

Hamilton School

Striving to be a great school where people work together to transform lives

Socialising

The most common forms of online activity for young people nowadays are:

- Socialising
- Gaming
- Talking to people
- Searching
- Sharing
- Using a Mobile Phone

Socialising

Your child will be using services online to create a network of 'friends'. Social networking sites, like Facebook, encourage and enable your child to link with their friends so they can chat, keep up to date, share photos and videos... and their opinions of them!

Almost every site online now has a social element. Whether it is finding out what music your friends are buying, to reading their reviews of the latest films or games, increasingly we see the internet through the eyes of our friends.

To young people, their idea of an online 'friend' may be different to an offline 'friend'. Friends online might be your best mate, your entire school, friends of friends, people you meet gaming, or even just someone with a funny profile. Therefore, online 'friends' are likely to be a much larger group than friends in the real world.

Making someone your 'friend' gives them access to things you share – that could be; what you like, who you like and even where you live...Therefore, the larger the group of friends, the more people can see things about you. As you might expect, this can be risky.

Four Top Tips

1. Know who your friends are. Because 'friends' have access to their personal information and can chat to them, your children should only be friends with people that they trust. Talk to your child about who their 'friends' are, encourage them to think about where and when they 'met' people and whether it is appropriate to share information with them.
2. Manage the information you share with them. On most sites, children can control the amount of information they share with different groups of friends. For example, you might share some holiday snaps just with your family, or create a private invitation to a party. Your child should only share personal information, like their telephone number or school, with people they know and trust in the real world.
3. Never meet up with someone you only know online. People might not always be who they say they are. Make sure your child understands that they should never meet up with anyone they only know online without taking a trusted adult with them.
4. Know what to do if someone upsets you. Sometimes 'friends' can do things that are upsetting, it's important that you and your child are aware of what you can do to block or report this