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Fact sheet

FACEBOOK
(For parents)

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What is Facebook?

Facebook is a free social networking site that allows users to create profiles, upload, share and view photos and videos and send messages. The site allows users who have common interests to interact, create and manage events and live chat with their online contacts, or 'Friends'. Facebook is restricted to users aged 13-years-old and above, however some users may lie about their age to join.

What devices can access Facebook?

Facebook can be accessed on any device that has an internet connection such as mobile phones, tablets and computers. It can be accessed via the Facebook website or through one of two apps, the generic Facebook app which includes all of Facebook's features except private messaging, and Facebook's 'Messenger' app which is used for private messaging.

Who can young people interact with when on Facebook?

Facebook users have the ability to interact with a wide range of individuals. Through Facebook's news feed users have the ability to interact in public conversations, with people who are not Friends.

What are the potential challenges with Facebook?

As with any form of social media, there are some challenges that young people may face when using Facebook. These can include online grooming (when an adult makes online contact with someone under the age of 16 with the intention of engaging in a sexual relationship) or cyberbullying and harassment. Other challenges include privacy concerns, such as revealing too much personal information on Facebook, reputation management or falling victim to scams shared through social networking sites.

What are the recommended privacy settings?

By maintaining strong privacy settings, users can limit the amount of information shared with strangers. When setting up privacy features on Facebook there are three options:

- Public - any Facebook user to can view personal content and interact with your child.
- Friends of Friends - allows Friends and their Friends to view and interact with your child and their content.
- Friends - only accepted Friends can see your content in the first instance. The Friends option is the safest way to ensure that you are sharing information with people you know and trust, but should not be considered as 100 per cent private.

There is also the ability to change the privacy options for individual posts.

How do you manage Facebook privacy settings?

It may be easier to change privacy settings on a computer rather than a mobile device. To manage your privacy on Facebook (on a computer), access the privacy settings by clicking on the downward facing arrow in the upper right-hand side of the page and select 'Settings'. In the left hand column, click on 'Privacy'.

To access these settings on a mobile device select the 'More' tab. Scroll down to the Help & Settings section and select 'Account Settings' and then 'Privacy'.
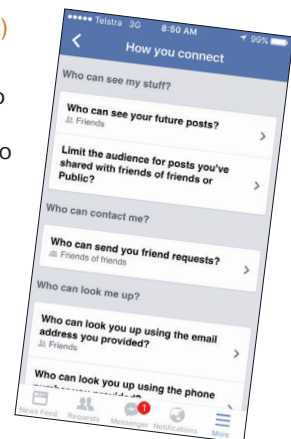

Here you can change a number of settings:

Restricting who can see a timeline (wall)

Under the 'Who can see my stuff?' section, you can manage who is able to access your timeline. Next to 'Who can see your future posts?', click on 'Edit' to ensure that 'Friends' is selected.

Restricting who can contact me

Under the 'Who can contact me?' section, you can manage who is able to send you Facebook requests. Next to 'Who can contact me?', click on the 'Who can send you friend requests?' and select the appropriate setting.

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Restricting who can see your email address and mobile number

Under the 'Who can look me up' section, you can manage who can see your email address and phone number if you have provided one.

Next to 'Who can look you up using the email address you've provided?', click on 'Edit' and select either 'Friends' or 'Friends of Friends'. Click on 'Edit' next to 'Who can look you up using the phone number you provided?' and select either 'Friends' or 'Friends of Friends'.

Restricting a Facebook profile being searchable

Under to 'Who can look me up' section, you can manage if your Facebook page will show up in search engine searches such as Google. The 'Do you want other search engines to link to you timeline?' option should be set to 'no' and can be switched to 'yes' by sharing your timeline with everyone.

How do you block offensive users?

You can block offensive users on Facebook by selecting the 'Block' option on their timeline, or by accessing the Blocking page through Facebook's Account Settings.

To block a user, access their profile and select the 'More' option (signified by three dots) next to the 'Message' option on or under the person's cover photo. In the menu which appears, select the 'Block' option.

A dialog box will appear which provides options for dealing with the offensive user. This box will have different options depending on whether this person is already your friend. Select the 'Block' option to block the user.

Blocking a user will stop them from seeing your posts, tagging you, inviting you to events or groups, messaging you and adding you as a friend. If you are already friends, blocking a user will also unfriend him/her.

If you wish to report inappropriate content to Facebook you will need to do this before you block the user.
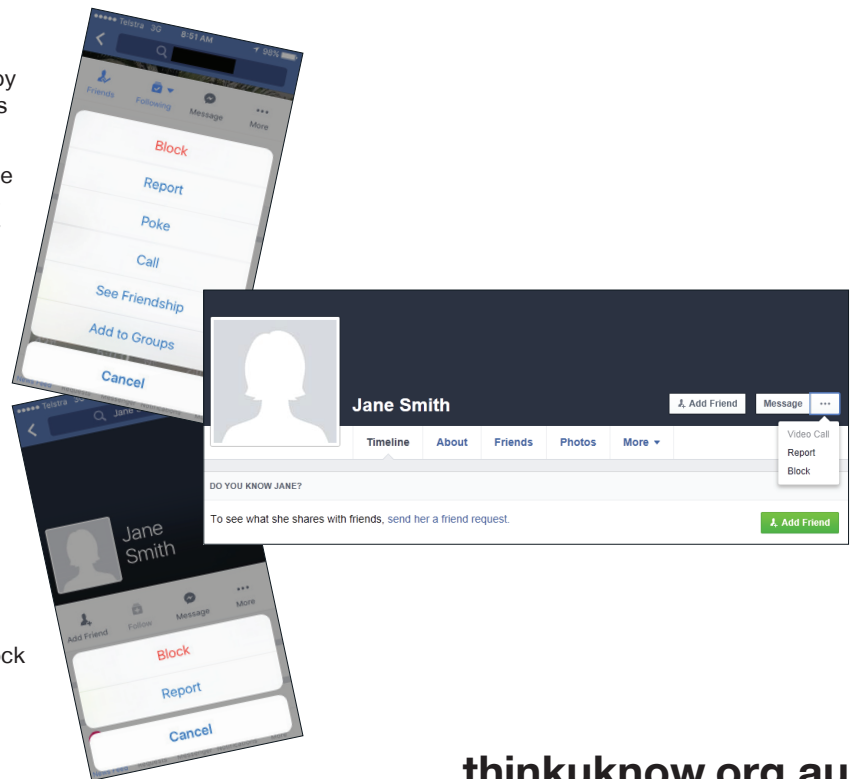
How do you report users or fake profiles?

To report a user or a fake profile on Facebook, access the profile's timeline and select the 'More' option (signified by three dots) next to the 'Message' option on or under the person's cover photo. In the menu which appears, select the 'Report' option.

In the corresponding dialog box, select 'Report this account' and then select the reason you wish to report the account. Follow the prompts to finalise your report.

More information

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/help

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