

Dealing with

Difficult issues with Social media

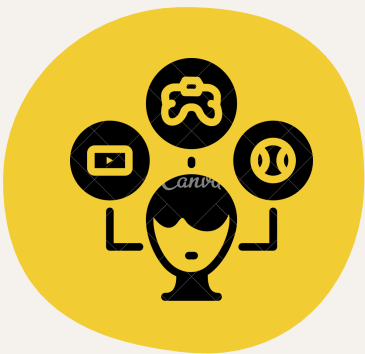
Many parents find it difficult to talk about teenagers use of the internet and social media. Its not realistic to think that we control every aspect of their digital life, but nor is it helpful to bury our head in the sand.

Like other aspects of parenting it is good to understand the part social media plays in their lives, talking about the risks and opportunities it presents.



Talk to them about being safe

Talk to your teen about staying safe online and when posting pictures and messages. There are some excellent sites you can look at together. See our list below.



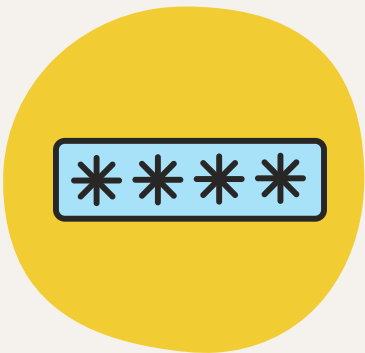
Show an interest

Show an interest in what they are doing, playing, listening, posting or creating online. Their digital world is an important part of their lives and they will want you to be interested in it.



Allow Privacy

Allow privacy, once safety rules are established, messages and conversations with friends should be private. Your teen will appreciate some trust.



Passwords

Talk about passwords and if possible agree a safe place where they can be stored and found in case of an emergency.

Parent tip

Ask your teen how things work and to teach you new skills.



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What else can help

Difficult issues with Social media

There are lots of subjects that can be particularly tricky to talk about with your teen or which feel like 'no go' areas. Often it can be our own embarrassment, we are afraid to know more than we do or scared it will end up in a row or your teen getting upset.

So what can help?



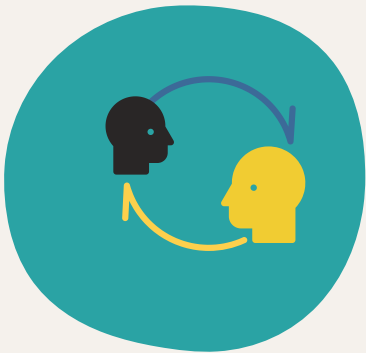
Your own media use

Think about your own media use. Do you frequently glance anxiously at your phone waiting for that important message? For teens the messages they are waiting for feel just as important. They don't want to miss anything.



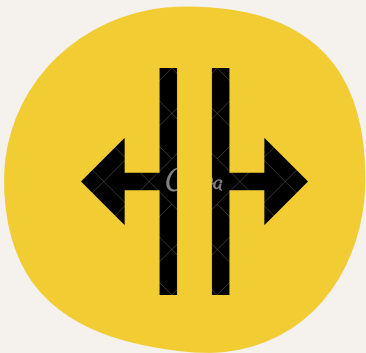
House Rules

Agree some house rules, these may include time limits or agreed media-free times for all the family. For example Meal times with no phones.



Communicating

Be aware when you are talking about communicating via social media to your teen, you are talking about relationships and this is about managing strong feelings.



Separation

Many teenagers will feel very anxious about being separated from their phones. Devices become very much an extension of their world. A break from the intensity may be welcomed but it may be very distressing. Talk to your teenager and try to establish times when they can be switched off to enjoy the world



Parent tip

Agree to turn all electronic devices off an hour before sleep.

'Blue light' keeps the brain alert

Staying safe websites

nspcc.org.uk

childline.org.uk

Chatdanger.com

kidsmart.org.uk

internetmatters.org

saferinternet.org.uk

thinkuknow.co.uk



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