

“

Never before has a
generation so diligently
recorded themselves

accomplishing

so little

”





The world of Social Media and the internet - Kids guide

What is social media?

A lifeline to some and a minefield to others...

The good the bad and the ugly

Social media is as the name suggests social platforms created for messaging and interaction via smartphones, tablets and computers. These platforms are dedicated to community-based input, content-sharing and collaboration.

Facebook, Youtube, Snapchat and Instagram to name just a few - if your not on you don't exist is the mentality of a generation. What's your user id?

Face to face interaction is being lost and replaced with invisible friends and popularity being measured by the amount of likes a photo or comment gets. People are left living under the delusion that they have hundreds of friends when actually they may have none.

"Party illustration: 18th birthday with 150 Facebook pals coming if it wasn't for family sat in the room they would have been on their own."

We can't throw the baby out with the bathwater, there are so many fantastic features and opportunities to use and explore on the net. The variety of apps and software additions to help us in life are not to be sniffed at. But surely not at the expense of personal interaction and the development of life skills such as communication, partnership and intimacy. Our kids are being drawn into a fake world of celebrity, where the sun always shines and you wake every morning with full hair and makeup. No spots or belatedness, it's always perfect in the world of Instagram with filtered retouched images making everybody look a million dollars whilst you feel like the dogs dinner.



The elephant in the room that no one seems to say is that it's not a reality, it's an illusion at best leaving so many dissatisfied with a sense that I'm the only one missing out.

Warning:

This dissatisfaction of being the one missing out can so easily open the door to manipulation exploitation and lack of self worth.

The fruit so readily seen on the tree are: depression, isolation, eating disorders, abuse both physical and emotional.

What are the social media platforms you use?

Facebook once the vanguard app is now seen as the app for mums and dads, tech moves so quickly

Teacher note: *Get them to expand on which platforms are in vogue*

Why do your kids use them?

Teacher note: *Get them to expand on their personal reasons for using social media*

Pitfalls and dangers:

Relationships

The average 12-15 year old has 272 social network friends

Teacher note: *How many of your online friends do you know - have actually met?*

Experience

60% of teens have been asked for a sexual image or video of themselves

Teacher note: *Have any of you ever been asked for inappropriate images or video?*

Behaviour

19% of 12-15 year-olds prefer to watch YouTube than TV

Teacher note: *How much of your monthly usage would be used downloading or streaming from the net?*

Lets take a look at the darker side of social media and the web

Grooming - Sexing - Online Bullying

Grooming:

Teacher note: *Can anyone describe what grooming is?*

Those people involved go to great lengths to hide their true identity, through the use of false profiles and pictures.

They will often:

- Pretending to be someone they are not, for example saying they are the same age online
- Offer you advice or understanding, a listening ear when no one understands you
- Buying gifts



- Giving you attention you may crave - busy house, other brothers sisters, feeling left out
- Using their professional position or reputation trying to impress
- Offer to take you on trips, outings or holidays

Teacher note: *Can you think of anything else?*

Remember grooming happens both off and online and can involve family, friends or neighbours, even people in authority like teachers, club leaders.

Signs a friend is being groomed they may:

- Be very secretive, including about what they are doing online
- Have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- Go to unusual places to meet friends
- Have new things such as clothes or mobile phones that they can't or won't explain
- Have access to drugs and alcohol.

In older children, signs of grooming can easily be mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour, but you may notice unexplained changes in behaviour or personality, or inappropriate sexual behaviour for their age.

Grooming is no respecter of person grooming can happen to either sex. Your validation feelings of love, acceptance and value should be found in the home.

Groomers are good at what they do, they will try to isolate an individual and through skilled words and manipulation draw that person into a very dark place. For their own vile ends.

Groomers may look for:

- Usernames or comments that are flirtatious or have a sexual meaning
- Public comments that suggest a child has low self-esteem or is vulnerable.
- Groomers don't always target a particular child. Sometimes they will send messages to hundreds of young people and wait to see who responds.
- Groomers no longer need to meet children in real life to abuse them. Increasingly, groomers are sexually exploiting their victims by persuading them to take part in online sexual activity.

Things you may notice:

If you're worried that a friend is being abused, watch out for any unusual behaviour.

Withdrawn - suddenly behaves differently - anxious - clingy - depressed - aggressive - problems sleeping - eating disorders - wets the bed - soils clothes - takes risks - misses school changes in eating habits - obsessive behaviour - nightmares - drugs alcohol - self-harm thoughts about suicide

It's paramount you don't see things that are not there and jump to conclusions either!



Sexting

Sexting: Do you know what it is?

Defined as the sending of a sexual text, image or video

Teacher note: *Do you know of any of your friends that have been asked for images?*

Relationships are complicated for everybody - never mind when your hormones are bouncing off the walls. It's our job as parent to help establish boundaries, worth and value in our kids no matter the gender. Pressure and manipulation are exactly that, the pressure to conform and follow the crowd even if it takes you off the cliff. Everybody must know how to recognise the patterns of manipulation - **when they are being manipulated and when they you manipulating!**

The land of confusion:

Being in a new relationship can make you feel excited, happy and in control. It's normal to enjoy getting compliments, feeling special and safe or like you've got more confidence. Relationships can often change and it can be hard to know when things are starting to change. Wanting to please the other person can so easily end as manipulation.

There is a reason they are called players!

The safe place can spiral out of control very quickly to become unsafe - if you love me you would!

Sexting can easily happen. Things can go wrong – even when you didn't mean for them to.

It starts with:

- Rude text messages or videos
- Underwear shots
- Naked pictures
- Sexual pictures or videos

What you need to know about sexting:

- Once you send a message you can't control what happens to it
Teacher note: *Has anybody seen the dark-side of this at school or college, once its out you can't get it back*
- Don't let someone guilt or pressure you into sending a sex text
- If you've sent a nude pic, have an honest conversation with the person you sent it to. Ask them to delete it
- If an indecent or nude pic of you is posted online, you can contact the website directly or make a report online to try and get it removed.

Golden rule:

If you wouldn't do it in public, don't do it in private

If he or she says if you don't I will leave, then let them good riddance (to bad rubbish)

Boys who chance their arm or girls who are leading you on, both as bad.



Online Bullying - the keyboard warriors

The fear of being isolated or excluded as a teenager is a massive influence on the choices we make. Teenage years are never easy, changes in your body, emotions and expectations. The pressure to make right choices and decisions that will impact your future.

Spots, greasy hair not wearing the right label or being seen with the right people huge pressures. Little do you know that at that age it seems so important until you bump into these guys 20 years later on and see just what their lives have amounted to.

Bullying:

Back in the day it was a wedge or a smack in the mouth, and in some-ways it's easier to deal with physical pain rather than the emotional and mental pain.

The keyboard warrior so willing to challenge and challenge from behind a screen in that invisible world. Most are just losers who feel no shame or guilt for the distress that their worthless words cause.

Teacher note: *Have you been bullied or witnessed a friend being bullied, what was the experience?*

The danger of digital:

Images captured on a digital device - no longer pegging it down to Boots with your roll of film waiting a week to see the results. Now instant uploading and sharing, embarrassment, that awkward moment and revealing image that can be used to manipulate and control.

Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me! Says who?

Keep talking:

It's key that you keep talking to people you trust, parents, grand parents, guardians, older brothers and sisters. Don't sit there in silence if you are being bullied or if one of your friends is, they may not have anybody to fight for or support them.

Lets be honest it's easier to be thankful that it's not happening to you and to walk away than to get involved. Be a good friend...

Don't get involved in text - table tennis it only makes things worse, no context or tone!

Teacher note: *Have you ever fell out or had a row after misinterpreting a text or email?*



5 Tips for Using any Social Network

- 1) Set appropriate privacy and security (location defaults) and choose a complex/unique password for your account. People who hijack your account, the damage that can be done.
- 2) Be careful installing third-party applications.
Don't install applications from sources you don't trust.
- 3) Only accept friend requests from people you know directly.
- 4) Limit the personal information you share. (Mum and dad away this weekend - vulnerable position)
- 5) Be careful what you post. Consider all information and pictures you post are public!

It was a good idea at the time:

Do you realise the impact that a profile can have on your future employers will often look you up online when finalising job positions, they have so much invested - the police do the same have you been tagged into a photo that can then incriminate you?

User name: Bobbybigboobs@hotmail.com

Pictures you post: you told them you are a tea-total angel your posts say something different.

Comments about your boss or the company: Can be used to discipline or fire you

Likes: You like a statement or image, you will be classed as endorsing that view as if you posted it yourself, racist, homophobic, a bully

Social Media Golden Rules:

- "Don't Talk To Strangers"
- "Don't gossip"
- "Don't criticise"
- "Don't volunteer your opinions"
- "Don't post any form of nudity"
- "Don't waste time unless it's productive"
- "Think before you Friend"
- "Think before you Share"
- "You are liable for posts or even re-posts"
- "Contrary to what people say, you are being watched"
- "Private is the only security you have"
- "With Friends is USELESS because you're linked to Friends of Friends etc. GOT IT!"
- "Finally, Search (Google, Bing etc) Yourself on the Internet to see what you find about yourself"

If you don't like what you see then go a fix it!

