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# *Student Guide to Social Media*





# *Welcome to our Student Guide to Social Media!*

We know that young people are the experts when it comes to technology.

We also know that, whilst the internet is positive in many ways, it can also have drawbacks. It can be easy to make a mistake, form a negative habit, or find yourself somewhere you didn't intend.

As such, we wanted to create a social media guide written by students, for students.

As part of our Online Safety strategy, we consulted with students to find out what advice they would give to other young people navigating the online world.



*Here's what they said...*





## What is it?

Snapchat is an app used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings. Unless saved, the messages disappear from the recipient's phone after a few seconds.

## Why do our students use it?

- To talk to friends
- To make new mutual friends
- To look back on memories

### Pros

- Easy way to chat to friends
- Can meet new people through mutual friends
- Fun filters
- Store photos for memories
- 'Stories' show what you're up to
- 'Snap Maps' make it easy to see where friends are
- Can follow celebrities

### Cons

- Easy for people to make a fake profile – only need a username
- Anyone can send you an add request
- Often used to send unsolicited images
- 'Snap Maps' can show your location to others
- Filters can damage self esteem
- People use 'Snap Score' as a measure of popularity

## Traps to avoid

- Adding strangers or people with no mutual friends
- Leaving your 'Snap Maps' viewable to all friends
- Accidentally posting something on your 'story' instead of sending it to a friend
- Forgetting that photos and messages can be screenshotted and saved

## How to keep safe

- Only add people you know or have lots of mutual friends with
- Put your Maps on 'Ghost Mode' or only allow select friends to view
- Save messages in case you ever need to show someone else

## Final Tips

- Be very careful of who you add
- Remember that all friends can see your location unless you change the settings
- Don't use filters too often
- Don't compare your 'Snap Score' to others'

## The official bit...



No one under 13 is allowed to create an account or use the services. If you are under 18, you may only use the services with the prior consent of your parent or legal guardian.



## What is it?

WhatsApp is a free messaging app that lets users make video and voice calls, send text messages, share their status, and more with just a WiFi or data connection.

## Why do our students use it?

- To chat to family and friends
- To join group chats
- To make new friends

### Pros

- It's very popular so most people have it
- Free messages and calls
- Easy to have multiple group chats
- Less likely to come across 'bot' accounts as profiles are linked to a phone number not just an email address

### Cons

- 'Chain mail' is often sent around - scare tactics can be used to pressure individuals to forward a message or post something on their status
- Messages can be deleted after they've been sent
- Group chats can include hundreds of people – potentially overwhelming
- Won't work without WiFi or Mobile Data

## Traps to avoid

- Joining group chats with hundreds of people in them – the amount of notifications can be too overwhelming
- Forwarding 'chain mail' or copying status trends
- Forgetting that potentially lots of other people can see the messages you send

## How to keep safe

- You can be added into a group chat with people you don't know – be aware of what you share
- Don't add all people from a group chat into your contacts
- Remember that anyone can see your status and profile photo

## Final Tips

- People can delete their messages so take screenshots if necessary
- Don't feel pressured into joining 'chain mail' or other trends
- Don't say anything in a message that you wouldn't in real life

## The official bit...



You must be at least 13 years old to register for and use our Services. In addition to being of the minimum required age, your parent or guardian must agree to our Terms on your behalf if you are under 18.



## *What is it?*

Instagram is a social media platform for sharing photos and videos. It has become a popular way to connect with brands, celebrities, thought leaders, friends, family, and more.

## *Why do our students use it?*

- To share and store memories
- To keep up with celebrities or other interests
- To chat to friends

### *Pros*

- Sharing photos and videos with friends through 'stories' or posts
- Seeing what others are up to
- Entertaining content
- Keeping up with pop culture/current affairs
- Lots of positivity if you follow the right accounts
- Ability to hide amount of likes on posts

### *Cons*

- Some images are edited and can damage self-esteem
- Some content can be harmful or disturbing
- Fake accounts send Direct Messages/ tag you in posts – content can be inappropriate
- Ads can be scams
- Easy for account to be hacked

## *Traps to avoid*

- Don't believe everything to be reality
- Try not to get sucked in to caring about likes and followers
- Don't click any links sent from people you don't know

## *How to keep safe*

- Make your account private. Alternatively, have two accounts – one public and one private for more personal posts
- Block messages from anyone you don't know
- Use a strong password

## *Final Tips*

- Be conscious of the content you share – have a private account for more personal posts
- Be aware of your wellbeing – unfollow anybody that makes you feel negative
- Remember that not everything you see is real

## *The official bit...*



You must be 13 years or older to use this site. You are responsible for any activity that occurs under your screen name.



## *What is it?*

TikTok is a video-sharing app that allows users to create and share videos that are 15 seconds to 10 minutes long, on any topic.

## *Why do our students use it?*

- To watch entertaining videos
- To keep up with peers – lots of people have it
- To make fun content with friends

### *Pros*

- Entertaining content
- Keeping up with pop culture/current affairs
- Lots of positivity if you follow the right accounts
- Source of awareness and education on wider issues
- Creative activity to do with friends
- Time-limit function to reduce screen time

### *Cons*

- Negative impact on attention span – can end up scrolling endlessly
- Can damage body image due to editing and unhealthy 'trends'
- Fake accounts send Direct Messages/tag you in posts – content can be inappropriate
- Can be difficult to avoid damaging content – violent videos sometimes appear in feed

## *Traps to avoid*

- Try to avoid watching anything you might not want to see again in the future – the algorithm will provide you with similar content
- Don't post anything personal on a public account
- Don't take part in damaging trends

## *How to keep safe*

- Make your account private. Alternatively, have two accounts – one public and one private for more personal posts
- Remove any followers you don't know
- Don't wear your uniform or share your location in videos

## *Final Tips*

- Use the time limit function to manage your usage
- Be aware of your wellbeing – don't watch anything that makes you feel negative
- Pause to think before taking part in trends

## *The official bit...*



You can only use the platform if you are 13 years of age or older. TikTok monitor for underage use and will terminate your account if they reasonably suspect that you are underage.





## *What is it?*

Twitter is an online news and social networking site where people communicate via tweets, which can be short messages or images.

## *Why do our students use it?*

- To keep up with news and current affairs
- To see what is 'trending' in the UK and the world
- To read and watch entertaining content

### *Pros*

- Easy way to access local and global news
- Source of awareness and education on wider issues
- Can feel a part of different 'communities' based on interests
- Entertaining content
- Majority of public figures and businesses have an account to follow

### *Cons*

- Can be a negative space depending on the accounts/topics you interact with
- 'Fake news' is often circulated and can be difficult to spot
- Can be easy to access inappropriate content
- Real names are not required to sign up so fake accounts are common

## *Traps to avoid*

- Don't believe everything you read to be true, even if it looks reliable
- Don't tweet anything personal, especially if you have a public account – this is for safety reasons as well as your reputation/digital footprint
- Consuming lots of bad news that impacts your mood

## *How to keep safe*

- Make your account private
- Turn off 'Tweet Location' so that others can't see where you are
- Remove any followers you don't know

## *Final Tips*

- Unfollow or block any accounts that make you feel uncomfortable or impact your mood
- Don't worry about having lots of followers
- Don't tweet anything that you wouldn't say in real life

## *The official bit...*



You must be at least 13 years old to use the Services. You are responsible for your use of the Services and for any Content you provide, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.



## What is it?

YouTube is a video sharing service where users can watch, like, share, comment and upload their own videos. It can be accessed on PCs, laptops, tablets and via mobile phones.

## Why do our students use it?

- To watch videos as an alternative to TV
- To keep up with celebrities or internet personalities
- To relax and switch off

### Pros

- Loads of content across many different genres e.g. gaming, tutorials, YouTube personalities, crafts, music, relaxation etc.
- Can feel a part of different 'communities' based on interests
- A creative outlet – can make and upload your own videos
- Lots of educational content – teachers may include videos in homework

### Cons

- Spreading of misinformation – lots of 'clickbait' videos with misleading titles
- Lots of advertising and 'influencing' – can result in pressure to buy certain products
- Can seem as though creators have a 'perfect' life
- People can leave cruel and hurtful comments

## Traps to avoid

- Uploading personal content to a public account that can be seen by anyone
- Clicking endlessly from one video to the next – it is very easy to spend hours doing this
- Commenting anything that you wouldn't say in real life

## How to keep safe

- Have a private account or be very mindful of what you post if it's public
- Turn off dislikes and comments on your videos
- Only watch appropriate content – your watch history could be accessed in the future

## Final Tips

- Only watch videos that are appropriate and bring you joy
- Don't believe everything you read or watch
- Be mindful of how much time you spend on the app

## The official bit...



You may use the Service if you are at least 13 years old; however, children of all ages may use the Service and YouTube Kids (where available) if enabled by a parent or legal guardian.





## What is it?

Discord is a free communications app that lets you share voice, video, and text chat with friends, game communities, and developers.

## Why do our students use it?

- To communicate, especially when gaming
- To try and talk to celebrities - celebrities or other well-known figures have 'servers' that anyone can join

### Pros

- 'Servers' are like group chats and are often related to a specific topic - can talk to people with similar interests
- Can stream your screen whilst gaming so others can see what you're doing
- Can join celebrities' servers

### Cons

- You are usually talking to people you don't know. This can be voice calls, video calls, or messaging.
- 'Meet ups' are often organised
- People can join some 'servers' and video calls without needing to be accepted
- People can use voice distorters to appear older/younger

## Traps to avoid

- The app has quite a confusing layout so it can be difficult to navigate and be sure of what you're doing
- Accidentally joining a voice or video call
- Believing everyone is who they say they are

## How to keep safe

- Don't join large group calls
- Don't disclose any personal information to anyone you don't know
- Only join/create invite-only servers with your friends

## Final Tips

- If you do join a public server, don't communicate directly with strangers
- Use it as a way of watching streamed gaming content instead of a communication platform

## The official bit...



By accessing our services, you confirm that you're at least 13 years old. If you are not old enough to have authority to consent to our terms, your parent or guardian must agree to our terms on your behalf.



## *What is it?*

Omegle pairs random users to chat via text, video or both. A user can add their interests, and Omegle will try to pair them with someone who has similar interests. If not, you could meet anyone.

## *Why do our students use it?*

- To have fun with friends, especially at sleepovers
- To entertain themselves when bored

### *Pros*

- Celebrities sometimes use it – chance to interact with them
- Can chat to people you wouldn't have met otherwise

### *Cons*

- Omegle is known to be used by teenagers which can attract predators
- There is no accountability – this can lead to incidents such as racism, indecent exposure etc.
- Once the chat or video has been closed, there is no way to retrieve it
- No control over who you are paired with
- No way to verify age

## *Traps to avoid*

- Sharing any personal information with strangers
- Wearing/showing anything on camera that might identify you
- Following any links sent by another user

## *How to keep safe*

- Do not share any personal information with other users
- Disconnect if you feel uncomfortable
- Do not share details of your other social media profiles

## *Final Tips*

- Try not to feel pressured to take part if it makes you uncomfortable
- Use the chat option instead of the video

## *The official bit...*



The services are not available to, and shall not be accessed or used by, persons under the age of 18. By accessing or using the services, you represent and warrant that you are at least 18 years of age.

If you see or receive anything online that makes you feel uncomfortable or worried, you should:

- Tell a parent or carer
- Tell a member of staff
- Report it through [www.reportharmfulcontent.com](http://www.reportharmfulcontent.com)



- Report it through [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)  
(Child Exploitation & Online Protection)



## *Useful websites:*

[www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)



[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**childline**  
ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME



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



[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)



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