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AKHEPRAN
Social Media
POLICY HANDBOOK
FOR
PARENTS, STUDENTS
AND STAFF

August 2023 Revised

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Akhepran International Academy

Dear Parents, Students, and Staff,

Welcome to Akhepran Social Media Handbook – a comprehensive guide designed to provide valuable insights into the world of social media and its impact on our school community. This handbook aims to equip you with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate social media responsibly, ensuring a safe and positive online experience for all.

Currently, more than 95% of youth have access to a number of social media applications and websites, so it's easy for them to engage with other people on the internet. Teens today are often anonymous in how they interact, and they can engage with a community while in character or hide who they are when talking to others. While online platforms can have enormous social advantages for teenagers, teens are negatively affected by the privacy, safety, and overall well-being breaches of social media platforms, which is enough to make any parent scared. To make parents more informed, we need to raise awareness of the applications and platforms children to utilize. **Ahmed Baig 2023**

Understanding Social Media:
In the digital age, social media has become an integral part of our lives. This handbook explains what social media is, how it is used by children, teens, and adults, and the various types of platforms that exist.

Advantages and Disadvantages of using Social Media:
We explore the advantages and disadvantages of social media, particularly concerning children and teens. Understanding these aspects will empower you to make informed decisions about your social media usage.

While 73% of those ages 9-16 with Internet access (most of them) have an online profile, and 79% use social networking sites often, which accounts for more than half of that age group's Internet users (Childwise Monitor Special Report). As your children become older, it would be great if you were there to show them the ropes on social media, and their lives will be easier afterward. By letting teenage kids know which social networking apps are good, you can stay in control and keep an eye on their connections. Here in this [handbook], we have listed more than 20 social networking apps children and teenagers are using so parents and staff may know. **Ahmed Baig 2023 Reference below**

Akhepran's Expectations:
As members of the Akhepran community, we uphold certain expectations when it comes to social media usage. The handbook outlines our guidelines for responsible and respectful online behavior, ensuring that our interactions online mirror the values we hold in our school environment.

Consequences of Social Media Usage:
While social media offers numerous benefits, it also comes with responsibilities. The handbook outlines the consequences of misusing social media within and outside of the school context, emphasizing the importance of maintaining a positive online presence.

Legal Actions Against Online Bullying:
We take online safety seriously. The handbook provides information on the legal actions that can be taken in cases of online bullying, harassment, or any other harmful behaviors. Our aim is to create a secure online space for everyone.

Accessing the Akhepran Social Media Handbook:
The Akhepran Social Media Handbook is available for your reference and can be accessed through our school's website [website link]. We encourage all parents, students, and staff to take the time to read through the handbook, as it contains valuable information that will contribute to a safer and more respectful online environment.

We believe that by fostering responsible social media usage, we can create a digital community that reflects the same care, respect, and values that define our physical community at Akhepran International Academy.

Thank you for your commitment to maintaining a positive and respectful online presence. Together, we can ensure that our digital interactions align with our school's principles and contribute to the overall well-being of our community.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jacinta Higgs - President
Akhepran International Academy

Social Media Etiquette Guidance for Students

Using social media can be a creative and fun way to express yourself, connect with friends, and share your interests. However, it's important to remember that your online presence reflects on you and your school. Here are some positive tips and recommendations for creating, designing, and producing social media content:

1. **Think Before You Post**: Before sharing anything, ask yourself if it's something you'd feel comfortable showing to your parents, teachers, or future employers. Once it's online, it's there for everyone to see.
2. **Respect Others**: Treat people online the same way you would in person. Be kind, respectful, and considerate in your comments and interactions. Cyberbullying and hurtful language have no place on social media.
3. **Protect Your Privacy**: Be cautious about sharing personal information such as your full name, address, phone number, or school location. Review and adjust your privacy settings to control who can see your posts.

4. **Original and Positive Content**: Share content that you've created or that inspires positivity. Spread kindness, share your hobbies, talents, or creative projects, and contribute to a positive online community.
5. **Give Credit**: If you're sharing someone else's work, whether it's a photo, quote, or artwork, make sure to give proper credit. Plagiarism is not only unfair but can also damage your reputation.
6. **Consider Your Audience**: Remember that your social media content may be seen by a wide range of people, including teachers, classmates, and potential employers. Keep your posts appropriate and professional.
7. **Avoid Controversial Topics**: While it's important to express your opinions, be mindful of sensitive topics that could lead to arguments or hurt feelings. Engage in respectful discussions if you choose to discuss such issues.
8. **Fact-Check Before Sharing**: Before sharing news or information, make sure it's accurate and from a reliable source. Misinformation can spread quickly and cause harm.
9. **Balance Online and Offline**: Don't let social media take over your life. Make time for real-world activities, hobbies, and spending time with family and friends.
10. **Respect School Policies**: Be aware of your school's guidelines on social media use, especially if you're posting about school-related events or activities. Follow any rules or restrictions set by your school.

Remember, your online presence is a reflection of who you are. By following these guidelines, you can create a positive and respectful online image that represents both you and your school in the best possible light.

Social Media Etiquette Guidance for Parents

In today's digital age, guiding your children in using social media responsibly is crucial. Here are positive tips and recommendations to help you monitor and support your students' online activities:
1. **Open Communication**: Foster an environment where your child feels comfortable discussing their online experiences. Encourage them to share their social media accounts and friends with you.
2. **Educate About Privacy**: Teach your child about the importance of privacy settings and how to control who sees their posts. Help them understand the risks of sharing personal information online.
3. **Lead by Example**: Model appropriate social media behavior for your child. Show them how to interact respectfully and responsibly online.
4. **Set Time Limits**: Establish clear guidelines for screen time and social media use. Encourage a healthy balance between online and offline activities.
5. **Discuss Online Etiquette**: Teach your child the importance of treating others with kindness and respect on social media, just as they would in real life.
6. **Monitor Friend Lists**: Regularly review your child's friend list and followers to ensure they are connecting with real-life friends and trusted individuals.

7. **Explore Together**: Explore social media platforms together to better understand the apps and their features. This will help you guide your child's choices and identify potential risks.
8. **Discuss Cyberbullying**: Talk to your child about the harmful effects of cyberbullying and how to handle it if they encounter it. Encourage them to report any incidents to you or a teacher.
9. **Encourage Critical Thinking**: Help your child develop critical thinking skills to evaluate the credibility of online information and news.
10. **Stay Updated**: Stay informed about the latest social media trends, apps, and challenges that might be popular among students. This will help you engage in relevant conversations with your child.
11. **Create a Social Media Contract**: Develop a family agreement or contract outlining social media rules, guidelines, and consequences. This ensures everyone is on the same page.
12. **Be Respectful of Their Privacy**: While it's important to monitor your child's online activities, respect their privacy as they grow older. Allow them space to make responsible decisions.
13. **Encourage Offline Interactions**: Emphasize the value of face-to-face interactions, hobbies, and spending quality time with family and friends in the real world.
14. **Stay Engaged**: Continuously engage in conversations about your child's online experiences. Ask about their favorite platforms, friends, and interests.
15. **Be Supportive**: Let your child know that you are there to support and guide them. Offer assistance when they encounter challenges or questions online.

By following these positive guidelines, you can help your child navigate the online world safely and responsibly, fostering a healthy and productive relationship with social media.

Social Media Etiquette Guidance for Teachers and Staff

Engaging in responsible and respectful social media behavior is essential as representatives of Akhepran International Academy. This guidance provides positive tips and recommendations for posting content on social media and effectively monitoring and guiding students' social media activities:

For Teachers and Staff:
1. **Reflect the School's Values**: Ensure that your social media posts align with the school's mission, values, and code of conduct.
2. **Separate Personal and Professional Accounts**: Maintain separate personal and professional social media accounts. Your professional account should focus on educational and school-related content.
3. **Think Before You Post**: Prioritize thoughtful and respectful content. Consider how your posts might be perceived by students, parents, and colleagues.

4. **Respect Privacy and Confidentiality**: Refrain from sharing sensitive or confidential information about students, colleagues, or the school. Protect the privacy of students and their families.
5. **Avoid Controversial Topics**: Steer clear of controversial or divisive subjects that may not be suitable for a professional educator's online presence.
6. **Engage Positively**: Interact with students, parents, and colleagues in a positive and respectful manner. Encourage meaningful and productive discussions.
7. **Use Disclaimers**: If your opinions are your own and not reflective of the school's stance, include a disclaimer in your profile or posts.
8. **Monitor Your Posts**: Regularly review your past and scheduled posts to ensure they uphold professional standards.
9. **Be Mindful of Photos**: Before posting pictures of students or school events, obtain necessary permissions and consider the appropriateness of the content.

Tips for Monitoring and Guiding Students who use Social Media:
1. **Open Dialogue**: Encourage students to share their social media activities with you. Create an open dialogue to discuss responsible online behavior.
2. **Teach Digital Literacy**: Educate students about online privacy, security, and the potential consequences of their social media actions.
3. **Model Positive Behavior**: Demonstrate appropriate social media conduct and engage with students as a positive role model.
4. **Promote Positive Content**: Encourage students to create and share uplifting, educational, and respectful content that reflects their achievements and interests.
5. **Address Misconduct Respectfully**: If you come across inappropriate student content, address it privately and respectfully. Offer guidance on making responsible choices online.
6. **Use Teachable Moments**: Utilize instances of both positive and negative social media use as teachable moments to promote digital citizenship.
7. **Collaborate with Parents**: Maintain open lines of communication with parents to ensure a consistent approach to monitoring and guiding students' social media behavior.

Remember, your online presence as educators can have a lasting impact on students. By adhering to these guidelines, you contribute to a safe, respectful, and positive digital environment for both the school community and its students.

Do the RIGHT THING- EXPOSE Inappropriate Content:
1. **Maintaining a Safe Environment**: Inappropriate content can create a hostile and unsafe online environment for students, parents, and staff. Exposing such content helps ensure the well-being of the entire school community.
2. **Preventing Harm**: Inappropriate content, especially derogatory or negative remarks, can lead to emotional distress, harm, and conflicts among individuals. Exposing this content helps prevent potential harm.

3. **Preserving Reputation**: Inappropriate content posted by students, parents, or staff can reflect negatively on the school's reputation. Addressing and exposing such content helps protect the school's image.
4. **Promoting Accountability**: Holding individuals accountable for their online actions reinforces the importance of responsible social media usage and discourages inappropriate behavior.
5. **Teaching Responsible Citizenship**: Exposing inappropriate content teaches students, parents, and staff about the consequences of their online actions, fostering responsible digital citizenship.
6. **Creating a Positive Online Culture**: By taking action against inappropriate content, the school sends a message that negative behavior will not be tolerated, thereby contributing to a positive online culture.
7. **Preventing Future Incidents**: Exposing and addressing inappropriate content serves as a deterrent, discouraging others from engaging in similar behavior.

Whistleblowing for inappropriate content is crucial for maintaining a respectful, safe, and positive online environment within the school community. It empowers individuals to stand up against harmful behavior and uphold the values of responsible digital citizenship.

Consequences for students who post INAPPROPRIATE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

The consequences for a student who posts inappropriate content on social media can vary depending on the severity of the situation, school policies, and local laws. Some potential consequences may include:

1. **Educational Intervention**: The school may use the incident as an opportunity for education. The student might be required to attend workshops or discussions on responsible social media use and online etiquette.
2. **Parental Involvement**: Parents or guardians may be informed about the situation and asked to address the issue with their child. Collaboration between the school and parents is essential in guiding the student's behavior.
3. **Counseling or Guidance**: The student may be required to meet with a school counselor or guidance staff to discuss the consequences of their actions and the potential impact on themselves and others.
4. **Apology and Remediation**: Depending on the nature of the content, the student might be asked to issue a public apology or take steps to remedy any harm caused by their posts.
5. **Loss of Privileges**: The student could face temporary or permanent restrictions on school-related privileges, such as participation in extracurricular activities, events, or leadership roles.
6. **Community Service**: In some cases, the student may be assigned community service hours related to promoting responsible online behavior or other relevant activities.
7. **Social Media Removal**: The student may be required to remove or edit the inappropriate content from their social media accounts.

8. **Suspension**: In more serious cases, the student may face a suspension from school, typically for a specified duration.
9. **Legal Consequences**: If the content violates laws or involves serious misconduct, legal actions may be taken, and law enforcement may be involved.

It's important for schools to have clear policies and procedures in place for addressing such situations, and the consequences should aim to educate and guide the student toward responsible behavior while considering their overall well-being and growth.

Warning Signs that a Child or Teenager is the Victim of Cyberbullying:

1. **Emotional Distress:** Sudden changes in mood, behavior, or emotional well-being, such as increased sadness, anxiety, or withdrawal.
2. **Reluctance to Use Technology:** A noticeable reluctance or fear of using electronic devices or being online, especially social media platforms.
3. **Change in Social Behavior:** Avoidance of social situations, isolation from friends, or sudden loss of interest in social activities.
4. **Decline in Academic Performance:** A sudden drop in school performance, lack of concentration, or disinterest in schoolwork.
5. **Physical Symptoms:** Complaints of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical symptoms that seem to coincide with online activity.
6. **Sleep Disturbances:** Changes in sleep patterns, difficulty falling asleep, or frequent nightmares.
7. **Secrecy:** Being secretive or evasive about online activities, not wanting to share what they are doing online.
8. **Unexplained Emotional Responses:** Reacting strongly to messages or notifications on their device, which could indicate negative online interactions.
9. **Withdrawal from Friends and Family:** Pulling away from close relationships, especially if they were once close to the person causing the bullying.
10. **Deleted Social Media Accounts:** Abruptly deleting or avoiding social media profiles or accounts without explanation.

Warning Signs that a Child or Teenager is the Perpetrator of Cyberbullying:

1. **Excessive Screen Time:** Spending a significant amount of time online or using electronic devices, often to the detriment of other activities.
2. **Secretive Behavior:** Being secretive about online activities, using private browsers or deleting messages to hide their online interactions.
3. **Inappropriate Use of Language:** Using offensive language, derogatory comments, or hurtful language in messages or posts.
4. **Multiple Online Profiles:** Creating fake or multiple online profiles to harass or impersonate others.
5. **Sudden Change in Behavior:** Displaying aggression, hostility, or anger that is uncharacteristic of their usual behavior.
6. **Obsession with Social Status:** Showing an excessive concern for popularity, number of followers, or likes on social media.

7. **Lack of Empathy:** Demonstrating a lack of empathy for others' feelings or minimizing the impact of their online actions.
8. **Frequent Negative Interactions:** Consistently engaging in negative interactions, arguments, or conflicts with others online.
9. **Using Others' Devices:** Using someone else's device to engage in cyberbullying in an attempt to avoid detection.
10. **Overly Defensive:** Becoming defensive or hostile when asked about online behavior or interactions.

It's important for parents, guardians, and educators to be vigilant about these warning signs and have open conversations with children and teenagers about their online activities. Creating a safe and supportive environment can help both victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying get the help they need.

Consequences of Cyberbullying on Social Media:

For Children and Teens:
1. **Emotional Distress:** Victims of cyberbullying may experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem due to the constant online harassment and negative messages.
2. **Academic Impact:** Cyberbullying can lead to a decline in academic performance as victims may struggle to concentrate and engage in their studies.
3. **Isolation:** Victims may withdraw from social interactions both online and offline, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness.
4. **Physical Health:** Prolonged exposure to cyberbullying can have physical health effects, such as headaches, sleep disturbances, and even psychosomatic symptoms.
5. **Self-Harm and Suicidal Thoughts:** In extreme cases, cyberbullying can contribute to self-harm behaviors or even thoughts of suicide.

For Parents:
1. **Emotional Toll:** Parents of victims may experience stress, anxiety, and a sense of helplessness upon discovering their child is being cyberbullied.
2. **Communication Breakdown:** Cyberbullying can strain parent-child relationships, as children may be hesitant to share their online experiences.
3. **Legal Implications:** Parents may be held accountable for their child's cyberbullying behavior, leading to legal consequences and potential liability.

For Staff:
1. **Professional Repercussions:** Staff members who engage in cyberbullying may face disciplinary actions, damage to their professional reputation, or even termination.
2. **Legal Consequences:** Cyberbullying can lead to legal action against staff members, including charges of harassment or defamation.
3. **Impact on School Environment:** Staff involvement in cyberbullying can negatively affect the overall school climate, trust among colleagues, and student well-being.

For Everyone Involved:

1. **Impact on Mental Health:** Both perpetrators and victims of cyberbullying can experience long-term mental health issues, affecting their overall well-being.
2. **Damaged Relationships:** Cyberbullying can strain relationships among peers, colleagues, and even family members, leading to fractured social connections.
3. **Negative Online Reputation:** Perpetrators risk damaging their online reputation, affecting their future opportunities and relationships.
4. **Legal Action:** Cyberbullying can result in legal consequences, including restraining orders, fines, and potential criminal charges.
5. **Educational and Professional Setbacks:** The effects of cyberbullying can disrupt education, career growth, and future prospects for all parties involved.

It is essential for individuals to understand that cyberbullying is harmful, unacceptable, and has far-reaching consequences that extend beyond the digital realm. Encouraging positive online behavior, empathy, and open communication is crucial for preventing and addressing cyberbullying.

Legal consequences for perpetrators of cyberbullying

Legal consequences for perpetrators of cyberbullying can vary depending on the jurisdiction and severity of the offense. Common legal actions and consequences for cyberbullying may include:

1. **Civil Lawsuits:** Victims of cyberbullying may pursue civil lawsuits against perpetrators for defamation, intentional infliction of emotional distress, invasion of privacy, or other applicable claims. If found liable, perpetrators may be required to pay monetary damages to the victim.
2. **Criminal Charges:** In some cases, cyberbullying behaviors may lead to criminal charges, such as harassment, stalking, cyberstalking, or even hate crimes, depending on the nature of the content and its impact on the victim.
3. **Restraining Orders:** Victims can seek restraining orders or protection orders against cyberbullies to prevent further contact or harassment. Violating such orders can result in criminal charges.
4. **School Disciplinary Action:** If the cyberbullying occurs within an educational setting, schools may take disciplinary actions against student perpetrators, which can include suspension, expulsion, or mandatory counseling.
5. **Loss of Internet Privileges:** Some jurisdictions impose restrictions on an individual's internet usage, either as part of probation or as a result of a court order related to cyberbullying offenses.
6. **Community Service:** Courts may mandate perpetrators to perform community service, such as speaking engagements or workshops on the harmful effects of cyberbullying.
7. **Fines:** In some cases, perpetrators may be required to pay fines as a consequence of their cyberbullying actions.

8. **Criminal Records:** Convictions for cyberbullying offenses can result in the creation of a criminal record, which may have long-lasting effects on an individual's personal and professional life.
9. **Juvenile Justice System:** Minors involved in cyberbullying may be subject to the juvenile justice system, which can lead to probation, counseling, or other interventions.
10. **Legal Settlements:** Perpetrators may opt to settle legal disputes with victims through negotiations that may involve financial compensation or other agreed-upon terms.

It's important to note that the legal consequences of cyberbullying can be complex and depend on various factors, including the local laws, the severity of the offense, and the impact on the victim. Individuals should be aware of the potential legal ramifications and consider practicing responsible and respectful behavior online.

Consequences for parents who post inappropriate social media content

Consequences for parents who post inappropriate social media content may vary depending on the severity of the content and the policies of the school or organization. Here are potential consequences:
1. **Communication from School:** The school may contact the parent to address the inappropriate content and remind them of the school's expectations for responsible social media behavior.
2. **Educational Seminars:** Parents may be encouraged to attend educational seminars or workshops on responsible social media usage, digital citizenship, and the potential impact of their online actions.
3. **Impact on Student:** If the content involves the school or students, the parent's actions may be discussed with them to explain how the content can negatively affect their child and the school community.
4. **Restriction of Involvement:** In more severe cases, the school may restrict the parent's involvement in school activities or events, especially if the inappropriate content affects the school's values or image.
5. **Negative Impact on Child:** Parents' inappropriate online behavior can potentially impact their child's experience at school, including relationships with peers and teachers.
6. **Loss of Trust and Respect:** Posting inappropriate content can lead to a loss of trust and respect among other parents, teachers, and school staff members.
7. **Limitation of Access:** The school may restrict the parent's access to school-related information and communication platforms if their online behavior contradicts the school's values.
8. **Exclusion from Events:** Parents who consistently post inappropriate content that goes against the school's policies may be excluded from certain school events or functions.

9. **Damage to School-Parent Relationship:** Inappropriate content can damage the school's relationship with the parent, making it harder to work collaboratively for the benefit of the child.
10. **Negative Influence:** Parents are expected to set a positive example for their children. Inappropriate content can negatively influence their child's understanding of responsible online behavior.

It's important for parents to recognize the impact of their online actions on their children, the school community, and their own reputation. Open communication with the school and a commitment to responsible social media usage are essential to maintaining a positive school-parent partnership.

Consequences for staff who post inappropriate social media content

Consequences for teachers and staff who post inappropriate social media content may vary based on the severity of the content and the policies of the school or organization. Here are potential consequences:

1. **Official Warning or Reprimand:** In less severe cases, the teacher or staff member may receive an official warning or reprimand from their superiors, emphasizing the importance of adhering to the school's social media policy.
2. **Training and Education:** Teachers and staff may be required to undergo training or workshops on responsible social media usage, online etiquette, and the potential consequences of their actions.
3. **Loss of Trust and Reputation:** Posting inappropriate content can lead to a loss of trust among colleagues, students, and parents, damaging the teacher's professional reputation and relationships.
4. **Suspension or Leave:** In more serious cases, the teacher or staff member might face suspension or temporary leave pending further investigation into the matter.
5. **Disciplinary Action:** Depending on the severity of the content, the school may take disciplinary action, which could result in demotion, loss of privileges, or even termination of employment.
6. **Legal Consequences:** In cases where the content violates laws or regulations, legal action may be pursued, leading to fines, lawsuits, or criminal charges.
7. **Negative Impact on Students:** Posting inappropriate content can negatively impact the learning environment and students' well-being. Teachers and staff are expected to be positive role models for students.
8. **Damage to School Image:** Inappropriate content associated with a teacher or staff member reflects poorly on the school's image and values, potentially leading to reputational damage.
9. **Revocation of Social Media Privileges:** The school may restrict or revoke the individual's access to official social media accounts representing the school.

It's crucial for teachers and staff to understand that their online presence reflects the values of the school and can have a significant impact on their professional careers and the school community.

18 Social Media Apps and Sites Kids Are Using Right Now

Social media apps that let teens do it all -- text, chat, meet people, and share their pics and videos -- often fly under parents' radars.

Topics: Cellphones and Devices Mental Health Sex, Gender, and Body Image Social Media

It's official: Facebook isn't cool. Though some teens still use it, they prefer to use a variety of apps to connect, curate, and capture their lives in different ways. And though household names such as Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter have proven their staying power, teens love to try out new apps they hear about from friends, ads, or even what's trending in the app store.

This can be challenging for parents to keep up with. But you don't need to know all the ins and outs of all the apps, sites, and terms that are "hot" right now (and frankly, if you did, they wouldn't be trendy anymore). But knowing the basics -- what they are, why they're popular, and what problems can crop up when they're not used responsibly -- can make the difference between a positive and a negative experience for your kid.

Below, we've laid out some of the most popular types of apps and websites for teens: texting, microblogging, livestreaming, self-destructing/secret, and chatting/meeting/dating. The more you know about each, the better you'll be able to communicate with your teen about safe choices.
The bottom line for most of these tools? If teens are using them respectfully, appropriately, and with a little parental guidance, they're mostly fine. So take inventory of your kids' apps and review the best practices.

TEXTING APPS

1. **GroupMe** is an app that doesn't charge fees or have limits for direct and group messages. Users also can send photos, videos, and calendar links.
What parents need to know

- **It's for older teens.** The embedded GIFs and emojis have some adult themes, such as drinking and sex.
- **Teens are always connected.** Without fees or limits, teens can share and text to their heart's content, which may mean they rarely put the phone down.

2. **Kik Messenger** is an app that lets kids text for free. It's fast and has no message limits, character limits, or fees if you only use the basic features. Because it's an app, the texts won't show up on your kid's phone's messaging service, and you're not charged for them (beyond standard data rates).
What parents need to know

- **Stranger danger is an issue.** Kik allows communication with strangers who share their Kik usernames to find people to chat with. The app allegedly has been used in high-profile crimes, including the murder of a 13-year-old girl and a child-pornography case.
- **It's loaded with covert marketing.** Kik specializes in "promoted chats" -- basically, conversations between brands and users. It also offers specially designed apps (accessible only through the main app), many of which offer products for sale.

3. **WhatsApp** lets users send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.
What parents need to know

- **It's for users 16 and over.** Lots of younger teens seem to be using the app, but this age minimum has been set by WhatsApp.
- **It can be pushy.** After you sign up, it automatically connects you to all the people in your address book who also are using WhatsApp. It also encourages you to add friends who haven't signed up yet.

4. **Discord** started as a place for gamers to chat while playing video games but has become a bigger platform where users can use text, voice-chat, and video-chat to discuss a wide variety of topics.
What parents need to know
- **There are public and private "servers"** or discussion groups. Teens can join public groups, ask to join private ones, or start their own. The safest option is for them to join a private group with people they know in real life.
- **Some groups are more moderated than others, some are NSFW, and some are hate-filled**. There are plenty of groups that are meant for adults only, and some are totally tame and well moderated. If your kid is in one of the latter, the risk is much lower.

PHOTO AND VIDEO-SHARING APPS AND SITES

5. **Instagram** lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos, either publicly or within a private network of followers. It unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos. It also lets you apply fun filters and effects to your photos, making them look high-quality and artistic.
What parents need to know

- **Teens are on the lookout for "likes."** Similar to the way they use Facebook, teens may measure the "success" of their photos -- even their self-worth -- by the number of likes or comments they receive. Posting a photo or video can be problematic if teens are posting to validate their popularity.
- **Public photos are the default.** Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public unless privacy settings are adjusted. Hashtags and location information can make photos even more visible to communities beyond a teen's followers if his or her account is public.
- **Kids can send private messages.** Instagram Direct is like texting with photos or videos and you can do it with up to 15 mutual friends. These pictures don't show up on their public feeds. Although there's nothing wrong with group chats, kids may be more likely to share inappropriate stuff with their inner circles.

6. **Tik Tok - Real Short Videos** is a performance- and video-sharing social network that mostly features teens lip-synching to famous songs but also includes some original songwriting and singing. Users can build up a following among friends or share posts publicly.
What parents need to know

- **Songs and videos contain lots of iffy content.** Because the platform features popular music and a mix of teen and adult users, swearing and sexual content are commonplace.
- **There are often creepy comments.** Though lots of comments are kind, videos often have comments about the performer's body or other sexual references, and since kids under 13 and adults use the app, it's especially creepy.
- **Gaining followers and fans feels important.** Teens want a public profile to get exposure and approval, and many are highly motivated to get more followers and likes for their videos.

MICROBLOGGING APPS AND SITES

7. **Tumblr** is like a cross between a blog and Twitter: It's a streaming scrapbook of text, photos, and/or video and audio clips. Users create and follow short blogs, or "tumblogs," that can be seen by anyone online (if they're made public). Many

teens have tumblogs for personal use: sharing photos, videos, musings, and things they find funny with their friends.
What parents need to know

- **Porn is easy to find.** This online hangout is hip and creative but sometimes raunchy. Pornographic images and videos and depictions of violence, self-harm, drug use, and offensive language are easily searchable.
- **Privacy can be guarded but only through an awkward workaround.** The first profile a member creates is public and viewable by anyone on the internet. Members who desire full privacy have to create a *second* profile, which they're able to password-protect.
- **Posts are often copied and shared.** Reblogging on Tumblr is similar to re-tweeting: A post is reblogged from one tumblog to another. Many teens like -- and, in fact, want -- their posts to be reblogged.

8. **Twitter** is a microblogging tool that allows users to post brief, 140-character messages -- called "tweets" -- and follow other users' activities. It's not only for adults; teens like using it to share tidbits and keep up with news and celebrities.
What parents need to know

- **Public tweets are the norm for teens.** Though you can choose to keep your tweets private, <u>most teens report having public accounts</u>. Talk to your kids about <u>what they post and how a post can spread far and fast</u>.
- **Updates appear immediately.** Even though you can remove tweets, your followers can still read what you wrote until it's gone. This can get kids in trouble if they say something in the heat of the moment.

LIVE-STREAMING VIDEO APPS

9. **Houseparty - Group Video Chat** is a way for groups of teens to connect via live video. Two to eight people can be in a chat together at the same time. If someone who's not a direct friend joins a chat, teens get an alert in case they want to leave the chat. You can also "lock" a chat so no one else can join.
What parents need to know

- **Users can take screenshots during a chat.** Teens like to think that what happens in a chat stays in a chat, but that's not necessarily the case. It's easy for someone to take a screenshot while in a chat and share it with whomever they want.
- **There's no moderator.** Part of the fun of live video is that anything can happen, but that can also be a problem. Unlike static posts that developers may review, live video chats are spontaneous, so it's impossible to predict what kids will see, especially if they're in chats with people they don't know well.

10. **Live.me – Live Video Streaming** allows kids to watch others and broadcast themselves live, earn currency from fans, and interact live with users without any control over who views their streams.
What parents need to know

- **It's associated with Tik Tok - including musical.ly.** Because of the parent app's popularity, this streamer is very popular, and many kids who use one app use the other, too.
- **Kids can easily see inappropriate content.** During our review, we saw broadcasters cursing and using racial slurs, scantily clad broadcasters, young teens answering sexually charged questions, and more.
- **Predatory comments are a concern.** Because anyone can communicate with broadcasters, there is the potential for viewers to request sexual pictures or performances or to contact them through other social means and send private images or messages.

11. **YouNow: Broadcast, Chat, and Watch Live Video** is an app that lets kids stream and watch live broadcasts. As they watch, they can comment or buy gold bars to give to other users. Ultimately, the goal is to get lots of viewers, start trending, and grow your fan base.
What parents need to know

- **Kids might make poor decisions to gain popularity.** Because it's live video, kids can do or say anything and can respond to requests from viewers -- in real time. Though there seems to be moderation around iffy content (kids complain about having accounts suspended "for nothing"), there's plenty of swearing and occasional sharing of personal information with anonymous viewers.
- **Teens can share personal information, sometimes by accident.** Teens often broadcast from their bedrooms, which often have personal information visible, and they sometimes will share a phone number or an email address with viewers, not knowing who's really watching.
- **It's creepy.** Teens even broadcast themselves sleeping, which illustrates the urge to share all aspects of life, even intimate moments, publicly -- and potentially with strangers.

SELF-DESTRUCTING/SECRET APPS

12. **Snapchat** is a messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear. Most teens use the app to share goofy or embarrassing photos without the risk of them going public. However, there are lots of opportunities to use it in other ways.
What parents need to know

- **It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever.** Data is data: Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. (For example, the person on the

receiving end can take a screenshot of the image before it disappears.) Snapchats can even be recovered. After a major hack in December 2013 and a settlement with the FTC, Snapchat has clarified its privacy policy, but teens should stay wary.

- **It can make sexting seem OK.** The seemingly risk-free messaging might encourage users to share pictures containing sexy images.
- **There's a lot of iffy, clicky content.** Snapchat's Discover feature offers a grab-bag of articles, videos, and quizzes from magazine publishers, TV networks, and online sources mostly about pop culture, celebrities, and relationships (a typical headline: "THIS is What Sex Does To Your Brain").

13. **Whisper** is a social "confessional" app that allows users to post whatever's on their minds, paired with an image. With all the emotions running through teens, anonymous outlets give them the freedom to share their feelings without fear of judgment.
What parents need to know

- **Whispers are often sexual in nature.** Some users use the app to try to hook up with people nearby, while others post "confessions" of desire. Lots of eye-catching, nearly nude pics accompany these shared secrets.
- **Content can be dark.** People normally don't confess sunshine and rainbows; common Whisper topics include insecurity, depression, substance abuse, and various lies told to employers and teachers.
- **Although it's anonymous to start, it may not stay that way.** The app encourages users to exchange personal information in the "Meet Up" section.

CHATTING, MEETING, AND DATING APPS AND SITES

14. **Monkey -- Have Fun Chats.** If you remember Chatroulette, where users could be randomly matched with strangers for a video chat, this is the modern version. Using Snapchat to connect, users have 10 seconds to live video-chat with strangers.
What parents need to know

- **Lots of teens are using it.** Because of the connection with Snapchat, plenty of teens are always available for a quick chat -- which often leads to connecting via Snapchat and continuing the conversation through that platform.
- **Teens can accept or reject a chat.** Before beginning a chat, users receive the stranger's age, gender, and location and can choose whether to be matched or not.

15. **MeetMe: Chat and Meet New People**. The name says it all. Although not marketed as a dating app, MeetMe does have a "Match" feature whereby users can "secretly admire" others, and its large user base means fast-paced communication and guaranteed attention.

What parents need to know

- **It's an open network.** Users can chat with whomever's online, as well as search locally, opening the door to potential trouble.
- **Lots of details are required.** First and last name, age, and ZIP code are requested at registration, or you can log in using a Facebook account. The app also asks permission to use location services on your teens' mobile devices, meaning they can find the closest matches wherever they go.

16. **Omegle** is a chat site that puts two strangers together in their choice of a text chat or a video chat. Being anonymous can be very attractive to teens, and Omegle provides a no-fuss way to make connections. Its "interest boxes" also let users filter potential chat partners by shared interests.
What parents need to know

- **Users get paired up with strangers.** That's the whole premise of the app. And there's no registration required.
- **This is *not* a site for kids and teens.** Omegle is filled with people searching for sexual chat. Some prefer to do so live. Others offer links to porn sites.
- **Language is a big issue.** Since the chats are anonymous, they're often much more explicit than those with identifiable users might be.

17. <u>Yubo</u> **(formerly Yellow - Make new friends)** is an app that is often called the "Tinder for teens" because users swipe right or left to accept or reject the profiles of other users. If two people swipe right on each other, they can chat and hook up via Snapchat or Instagram.
What parents need to know

- **It's easy to lie about your age.** Even if you try to enter a birth date that indicates you're under 13, the app defaults to an acceptable age so you can create an account anyway.
- **You have to share your location and other personal information.** For the app to work, you need to let it "geotag" you. Also, there are no private profiles, so the only option is to allow anyone to find you.
- **It encourages contact with strangers.** As with <u>Tinder</u>, the whole point is to meet people. The difference with Yellow is that the endgame is sometimes just exchanging social media handles to connect there. Even if there's no offline contact, however, without age verification, teens are connecting with people they don't know who may be much older.

18. <u>**Amino - Communities, Chat, Forums, and Groups**</u> is an interest-based app that lets users find people who are into the same things. Teens can join groups -- or create them -- and then post within the group, follow other users, and chat with them via text, voice, or video.
What parents need to know

- **Contact with strangers is part of the experience**. While it's great for kids to be able to feel a sense of belonging and kinship with others, the mix of kids

and adults blended with all varieties of chat makes it risky. Also, unless a kid is in a closed group, everything they post is public, and other users can search for them. Make sure your kid's location is not included in their profile.

- **Mature content and bullying is common.** Since each community makes its own rules, profanity, sexual references, and violent content are a part of some forums. A lot of what your kid sees, who they meet, and what people post is determined by the groups they decide to join, as some are very tame and some are definitely not for kids.
- **It's not made with kids in mind.** Because this app wasn't created for kids, it doesn't have the same safeguards or privacy standards as apps that are made for kids.

The bottom line for most of these tools? If teens are using them respectfully, appropriately, and with a little parental guidance, they should be fine.

Take inventory of your kids' apps and review the best practices.

TV senior editor Polly Conway and former Common Sense Education writer Kelly Schryver contributed to this article.

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https://www.commonsensemedia.org/articles/18-social-media-apps-and-sites-kids-are-using-right-now

12 Social Networking Apps Teenagers are using in 2023

by **Ahmed Baig**

 Last Updated On: August 9, 2023

in **Apps**

Currently, more than 95% of youth have access to a number of social media applications and websites, so it's easy for them to engage with other people on the internet. Teens today are often anonymous in how they interact, and they can engage with a community while in character or hide who they are when talking to others. While online platforms can have enormous social advantages for teenagers, teens are negatively affected by the privacy, safety, and overall well-being breaches of social media platforms, which is enough to make any parent scared. To make parents more informed, we need to raise awareness of the applications and platforms children to utilize.

While 73% of those ages 9-16 with Internet access (most of them) have an online profile, and 79% use social networking sites often, which accounts for more than half of that age group's Internet users (Childwise Monitor Special Report). As your children become older, it would be great if you were there to show them the ropes on social media, and their lives will be easier afterward. By letting teenage kids know which social networking apps are good, you can stay in control and keep an eye on their connections. Here in this post, we have listed some of the best social networking apps for teenagers.

1. [Facebook](#)
Anyone can create a profile on Facebook and instantly connect with family, friends, and any person on Facebook. It is currently one of the best most popular and best free social networking websites that teenagers can use. Teens can use this social networking app to connect with their friends and teachers. Also, there are many educational and knowledge-sharing pages available on Facebook that can help a teen in growing his knowledge. Although, a watch from parents is necessary while using Facebook as kids can get distracted pretty often on Facebook.

2. [Instagram](#)
It is just another popular social networking app right now. Instagram allows users to share pictures and videos with others online. While Facebook, Twitter, and the rest all offer many options for people to engage with their fans, Instagram is specifically designed to share photographs and videos with followers. Sharing improper images or videos that might harm a teen's character or draw unwanted interest, and obviously, privacy are all reasons why parents must keep an eye on their children while they are using Instagram.

3. Snapchat

To send images, video, text, and pictures, people use Snapchat, an app for smartphones. The app is completely free to download and completely free to use. It has suddenly become very popular with the younger generation because pictures sent to the recipient vanish after being seen. While it is a very popular app, we will recommend teens to use it only for enjoying a different set of filters and lenses provided by Snapchat and not for anything else. If used wisely, Snapchat is definitely a fun-to-use app for clicking and sharing funny/creative photos.

4. YouTube

A video-sharing website where users may view, like, share, comment, and post their own videos, YouTube has become a popular Internet destination. YouTube has every possible video someone can post, which includes all of the many topics and ideas. The effect that YouTubers have on teenagers can help them in doing many things in life. Teenagers will often imitate the things they observe in videos they love, including language, clothes, and gestures. If a teen is keen on learning something, there is no other social networking app better than YouTube right now. There are tons of good videos available on YouTube that a teenager can watch and develop/improve his skills.

5. WhatsApp

Nearly 1.6 billion people in the world rely on WhatsApp for communications. Using the app, people may connect quickly, easily, and in a manner that provides them with the freedom to exchange images, videos, documents, location, etc. in real-time. A lot of teenagers have started using WhatsApp to connect with their friends and know-ones. Not only this but despite regular calling, WhatsApp video and voice calls have become a regular part of teenagers. Since every contact can see the WhatsApp stories and status, a teen can be kept on a watch and that's what makes WhatsApp the best social networking app for teenagers. There are many third-party mods available like GBWhatsApp which you can use.

6. TikTok

TikTok is a video-sharing website where anyone can create, share, and watch bite-sized clips. The app provides a platform for young people to express themself via clips that can be shared on the platform. A major reason why TikTok has popular trends is because of its audio system. When users submit a video, they may use it to lipsync the audio or provide it to other users. Though a lot of users use it for sharing entertaining stuff, a lot of good and knowledge-sharing channels are also available on TikTok. Teens must be encouraged to join and promote such channels.

7. Pinterest

Pinterest is an image search engine that provides cooking, home, design ideas, and almost anything. Pinterest has billions of pins, all of which provide access to methods to discover ideas. If you find an image you like, add it to a board to

collect all your ideas in one place. Pinterest's main benefit is that it is like other social networking sites in that profiles can be password protected. Additionally, no private or bank details are needed, and thus it doesn't pose a risk to you by joining up.

8. Tumblr
Tumblr is a social networking and microblogging service where users can build a virtual journal. You'll be able to connect with others who have similar interests and content. Additionally, you may connect with others, as well as discover other interesting bloggers and brands to follow. If you find a picture, video, or story that you like, you may "reblog" it on your blog for your followers to enjoy. Thousands of blog posts are shared on Tumblr every day, so teenagers can use it either to read or share their own posts.

9. Google Duo
Google Duo is one of the best video calling apps available right now and you can use this app to make video calls to anyone around the world. This app is good for teenagers because it requires contact list permission before you can make calls to anyone. So anytime you can check your teen's phone to know who is calling by looking at the contact list. Also, all of the calls and chat messages made with Google Duo are end-to-end encrypted so you don't have to worry about your child's privacy. If you are a teenager yourself, then we will recommend you to use this app to make high-quality phones with others.

10. GroupMe
GroupMe allows private communication between individuals as well as a group conversation. This allows a big group of users to break off into smaller groups that can easily communicate with one another thereafter. It includes unique emoticons you may use when talking, as well as the ability to make memes. GroupMe is not a secure option for private conversation, since it doesn't support end-to-end encryption. This may come in handy as teenagers will be more cautious while sharing anything on this social networking app as they know everything is monitored by GroupMe itself.

11. Twitter
A lot of people know that Twitter is where you can catch up on news and socialize at the same time. How do they do it? In short, messages are known as tweets. Many users use Twitter to follow individuals and organizations they find fascinating. To unite people and provide a medium for spreading information to a wide audience, its goal is clear. Teens may easily keep up with news relevant to them by joining Twitter, and it is a breeze to keep up with individuals through their lists. Twitter is definitely one of the best social networking apps for teenagers right now unless they start indulging themselves in online fights and so.

12. Ask.FM
Ask.FM is basically a question-and-answer service that allows users to post both questions and answers. It is currently one of the best websites to get answers to all

your questions. Ask.FM has the problem of unmonitored anonymous material. As unidentified and unwatched content is allowed on the platform, online bullying, graphic nudity, and perhaps other abuses are on the rise. Although you can ask your teenage kids to use this website for getting answers to their questions and we are sure they will love it too.

Teens who are taken off of social media may appear as social outcasts. Unfortunately, in the modern-day, teenagers have a multitude of unpleasant experiences with social media. Even those with malicious purposes or those inclined to act in an inappropriate manner will be drawn to social media sites, where they can harm others, cyberbully, and be a danger to themselves. Teens can use them in an acceptable manner if they are utilizing them with some direction from parents.

Check your children's app histories and habits for safe browsing and downloads. We will keep adding more social networking apps for teenagers in this post, so consider checking it often.

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https://twitgoo.com/best-social-networking-apps-teenagers/

Akhepran Guidelines for Exposing Inappropriate Content on Social Media

At Akhepran International Academy, we are committed to fostering a safe and respectful online environment for our students, parents, and staff. To uphold these values and ensure the well-being of our school community, we have established the following guidelines for exposing individuals who post inappropriate content on social media:

1. Awareness and Education:
- This handbook is to educate students, parents, and staff about our school's policies on social media usage and the potential consequences of posting inappropriate content.
- Clear guidelines are provided in this handbook to define what constitutes inappropriate, negative, or derogatory content.

2. Anonymous Reporting Channels:
- We have established confidential and anonymous reporting email to allow individuals to report inappropriate content without fear of retaliation.

- Dedicated email president@akhepran.com is available which is read by Dr. Jacinta Higgs ONLY.
- You may also email principal@akhepran.com – Ms. Neymour and or vice.principal@akherpan.com – Miss Bethell

3. Open Communication:
- Akhepran promotes an open and safe environment where students, parents, and staff feel comfortable discussing concerns related to inappropriate content.
- Open dialogues will be encouraged among teachers, parents, and students to address responsible social media behavior.

4. Reporting Procedures:
1. **Document the Content:** Take a screenshot or note down details of the inappropriate social media posting, including the date, time, and any relevant usernames or profiles involved.
2. **Report any content that is listed below:**
   a) Offensive Language and Hate Speech: Content that includes offensive, derogatory, or discriminatory language, as well as hate speech targeting individuals or groups based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or other protected characteristics.
   b) Harassment and Cyberbullying: Posts that involve repeated, targeted, or malicious attacks on individuals, causing emotional distress, humiliation, or intimidation.
   c) Explicit or Inappropriate Material: Sharing or posting explicit, sexual, or graphic content that is not suitable for the intended audience, especially if involving minors.
   d) Minors posting nude photos: Children of Teenage students are STRONGLY WARNED NOT TO TAKE, and or POST NUDE PHOTOS OF themselves and post it on social media. DO NOT take and post nude photos of your body and email or WhatsApp it to anyone, not even a boyfriend or girlfriend. There are many examples of innocent persons who took nude photos of themselves and sent it to persons who claimed to love them or claimed to be their friends and the photos were then sent to many other boys and girls on Social Media. **THIS IS A CRIME AND THE POLICE MUST BE CALLED IN.**
   e) Threats and Violence: Content that includes threats of harm, violence, or promoting dangerous activities, potentially putting the safety of individuals or the community at risk.
   f) Privacy Violation: Sharing personal information, private conversations, or images without consent, invading the privacy of individuals and potentially leading to negative consequences.
3. **Use Confidential Reporting Channels:** Send an email immediately to:
   president@akhepran.com – Dr. Jacinta Higgs
   principal@akhepran.com – Ms. D'hniesha Neymour
   vice.principal@akhepran.com – Miss LaQuaya Bethell

4. **Provide Evidence:** When reporting, attach the screenshot or provide a clear description of the inappropriate content. This will help school administrators to better understand the situation.
5. **WhatsApp of Call School Authorities:** If you are unable to send an email send us a WhatsApp message **IMMEDIATELY to any or all of the following phone numbers:**

> **Dr. Jacinta Higgs – 376-0911**
> **Ms. D'hniesha Neymour – 826-3589**
> **Miss LaQuaya Bethell – 826-6643**
> **Miss Lillian Flowers – 826-8598**

Directly contact designated school authorities listed above, or tell teachers, counselors, or administrators, who are responsible for handling such matters. Provide them with the documented evidence and any relevant information.

Remember, timely reporting is crucial to address inappropriate content effectively and ensure the well-being of the school community. Your willingness to report such incidents contributes to maintaining a safe and respectful online environment.

5. Timely Responses:
- School officials will promptly handle all reported cases and conduct thorough investigations to ensure a timely resolution.
- Regular updates will be provided to the reporter regarding the progress of the investigation.

6. Consistent Consequences:
- Consequences for posting inappropriate content are clearly defined in this Social Media Handbook and will consistently be applied to all individuals, regardless of their role within the school.

7. Educational Initiatives:
- Workshops and seminars will be offered to educate students, parents, and staff about responsible social media usage and the potential impact of their online actions.

8. Support for Targets:
- Individuals who report inappropriate content will be offered emotional support and provided with resources to help them cope with potential backlash.

9. Legal and Ethical Considerations:
- Akhepran emphasizes the legal and ethical obligations of reporting inappropriate content to protect the well-being of the school community.
- The potential harm caused by inappropriate content, including cyberbullying, reputation damage, and negative impact on the school's image, will be highlighted.

By adhering to these guidelines, we can collectively contribute to maintaining a respectful and positive online culture within our school community. Your commitment to responsible digital citizenship is essential for creating a safe and nurturing environment for all. Together, we can ensure that Akhepran International Academy remains a place of respect, understanding, and growth.