



Social Media



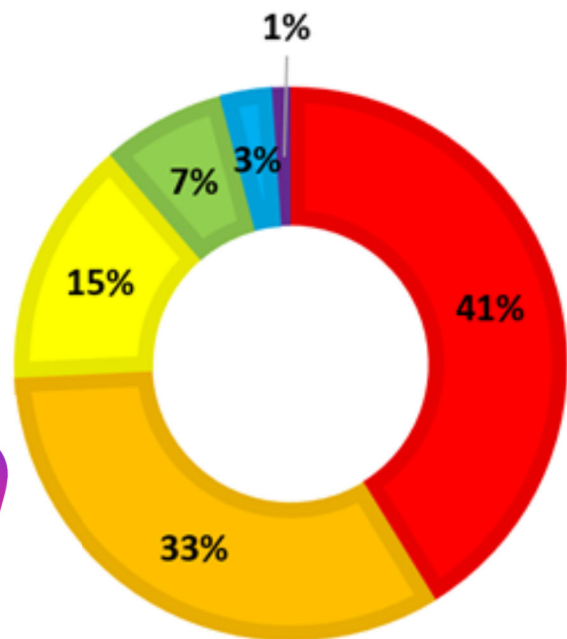
Social Media

Most social media sites require users to be 13 years old.

- 74% of 12-15 year olds have a social media profile (by age 12, half of all children have a social media profile)
- 61% of 12-15 year olds play games online (17% say they play games online with people they have never met)
- Facebook is still the most used platform, although this is decreasing. Snapchat and Instagram use are increasing.

MAIN SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS USED BY CHILDREN AGED 12-15 (2017)

Facebook Snapchat Instagram
Youtube Whatsapp Music.ly



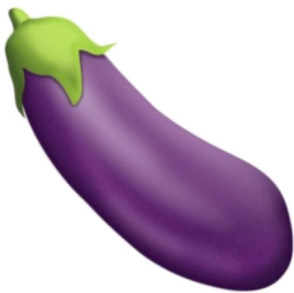
Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk

or call: 0344 381 4772 Monday to Friday: 10am-4pm



Sexting

Although the age of consent is 16, the relevant age in relation to indecent images is 18. Creating or sharing explicit images of a child is illegal, even if the person doing it is a child. This means a young person is breaking the law if they: take; share; possess/download/store an explicit image/video of a child (even if it is of themselves). However, it is not in public interest to prosecute and therefore police are more focused on young people being educated about sexting and the risks of sending sexualised images/videos.



- You can legally access pornography at the age of 18. However, over 50% of 11-16 year olds have seen explicit material online (most of them by the age of 14). Mostly, young people are exposed to online porn for the first time accidentally or by being shown by someone else (19% sought it out themselves).
- ChildLine has seen an increase in young people mentioning concerns about online porn or websites containing harmful content.
- 74% of 11-18 year olds think porn should be discussed in sex education. Without such, porn creates unrealistic attitudes about sex and relationships, risky sexual behaviour and unrealistic expectations of body image and performance.

Pornography

Bullying and Risky Behaviour

- 2 in 5 young people (16-18 year olds) have admitted to using social media to spread **gossip**.
- 75% have used social media to say something **unkind/rude**.
- Half of the older children surveyed had seen **online bullying**.
- 22% of 8-17 year olds have had someone post an image/video to **bully them**.
- 38% young people have received **negative comments** on a photo they have posted on social media.
- 4/5 have witnessed **online hate** (including offensive/threatening language).
- 45% of 13-17 year olds have seen **nude/nearly nude** photos of someone they know being shared around their school or local community.
- 65% 8-17 year olds have shared images/videos directly with someone they **only know online**.



Effects on Mental Health and Relationships

- Adolescents using social media for 2+ hours a day are more likely to rate their mental health as 'fair' or '**poor**'.
- Heavy usage leads to young people 3x more likely to feel **depressed**.
- Using social media can affect **sleep** (e.g blue light or being woken by notifications/messages) - sleep is important for adolescent brain development and lack of it can lead to low mood/depression.
- Social media allows us to compare our lives to others, leading to feelings of **inferiority**.
- People that post on social media frequently, searching for likes, are **disappointed** when they don't get enough, and therefore post more and more and more, leading to a vicious cycle of posting and waiting for feedback. Doing this is linked to anxiety, poor body image and decreased mental health. By seeking confirmation from others, young people **cannot develop a secure sense of self** and need others to tell them their worth, as well as worrying how others see them.
- Research has shown that more time online is linked to **body insecurity**
- By spending too much time online young people are engaging less in real-life relationships and face-to-face conversations with friends and family... this can lead to feelings of **disconnectedness** and **depression**. Young adults (16-25 year olds) rely on friends for advice and social development, difficult if this is inhibited by excessive social media use.
- 22% have **lost friendships** because of actions on social media.



How can schools promote safe use of social media?

- Have discussions about internet risks and online safety—although this alone is not enough... young people need to be prepared for the emotional demands of social media and ‘like culture’.
- Know what platforms young people use, show an interest and make it clear that you are available to talk to about issues surrounding social media.
- Have policies and procedures for how to safeguard against and respond to an online safety incident.
- Involve and support parents
- Ensure staff attend regular training around e-safety and social media
- Monitor the internet access at school, especially if internet use is required in lesson time.
- If assigning homework that requires using the internet, prepare a list of websites that are safe to use and make these available to parents.



Positives of social media

- Making friends
- Connecting with friends, family and the wider world
- Getting inspiration
- Learning to do new things
- Sharing achievements
- Get help/support
- Wide access to information
- Powerful tool for self-expression
- Have a voice



Negatives of social media

- Self-image / trying to maintain image
- Self-confidence
- Self-worth
- Bullying
- Not knowing who to trust / not feeling safe
- Pressure to be involved in social media and post regularly
- Feeling bad about not being able to ‘keep up’ with others
- Not knowing what to do if things go wrong on social media
- Not being able to avoid being contacted (available 24/7)



Resources



- **Teaching resources and curriculum planning.**
- **Education packs** (www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2017/education-packs)
- **SID TV Films** (<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/sid-tv>)
- **Leaflets and resources for young people**
- **Professionals online safety helpline**

Support all professionals working with children and young people. The team can help with any online safety issues - privacy, online reputation, gaming, grooming, cyberbullying, sexting, inappropriate behaviour on social media and so on. As the only helpline in the UK solely dedicated to supporting the children's workforce, POSH are unique in their relationships within industry- having direct channels to escalate concerns to social media companies and many websites.

📞 **0344 381 4772** (Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm)

🖱️ **www.saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline** or Email: **helpline@saferinternet.org.uk**



E-Learning and resources related to online child exploitation and abuse.

🖱️ **www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/**



References:

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the ZONE

