

3rd July 2018

Dear Families,

Re.: Important information on social media and e-safety

We are living at a time where social media and various apps are becoming increasingly popular. Although there are many positives with communications on various social media networks and the wealth of knowledge the internet can bring, there are also many risks that we also need to be aware of too. Not only do our students need to know the possible dangers, we realise that families also need to understand what these may be as well. The pace in which technology is evolving means that we need to be kept as up to date as possible to ensure our children are safe.

Unsupervised access and use of technology can lead to young people making mistakes and exposing themselves to serious harm. Our students have had various assemblies this year delivered by West Mercia Police and CLL activities to make them aware of these possible risks. However, we would really appreciate it if you could have these conversations with them at home too.

Here is some information on the most popular social media apps used by young people. The information has been taken from <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>.

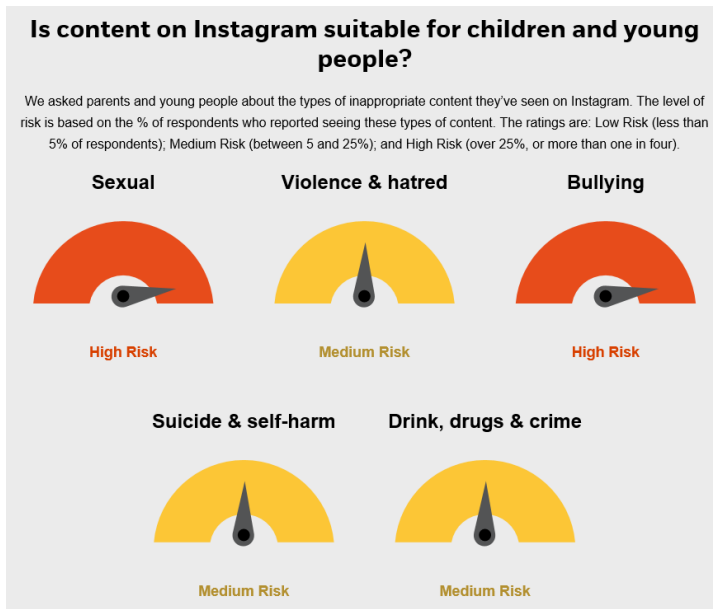
Instagram



The minimum age for using Instagram is 13. Instagram is a picture and video sharing app. Users can post content and use hashtags to share

experiences, thoughts or memories with an online community. You can follow your friends, family, celebrities and even companies on Instagram. Instagram allows live streaming.

Setting up an account is extremely easy. There is no need to put your date of birth and any email address will do. Are you sure that the Instagram account your child has shown you is the only one? It may be worth checking!



You can 'like' posts and comment on them too. Are you sure you know what your child is 'liking'? This may be seen by future employers/the police, which may affect your child's future. Setting up an account is easy, even if you are underage. If your child is younger than 13, can you be sure they do not have an account?

Snapchat

The minimum age for using Snapchat is 13. Snapchat is an app that lets you send a photo, short

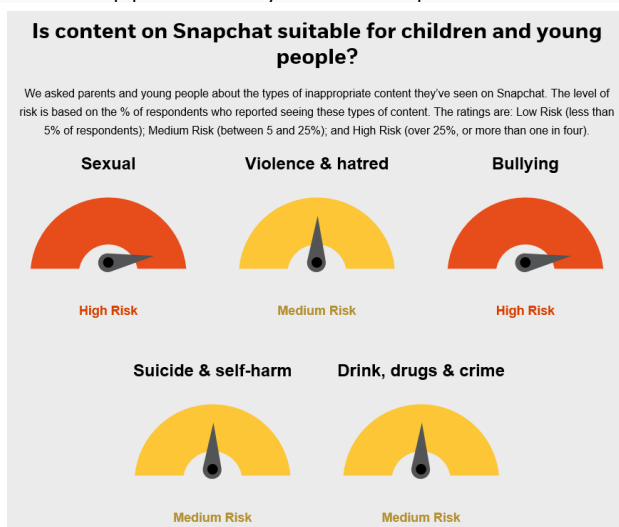


video or message to your contacts. The 'snap' appears on screen for up to 10 seconds before disappearing, or there is an option to have no time limit. There is also a feature called

Snapchat Story that lets you share snaps in a sequence for up to 24 hours.

Your child can receive messages from people they do not know and if 'ghost mode' is not enabled, it shares their precise location.

Are you aware of what your child is posting and receiving? Although the 'snaps' disappear in 10 seconds, if someone takes a 'screenshot', that can be sent and spread around very quickly. As with Instagram, setting up an account is very easy, even if you are underage. If your child is under the age of 13, are you sure they do not have an account?



YouTube

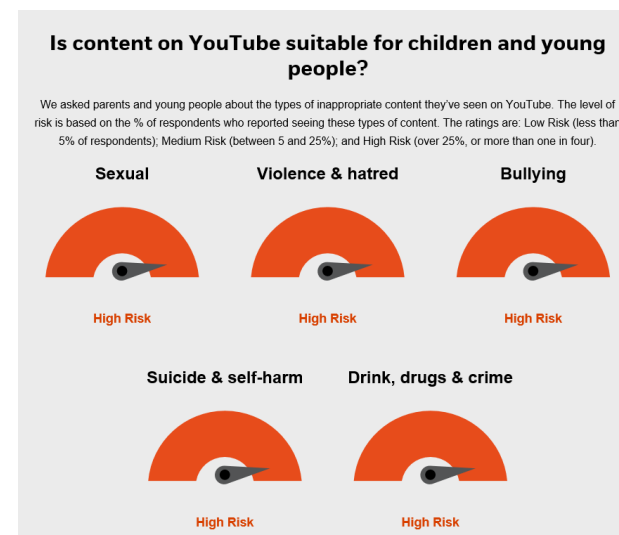


The minimum age for using YouTube is 13. YouTube allows you to watch, create and comment on videos. You can create your own YouTube account, create a music playlist, and

even create your own channel, which means you will have a public profile. YouTube allows live streaming.

Anyone can comment on the videos posted and it is very easy to see content that is not appropriate.

Are you aware of what your child is watching? Are you aware of what your child is posting? If someone has posted a comment on the video, how has that affected your child? Would your child tell you? Do they have different accounts?



For all three popular social media platforms/apps, the pictures and videos can be copied and shared very quickly and at great speed. What may have been posted for a few friends can very quickly be in the hands of the whole school, community and beyond.

