



Rough Guide to Social Media Use for Teens with Autism

WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

- Social media is a great way to **stay connected** with friends and to make new ones from all over the globe
- It's an **information source** – you can get lots of opinions in one place
- **Share your thoughts** with others in confidence and with respect
- A sense of **community** by interacting with people with similar passions



"There are risks. You just have to be aware"



Want to learn more?

Social Media Safety:

www.childnet.com/young-people
www.childline.org/stayingonline
www.digizen.org

Autism Information and Support:

www.asd-forum.org.uk
www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk

"It's peopling completely on my terms!"



TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE SAFETY

1

Think carefully about what you post. Once online, it is there permanently

2

Never give out personal details (address, telephone number) or passwords

3

Remember, not everyone online is who they say they are



4

Don't arrange to meet anyone you meet online before discussing with an adult

5

Report comments and block other people if they offend you or make you upset



6

You can always take a pause before responding to someone if you feel upset or you don't know what they mean



"I can generate discussion with lots of people who are similarly passionate"



Rough Guide to Social Media Use for Parents of Teens with Autism



BENEFITS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Interaction with others – on **their own terms and in their own time**

Exposure to different **points of view** and experiences

Meet other teens with autism and with **similar interests**

Develop and practice articulating own **opinions and beliefs**

“You can celebrate being part of a community”



“It’s a chance for him to escape”

“It helps her to feel more connected to other people”

RISKS AND HOW TO MANAGE THEM

Keep talking

Stay interested in your child’s online activity and encourage an open conversation



Understand what is appropriate to share

Agree what your child can share on their own, and what needs to be approved by you first



Discourage engagement with trolls/cyberbullies

Emphasise that they can ignore or report any interaction that does not feel safe or kind. Encourage your child to access groups which actively protect members from harmful comments through restrictions and guidelines.



Struggling to understand jokes, sarcasm, lies or irony

Discuss examples of these with your child. Help them to be critical to determine what is reliable



Further resources for parents

Child/Teen Online Safety:

- www.childnet.com
- www.saferinternet.org.uk
- www.parentport.org.uk
- www.btogether.co.uk

Autism Online Groups:

- www.community.autism.org.uk

Also, be aware of sites and apps which don’t focus on social networking but still allow users to comment or contact each other. Make sure your child knows how to control who can contact them and how to report inappropriate messages



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