

Facebook : under age users ? (Children should be 13)

Children often get guidance in various forms from adults teaching them about appropriate behaviour depending on the social situation, (eg: at the dinner table / crossing the road / in a place of worship, cinema or library/ in the school playground, etc.)

Because online social networking is less than 10 yrs old - fewer adults feel confident / able to provide children with such guidance. Indeed many adults have little experience of socializing online. As a consequence, many children often explore online social areas with little guidance or awareness of the potential risks. Most schools have had issues dealing with online bullying & nastiness (especially on Facebook).

The use of an online learning environment in school provides plenty of learning opportunities, (using discussion forums, personal pages & blogs), to establish expectations, to discuss appropriate & inappropriate online behaviour, and to reinforce vital e-safety messages in a safe environment. Such learning is fundamental to the PSHE / SRE curriculum and can only put the children in good stead for their teen & adult life online.

If you have a child that persists in anti-social online behaviour you have the option of changing their MLE / learning platform password to deny them access for a while. This will act as an effective sanction and deterrent to other pupils. Be sure to sit with them and help them change the content they have posted online and adopt more appropriate behaviours.

If they are also on Facebook and are **repeatedly** anti-social online , ignoring the messages they've received from teachers & parents, then it's possible to get their Facebook account closed their by reporting them as an under age user. This will afford you with even greater influence over the children's online behaviour. (I'd urge this to be done sparingly and in consultation with the parents - as if you do it too much / too often / too readily, you'll lose the pupils' trust & respect and they'll just go underground using social networking sites that offer fewer safeguards.)

As a school, you need to discuss your ethos towards this. Will you ????

1. **Do nothing:** Let the children do whatever they might. This will likely result (sooner or later) in instances of online bullying and nastiness – or worse.
2. **Be over-reactive:** Report **all** primary age school children using Facebook as under age users. Initially, this will stop them in their tracks, but ultimately will probably result in the children joining some other online social network. (There are dozens). The children will be unlikely to discuss again with adults, their online activities. As teachers and parents, the opportunities to guide and influence children in this respect, will have been lost.
3. **Be proactive:** Recognise that children will find a way of signing up for some online social networks, that they often do so with their parents' knowledge, consent and assistance, and that to keep a dialogue going offers opportunities to advise and guide them. Educate them using the safer tools at your disposal (eg; in your school learning platform / learning environment).
Report as a last resort !!

How to report a child under the age of 13

You will need the URL of the under age child's Facebook profile. This will look something like: <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=7561504049>

Go to: www.facebook.com (you don't need to log in)
Bottom right of page – click **"Help"**

Click **"Report Something"** on the left menu

Click **"Tools for Parents & Educators"**

At the top of a list you'll see: **"How do I report a child under the age of 13"**
Click on the link: **"here"** in the **third paragraph**

Enter the child's:

- Facebook URL
- full Name
- email address used
- actual age

Enter your:

- relationship to the child
- school office email address

Type in something like:

- I work in ***** Primary school Ealing UK and have responsibility for Safeguarding & e-safety. This child is a pupil in the school.
School tel no: 00 44 020 8578 0??0

Click **Send**

Report an Underage Child

If you believe there is a child under the age of 13 using Facebook, please use this form to file a report.

URL of the profile you'd like to report	<input type="text"/>
Full name of the person you'd like to report	<input type="text"/>
Email address listed on the profile	<input type="text"/>
Networks the person belongs to Ex: San Francisco, CA	<input type="text"/>
Actual age of the child	<input type="text" value="Pick One"/>
Your relationship to the user	<input type="text" value="Pick One"/>
Your contact email address	<input type="text"/>
Additional relevant information or questions	<input type="text"/>

If you're reporting a child's account registered under a false date of birth, and the child's age is reasonably verifiable as under 13, we will promptly delete the account. You will not receive confirmation of this action, but you should no longer be able to view this child's profile on the site.

If the reported child's age is not reasonably verifiable as under 13, then we may not be able to take action on the account. In this case, if you are not the parent of this child, then we strongly recommend that you encourage a parent to contact us personally, using this form.