

## Social networking safety

Social networking allows many of us to keep in contact with people and to share details and photos of what is happening in our lives. Young people will have grown up surrounded by sites such as Facebook, Bebo and Myspace. Social networking sites will undoubtedly play an important part in the lives of youngsters as they get older and we need to ensure that we give them simple guidance to ensure that they use them safely.

5 simple rules to discuss at home:

1. Adjust privacy settings – in Facebook you can select 'Settings, Privacy Settings, Profile'. This will allow you to restrict who sees information and prevents friends of friends seeing your posts and photos. In Bebo you can do a similar task by selecting 'Settings, Privacy Settings'. Remember that you can also restrict who sees each photo.
2. Think before you post – It is very easy to post a comment or photo in anger or frustration. By the time you remove it many people will have seen it and the harm has been done.
3. Only add people who you know in real life as friends. Remember that just because someone has a photo showing them as 15 year old in their profile they may be someone completely different.
4. Think carefully about how much personal information you put on your profile – you don't need to tell everyone your address, date of birth and mobile number.
5. Pay attention to age restrictions – for example Facebook and Bebo are for people aged 13 and over.

## What to do if things go wrong

Children can visit the Thinkuknow website ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)) and report issues by clicking on the report abuse icon:



All reports are taken seriously and will be followed up.

Many Social Networking sites and IM applications will also have the facility to report inappropriate content. For example Facebook has a 'Report' link on each page or concerns can be e-mailed to [abuse@facebook.com](mailto:abuse@facebook.com) and Bebo has a 'Report abuse' link on every profile page and below every piece of content (ie photo, video etc).

As a parent you can make reports on your child's behalf by visiting the parent's section of the CEOP website ([www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk))

### Useful websites

There are a range of useful websites that provide information for parents and children:

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)  
[www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org)  
[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)  
[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)  
[www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org)  
[www.dcsf.gov.uk/ukccis](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ukccis)

### But most importantly....

Remember that using technology can be a wonderfully powerful and positive experience. We should not discourage its use but support youngsters and help them to use it safely.



