Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board

# What is Facebook

Facebook is a profile base social media app, launched worldwide in 2006, which allows you to share pictures and videos with your friends. Every month, over 2 Billion users log into the app making it the largest social network on the planet. Facebook, as a parent company, also owns Instagram and WhatsApp.

The app itself offers a wealth of different features once you have created a profile, including:

**Private Messaging** - You can interact privately with other users by using the Facebook Messenger App. It will allow you to send pictures, links, emoji's and video chat through your mobile device.

**Groups** - Groups can be used to create public or private spaces to discuss common interests, hobbies or family groups. They can be set to public (anyone can join) or private (by invitation or request only)

**Pages** - Pages are used by businesses and celebrities to promote their products or services, very similar to a page on a website. Any user can create a page and other users are often invited to like them in order to see new posts on their news feed

**Location services** - Like most social media apps, Facebook offers a GPS based location service which allows users to 'check-in' to locations

You also have the ability to share the things you find online such as news articles, videos and pictures which can be posted directly to your profile without even opening the app. Friends can then comment on, 'Like' or share your content for their friends.

All of your friends posts will appear on the 'News Feed' which automatically shows you the content Facebook believe is most relevant to you, including posts from Pages you have liked, Groups you are part of and, of course, digital adverts.

# Do age restrictions apply?

Yes. All Facebook users should be over the age of 13, and the app will ask you to enter a valid date of birth before you can create your profile. Underage profiles can be reported to Facebook and they have a duty to remove them in order to comply with data protection legislation in the US. Reports can be filed by visiting the following page— https://www.facebook.com/help/contact/209046679279097

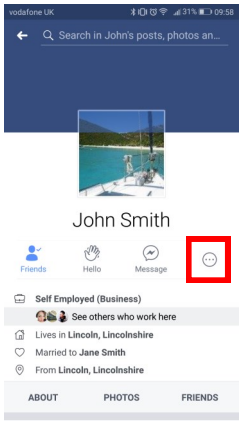
# Are there any privacy settings/controls?

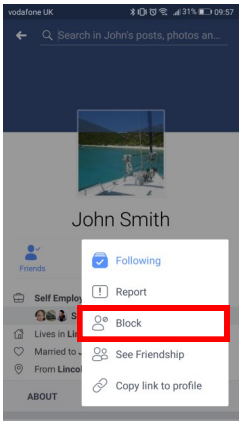
Yes. Facebook has a range of privacy controls to enable its users to choose the 'audience' for their posts. This can include all your friends, friends of your friends or public, meaning any Facebook user may be able to see it. Unlike other social media apps, Facebook gives you a huge amount of control over what people can see so it's vital that time is spent looking at the privacy controls offered before posting anything.

It's also important to regularly check your privacy settings as Facebook adds new features on a regular basis which may impact on what information can be seen.

Facebook also offers a blocking system to stop users from accessing your account or contacting you, a feature offered on all social net-works. To block a user simple visit their profile, click on the 3 dots (as shown opposite) and then click the 'Block' option.

You can unblock users if you want to by visiting the Blocked list under settings but once unblocked, you won't be able to block them again for at least 24 hours.



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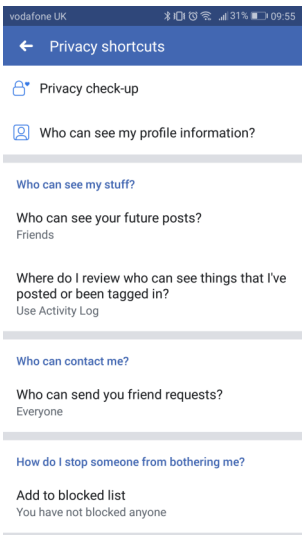
# Things to think about

## Personal Information




Unlike apps such as Instagram and Snapchat, Facebook gives you the ability to share an incredible amount of personal information with friends or with complete strangers. While the use of privacy controls are vital to safeguard our personal info, so is being mindful of the information we do share with our friends. Adults and children should be encouraged to keep personal info such as location, holiday dates and pictures of their children in school uniform to a minimum.

Recent studies conducted with children and young people have found that many children feel uncomfortable with the level of personal information shared about them by their parents, many feeling unable to raise their concerns with the adults in their life. Promote the sharing of appropriate information and lead by example, this will encourage our children to assess the level of personal information they feel comfortable sharing. If we as parents don't ask if a picture is OK to post, why would our children?

Children and young people are also much more fearless when posting information online and often don't understand how this can be used. There are many videos online which show just how quickly and easily your information can be found and used. Encourage your children to keep their account private but also to think about what is safe to share and what is not safe.

## Fake News

While fake news articles can appear anywhere, Facebook seems to be a place where they can be spread to a much larger audience of your closest friends. Recent studies have found that we are much more likely to share a story (regardless of how reliable the source is) if we trust the friend who shared it, sometimes without even reading the article in question! Adults and young people alike should be encouraged to fully read everything before they share it and to look past the shocking and misleading headlines (known as 'clickbait')

Many fact checking websites such as Snopes.com, now exists to help users identify fake or misleading stories. Always check the source of the post and if in doubt, always Google search the story first.

## Want to learn more?

Digital safety video from Barclaycard:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w2tW50CD6Aw

Facebook Safety Centre:
https://www.facebook.com/safety

Report including simplified Terms and Conditions for Facebook:
http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publications/growing-digital

If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child, you can call Lincolnshire Police on 101 or, in an emergency, dial 999