



Facebook

Setting the ground rules for Facebook

1. Privacy and Security

Spend some time with your teenager getting to know the settings on Facebook. This will ensure they have the maximum privacy and security settings, as recommended for children aged 13-17. The following websites take you through, step by step, the most appropriate setting for your teenager <http://www.communications.gov.au/easyguide/facebook> <http://www.facebook.com/safety>

2. Public information

It is important that your teenager understands that anything posted on Facebook is in the public domain. See below some useful points to discuss with them:

- a. Only accept friend requests from people you know – don't fall into the trap of collecting friends for the sake of it
- b. Think before you post - don't post anything you don't want others to see or know about. Facebook posts can remain on the Internet forever
- c. Treat your Facebook friends with the same respect you give your friends in person
- d. If someone else posts something you don't want to be part of don't respond and consider deleting the post
- e. Report abusive content and unfriend or block people who post offensive or inappropriate content. Remember that the other person doesn't get a notification when you unfriend them, so they won't know you have unfriended them
- f. Tell an adult about anything that concerns you on Facebook. Try to develop a culture of communication so that your teenager won't be afraid of being in trouble if something goes wrong

3. Real relationships – make sure your teenager spends more time with family and his/her friends (in person) than they do socialising on Facebook. This will provide balance and help your child to understand that there is a difference between online socialising and offline socialising. Some children will have hundreds of Facebook friends some of which they rarely speak to in person. Most children will only have up to a dozen family/friends they spend quality time with and these relationships should be encouraged.

4. Time Limits – as with the Internet, discuss time limits on Facebook with your teenager and enforce them. This will help build a healthy pattern of Internet/Facebook use. Facebook can take up a lot of time. A recent study found that non users of Facebook spend 88 percent longer studying outside class and gained better grades at school. Also, keep the computer in a common area, this way you will be able to discuss any of your teenager's immediate concerns with them and help them keep to their time limits.

5. Take an interest in Facebook and your child's other online activities. If they laugh at a funny post or Youtube video, ask them about it. If you have a Facebook profile ask them if you can become a friend. Some parents insist on this as part of the ground rules for joining up to Facebook because it means that you can see what your teen is posting and it will probably make them think twice before they post something inappropriate. At the same time don't comment on all your teen's posts, as they won't want you to be part of all their friends' conversations.