

## Here are 5Ps that should be considered about social networking sites.

**POSITIVE:** Stay positive about networking sites—try to strike a balance between educating children and young people to behave safely and trusting them to get on with it.

**PRIVACY:** Make sure that children know how to protect themselves on social networking sites through the tools provided. Its important to discuss the value of privacy with children.

**PHOTOS:** It's natural that children will want to include a photo on their site or profile, but help them think about the implications of posting photos and what is suitable.

**POSTINGS:** The ability to interact with this media and comment on other people's sites is part of what makes these sites so attractive. What starts off as a joke or gossip can quickly escalate to cause real pain which cannot be taken back.

**POLICE:** It's really important that you encourage your child to tell you about inappropriate or illegal activity they may come across.

### FURTHER RESOURCES

[www.childnet.com/blogsafety](http://www.childnet.com/blogsafety)

[www.digizen.org/socailworking](http://www.digizen.org/socailworking)

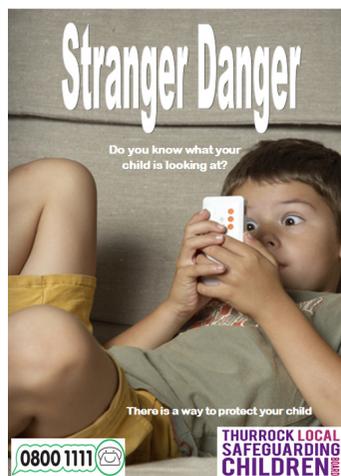
[www.childnet.com/music](http://www.childnet.com/music)

[www.cahtdanger.com](http://www.cahtdanger.com)

[www.connectsafely.org](http://www.connectsafely.org)

[www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk)

[www.inhope.org](http://www.inhope.org)



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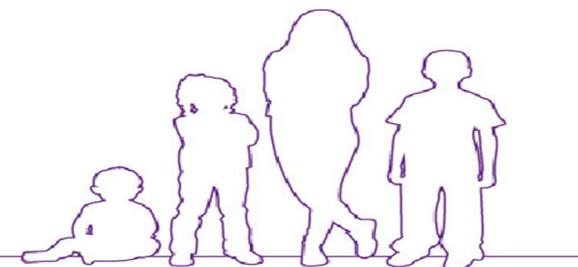
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## Do you remember Stranger Danger?



### YOUNG PEOPLE AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS, CARERS & TEACHERS ABOUT SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES



Social networking sites, such as Myspace, Bebo, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Ask FM and Facebook, are very popular with children, even as young as 8 and 9. These sites allow children to be incredibly creative online, keep in touch with their friends and express themselves using a whole range of different media and applications such as a video, photos, music and chat.

However, it's important to recognise while these are fun and offer great possibilities for children, there are potential risks including *cyberbullying*, *contact by adults with a sexual interest in children* and *the misuse of personal information*.

While most social networking sites stipulate a minimum user age of 13 or 14, users are often **YOUNGER** than this. As a parent, carer or teacher it's really important that you familiarise yourself with these services so that you can help to support your children in using them in a safe and constructive way.

Young people especially love this new environment because they can have a powerful voice to express their identity and opinion and many are using it to good effect. For example, some musicians and bands have launched themselves entirely on the strength of this new stage. And all this is for free with just one password — is it any wonder why young people love it?

# PRIVATE OR PUBLIC SOCIAL LIFE?

What sometimes appears as a private space for a child can become public very quickly and this blur between public and private expression can potentially put a child at risk in two main ways:

## CONTENT:

Children creating or posting inappropriate, offensive or even illegal content in their or others' Web pages could get them into trouble with their school, friends, and even the police, depending on the nature of the material. Content posted to the Web can be copied, altered and reposted by anyone and it's very difficult to 'take back' what may be later regretted. This can damage reputations as well as future prospects.

## CONTACT:

Children can also put too much personal information in these sites, exposing their information to adults with a sexual interest in children. Posting or chatting about personal details might enable someone to identify and contact your child online or in person. There is also the more likely risk of cyberbullying with young people intentionally harming another person online.

## SMART RULES

Childnet has produced 5 key SMART rules which remind young people to be SMART online. It can be helpful to go through these tips with your children.

# S

**SAFE:** keep safe by being careful not to give out personal information, - such as your full name, e-mail address, phone number, home address, photos or school name — either to people you are chatting with online or by posting it online where other people can see it.

# M

**MEETING:** Meeting someone you have only been in touch with online can be dangerous. Only do so with your parents' or carers' permission and even then only when they can be present.

# A

**ACCEPTING:** Accepting e-mails, IM messages, or opening files, pictures or texts from people you don't know or trust can lead to problems — they may contain viruses or nasty messages!

# R

**RELIABLE:** information you find on the internet may not be true, or someone online may be lying about who they are.

# T

**TELL:** Tell your parent, carer or a trusted adult if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, or if you or someone you know is being bullied online.