

TSS Online Safety Support Information

PARENTS NEWSLETTER— July 2022

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What age can my child start social networking?

By [Internet Matters Team](#) on 26th July, 2016

We're a not-for-profit organisation that has a simple purpose – to help keep children safe in the digital world.

As a parent it's important you know that all social networking platforms (or social networking apps, if on a smartphone) have age limits. Some social networks use technologies that might not be right for some ages, or engage with communities that are made up of people much older than your child.

This guide to the most common social networks your child might be on serves as a guide. Each link will take you to the age reference page of the social networking platform.

13 year olds and upwards:

- AskFm
- BBM
- Bebo
- Facebook
- Flickr
- Foursquare
- Google+
- Habbo
- Instagram
- Kik
- LinkedIn
- Musical.ly
- Reddit
- Snapchat
- Tumblr
- Twitter
- Vimeo
- YouTube

14 year olds and upwards:

- MySpace

16 year olds and upwards:

- WhatsApp

Only suitable for 17 year olds and upwards:

- Periscope
- Vine

Not suitable for under 18 year olds:

- YikYak
- Tagged

What are the risks of an underage social networking account?

- Many sites include an instant message function which allows private conversations between site members
- Most social networking sites have an app version available, meaning your child will have access to the social network from their smartphone or tablet. Some app versions of social networks use the location of the phone.
- Information shared between friends can be easily copied and may spread
- It isn't easy to take back information that has been posted – and can be impossible if it's already been shared.
- Not everyone your child meets online will be who they say they are. Chatrooms and forums can connect people who are complete strangers and can be unmoderated
- Chatrooms and forums are one of the places online groomers go to connect with children. They can also be places where people use a lot of sexual language and engage in online flirting. This is sometimes done through video chat programs.

What do I do if I find an underage social networking account?

Most social networking platforms have a reporting function. See our [social networking page](#) for more information and specific links to some of the most popular platform reporting links.

Additional information

If you'd like to learn more about other popular apps children are using here are some places you can visit:

[Parents apps guide](#) – summary of risky and popular apps children use

[NSPCC and O2 NetAware – guide to social apps children use](#)