Cyber Smart



What age should my child be before I let them use WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and other social networks?

East Peckham Primary School believes that children under 13 shouldn't use social networks and that parents should follow the policy that each site sets. This is often 13 + but some ask that you are 16 or 18 before you have an account. For example, Facebook and Instagram are for ages 13+, WhatsApp is for 16+.

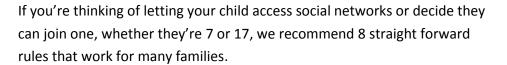
Although most parents at **East Peckham Primary School** don't allow their children to use these sites, we are aware that some parents decide to give their children permission to use social media when they are younger than the policy age. This may result in other parents feeling pressured to allow their children to do the same.

Before your child signs up to any social network or downloads an application (app), we recommend that you discuss the pros and cons and do your own research so you fully understand the implications of joining a particular network. If you want your child to wait to sign up, you could consider pointing him or her toward more age-appropriate sites. We have included some suggestions below.

BBC, CBBC Moshi Monsters 7+ Club Penguin 7+ Itwixie 8+

Jabbersmak 10+ Kidzworld 11+

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- 1) Know how to set a strong password. Strong passwords contain upper and lowercase letters as well as numbers. Aim for something with at least 7 characters for example, Ha55yP0oter or 3Litt1ePigs. Tell your child not to share their passwords with friends and don't give them your password.
- 2) Use privacy settings. Privacy settings aren't fool proof, but they can be helpful. Take the time to learn how privacy settings work on your child's favourite sites and apps, and teach them how to control the information they make public or private. Encourage them to check privacy settings regularly, since site policies often change.
- 3) Block and Report. When your child joins any social network (or website) make sure that they and you know how to block and report unwanted / inappropriate messages and content. It a good idea to look at this together when they sign up.
- **4) Tell your child to think before they post.** Remind them that everything can be seen by a vast, invisible audience (otherwise known as friends-of-friends-of-friends), and, once something's online, it's hard to take back.
- 5) Be a friend and follower. Each family will have different rules, but it's a good idea for parents to have access to their child's pages, at least at first, to be sure that what's being posted is appropriate. Parents can help keep their children from doing something they'll regret later.
- **6) Keep private information private.** Don't share your home address or other sensitive information such as which school you go to online.
- 7) Be respectful of others. Children may use social media to act out because they feel anonymous and that their actions are consequence-free. Make sure they understand that the Internet is a giant community that works best when everyone respects each other.
- 8) If things go wrong. It's not the end of the world. We know that children often keep things to themselves because they worry that if they tell an adult they will have their device/s confiscated. Consider having a no confiscation rule so that your child tells you right away when something has gone wrong or they made a bad choice.