default. Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public unless privacy settings are adjusted. Hashtags and location information can make photos even more visible to communities beyond a child's followers if his or her account is public.
- Private messaging is now an option. Instagram Direct allows users to send "private messages" to up to 15 mutual friends. These pictures don't show up on their public feeds. Although there's nothing wrong with group chats, children may be more likely to share inappropriate content stuff within their groups.

Tumblr

Tumblr is a cross between a blog and Twitter: It's a streaming scrapbook of text, photos, and/or videos and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or "tumblogs," that can be seen by anyone online (if made public). Many teens have tumblogs for personal use: sharing photos, videos, musings, and things they find funny with their friends.

What parents need to know

- Inappropriate images and videos and depictions of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.
- Privacy can be guarded but with difficulty. The first profile a member creates is public and viewable by anyone on the Internet. Members who desire full privacy have to create a second profile, which they're able to password-protect.
- Posts are often copied and shared. Reblogging on Tumblr is similar to re-tweeting: A post is reblogged from one tumblog to another. Many children like their posts reblogged.

Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging tool that allows users to post brief messages called "tweets", and follow other users' activities. It's not only for adults; children like using it to share tidbits and keep up with news and celebrities.

What parents need to know

- Public tweets are the norm for children. Though you can choose to keep your tweets private, most children report having public accounts. Talk to your children about what they post and how a post can spread far and fast.
- Updates appear immediately. Even though you can remove tweets, your followers can still read what has been written until it's gone. This can get children in trouble if they say something in the heat of the moment.

Snapchat

Snapchat is a messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear. Most children use the app to share silly or embarrassing photos without the risk of them going public. However, there are lots of opportunities to use it in other ways.

What parents need to know

- It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever. Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. For example, the person on the receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears. Snapchats can even be recovered.
- The seemingly risk-free messaging might encourage users to share pictures containing inappropriate images.

This is of course not an exhaustive list and new social networking sites are appearing all the time.

Blogs

Blogs allow people to share their writing with other members of the internet community who can then comment on the work. The blog could be a diary, research or just pieces of writing they have written. While everyone on the Internet can view this material, if settings are applied correctly, only approved members can contribute a post and all comments must be approved by the blog editor.

All school blogs are managed by class teachers. Children's posts must be approved by the teachers and all comments are moderated by them before published on the blog.

Social network safety

Password Protection

Explain to your child that passwords should never be shared, not even with friends. If the home computer is shared, remind them to always log out when they finish their online sessions to develop good online safety habits. It's important to log out of any websites they logged into on a shared computer to stop other people accessing their information.

Online Safety

Children may feel parents are disconnected and fear conversations about online safety will be awkward or embarrassing. Listen to how your child is using Twitter, Facebook and other online sites and always take their online relationships seriously.

One of the best ways to begin a conversation is to ask your child why services like Twitter or Facebook are important to them. You might also ask them to show you how to set your own Twitter account or Facebook timeline, so you can see what it's all about. Discuss what information it is appropriate to share online – and what isn't appropriate. Ask them about privacy settings and suggest that you go over them together, regularly. Set ground rules and enforce them. As a parent, you are a role model for your child. Demonstrate the importance of a balance between online and other activities by encouraging family activities online as well as offline.

Take the opportunity to learn about the sorts of situations your child is experiencing online and use these to identify solutions and encourage critical thinking…

> "*Who are you sharing this information with?*
> *Can you trust all the people that see the information on your profile?*
> *How could your Tweet/post be interpreted?*"

Help your child evaluate whether or not something is okay to post by reminding them that if they wouldn't say it to the person's face or out loud, they shouldn't say it online either.

Consider having a conversation about how what gets posted online can hurt feelings, affect offline relationships and even jeopardise future opportunities.

Respect for Others

It's important to talk about a key rule: treating others the way you want to be treated. This also applies to using new technologies. Make sure your children know where to go for support if someone ever harasses them. Help them understand how to make responsible and safe choices about what they post because anything they put online can be misinterpreted or taken out of context.

Dealing with problems

Spam

Some people take advantage of the fact they can send messages to lots of people in an online community. Users of social networks may find they receive confusing messages from strangers, perhaps trying to sell products or open communication. This is known as spam. If users receive spam, they should block that user so they can no longer communicate with them. If the messages continue, they should be reported to the specific site.

Serious Issues

Sometimes, people can use social networks to 'bully' other users. If your child is experiencing repetitive cyber-bullying consider taking the following actions:

- Coordinate with the school
  Many issues can be resolved by working with School Staff or agencies including the police or CEOP. If your child is experiencing cyber-bullying, please contact the school for support in taking action. If the perpetrators of the bullying are found to be pupils of the school, we will deal with the situation in the same way we would physical bullying.

- Report a violation
  Get to know the Twitter/Facebook rules and policies. After reviewing their policies, if you believe an account is violating their rules, you or your child can file a report.

- Contact local police
  Twitter and Facebook will investigate every report received, but if something has gone beyond the point of a personal conflict and has turned into credible threats, whether it be online or offline, you should contact your local police as they are in the best position to assess the threat and intervene or assist as necessary.

Tips for Parents/Carers

- It can be difficult to keep up with technology. Do not be afraid to ask your child to explain it to you.

- If you are not already on Facebook or Twitter, consider joining. That way you will understand what it is all about!

- Ask your child to have you as their friend on their profile so that you know what they are posting online.

- Teach your child the online safety basics so they can keep their online accounts private and safe.

- Talk about technology safety just like you talk about safety while out alone or playing sports.

- Monitor your childs' use of language and how they communicate with each other.

Start a conversation with your child

Some suggested ways of starting a conversation with your child about their social networking:

- Do you feel like you can tell me if you ever have a problem at school or online?

- Help me understand why Facebook/Twitter is important to you.

- Can you help me set up a Facebook timeline/Twitter account?

- Who are your friends on Facebook?

- I want to be your friend on Facebook. Would that be OK with you?
  What would make it OK?

Glossary

@
The @ sign is used to call out usernames in Tweets, like this: *Hello @Twitter!* When a username is preceded by the @ sign, it becomes a link to a Twitter profile.

Avatar or Profile Picture
The personal image uploaded to your Twitter profile in the *Settings* tab of your account.

Blog
A discussion or informational site published on the World Wide Web and consisting of discrete entries ('posts' typically displayed in reverse chronological order.)

Chat
Chat is a feature that lets you send instant messages to online friends.

Follow
To follow someone on Twitter is to subscribe to their Tweets or updates on the site.

Follower
A follower is another Twitter user who has followed you.

Following
Your following number reflects the quantity of other Twitter users you have chosen to follow on the site.

Friends
Friends are people you connect and share with on Facebook.

Hashtag
The # symbol is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was created originally by Twitter users.

Messages
Your messages and messages inbox house your on-going conversations with people on Facebook.

Poke
When you poke someone, they will receive a notification that you have poked them. People poke their friends on Facebook for a variety of reasons. For instance, you can poke your friend just to say 'hello'.

Timeline
Your timeline is your collection of the photos, stories and experiences that tell your story.

Trends
A subject algorithmically determined to be one the most popular on Twitter at the moment.

Tweet
Tweet, tweeting, tweeted. The act of posting a message, often call a 'Tweet', on Twitter. A message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Wall
Your Wall is the space on your profile where you and friends can post and share.