



Following an increase in calls concerning children and young people's safety online Bedfordshire Police is asking all parents and guardians to ensure they have a conversation with their children about keeping safe in a digital world.

The following guidelines have been designed to help parents and carers assist their children enjoy social media in a safe digital environment.

**Show me - Ask your child to show you the sites they use** Show an interest, take note of the sites your children visit and re-visit them later when you are alone. Find out how to set the safety features and how to report any issues directly to the site.

**Low profile - Ask your child to set profile settings to private** Since children use social media sites to share just about everything they do, setting their profile to private can help protect them against photos, personal information or even location in the real world ending up in the wrong hands.

**Just ask - Ask your child about their online friends** Help your children understand that people can create fake identities online and lie about who they are. They should only give out personal information and be "friends" with people they know and trust in the real world

**Photo check - Ask your child to only share photos that they wouldn't mind showing you first!** Talk to your child about the images they send, the sites and apps they use to share them and who they are sending them to.

**Don't worry - Ask your child to tell you if they are worried about something online** By talking to your child about the internet, their favourite sites and the risks they may encounter, they are more likely to turn to you if they get into situations online where they don't feel comfortable or see something they don't want to see..

Additional information about online safety can be found at [www.nspcc.org.uk/shareaware](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/shareaware) - the site is specifically aimed at parents and guardians, looking at how to talk to children about keeping safe online and giving the tools required to have the confidence to tackle such conversations.

If you are concerned about any content or activity on your child's internet and social networking sites then please contact Bedfordshire Police by calling 101 or visit our the Bedfordshire Police website [www.bedfordshire.police.co.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.police.co.uk)