

Keeping our children safe can present a challenge, but it is one we must take seriously

A school's role in safeguarding and protecting children does not just start and end at the school gate. Therefore at Haxby Road Primary Academy we take great pride in supporting, educating and protecting our children from some of the challenges and stresses that they will encounter as they grow up. Something that is an ongoing focus for us and has become more prevalent through this period of school closures and lock down is internet safety and the online world. We will be working with parents where we feel children are not able to keep themselves safe online, or we get notified of concerns that could impact on a child's personal safety and welfare. Please take the time to read this information and then more crucially check your children's devices, and begin that important conversation with them about how they use technology safely and appropriately.

All media forms have recommended age restrictions for several reasons.

1. They recognise that it takes a large **degree of maturity** to understand the effect that a careless comment can cause others or for an individual to cope with the ups and downs that social media brings with it.
2. It is very difficult for young children to understand **what is true or false on social media** and they can be easily influenced to follow or believe something that is simply not true or appropriate.
3. It also recognises that many social media apps contain **huge catalogues of unmonitored and sometimes undesirable content** that young children should not be accessing.
4. **The longer children spend** on these platforms, **the more opportunity** there is for a child to experience cyberbullying, sexting, grooming and viewing inappropriate content. Young children will be unlikely to have the skills to deal with this in the appropriate way.

Age restrictions often surprise parents.

Here is a diagram that explains many of the recommended age limits associated with social media platforms.

Another platform to have grown exponentially recently is TikTok.

The recommended age is 13+

It is sometimes recognised that children are more IT savvy than their parents/carers.

This makes it **even more important** than ever that parents and carers understand their responsibility and the potential harm or distress that unmonitored freedom can bring. It is not something we can turn a blind eye to or avoid and hope it goes away. Children can often be angry and throw tantrums if their phones or media platforms are taken away and therefore make it challenging for parents and carers to make changes.

Evidence suggests that holding open family discussions are a good starting point.

Some questions you may want to ask are:

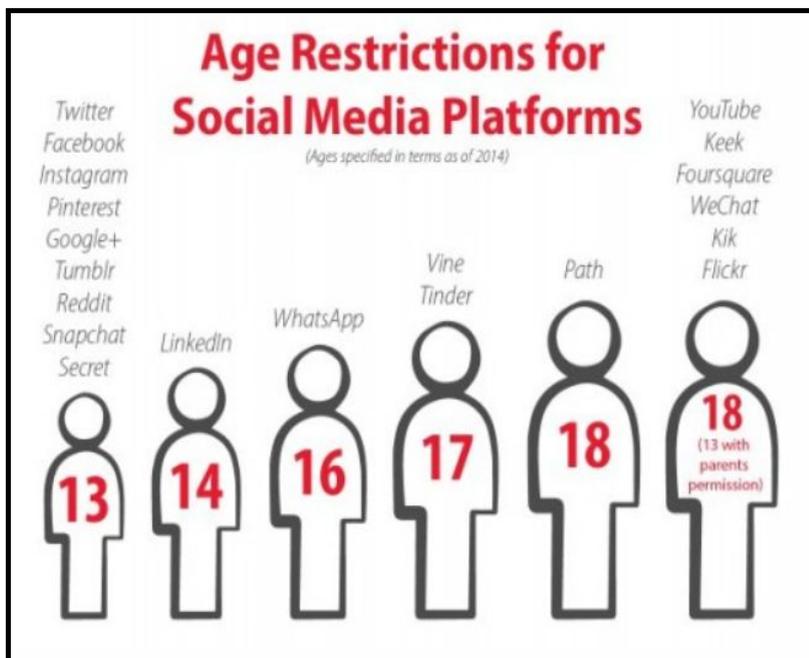
Do I know what my child is accessing whenever they go online?

Do I know their passwords and can I check what they are doing?

Are you worried about the amount of time your child is spending online?

Depending on your answers to the above questions, you may feel like you need to seek assistance and guidance.

Here are three documents that you may find useful.



The first outlines some of the potential risks and gives top tips for parents.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uHvc2ONDvM8U3pfJar083MQVrpmGRXez/view>

The second shows how to create a family agreement and hold positive conversations around safe and responsible internet use.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/17wE28RU557cd8czrOiSS-CAL4-4hiRH5/view>

The third offers guidance around cyberbullying and the use of internet matters.org as a resource and has the strapline Learn About It/Talk About It/Deal With It

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qfXCBB4TgJxhr_kzNt_ZeLeTRRoWOKHf/view

Kind regards,

Mrs Malster and Mrs Winter
Safeguarding and Wellbeing Team