



2 Minute Read – Social Media

Social Media is one of the most popular aspects of the internet, and with the amount of apps available for download increasing constantly, keeping young people safe online has never been more important.

Each year we have noticed that many of our upper KS2 children have been talking about their use of social media. Unfortunately, there have also been some incidents of children contacting each other on social media platforms (out of school) and saying unkind things. As you can imagine, this can be very upsetting for the children involved.

Many of the social media platform that children have been talking about have an age limit of 13+.



But what exactly do we need to know about the age restrictions and safety on these apps in terms of internet safety? We answer some of your most frequently asked questions below:

Why are a lot of social media apps 13+

As you can see from the above infographic, many social media apps have an age rating of 13+. This relates to data processing policies that social media companies need to adhere to. Under the COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) Law, social media companies are prohibited from collecting and storing any personal information about any persons under the age of 13, unless they have permission from their Parents/Carers.

What age do you recommend beginning social media networking?

This is going to be different for everyone. However, if the age rating were to do with content, it may be higher. For example, while YouNow's terms state that any user needs to be over the age of 13, some of the content that is being generated on that platform would not be appropriate for someone under the age of 18.



It's always a good idea to gather as much information as possible before proceeding to download any social media app.

We'd recommend checking out [Common Sense Media](#). They give an overview of the app and also a rating based on opinions from experts, Parents/Carers and children and young people too

What about privacy settings?

Privacy settings certainly allow for a greater sense of security when using social media apps. We advise that these are used collaboratively with children and young people, and are set up at the same time as downloading the app.

Certain apps have different content available depending on your age. For example, if you are over 13, but under 18, you may be restricted as to what content you can see on the platform. However, it is possible to falsify your age and receive access to the platform in its entirety, so check in regularly to see what your young person is seeing on the apps they may be using.

[Internet Matters](#) have excellent online safety guides available for Parents/Carers on popular apps, games and devices.

What if they see something upsetting?

It is now strongly advised that through Internet Safety Training, young people develop digital resilience to help them stay safe online. Training young people in internet safety and resilience online is now more important than ever before. Discuss the importance of critical thinking online, speaking up if they ever see something that they find upsetting or worrying, and online conduct regularly.

[Thinkuknow \(Powered by CEOP\)](#), have excellent resources available to train young people in digital resilience.

Please help us and your child / children by:

- talking to them about how to use the internet respectfully;
- talking to them about the importance of speaking out if they see or witness anything upsetting.
- monitor their use of the internet and apps.

To help children understand the dangers of social media we share an online video by 'The Child Exploitation and Protection Centre' to our [Y5&6](#) children. The link to the video can be found here: https://youtu.be/E23FLdPrh_s

The video is similar to the advertisements that were shown on TV several years ago. We believe that it is very important for our children to watch this video as it will help them to make better choices about online safety. However, if you feel strongly against this you can contact your child's teacher to opt out.

More information about social media and how we teach our children about online safety can be found on our school website.

