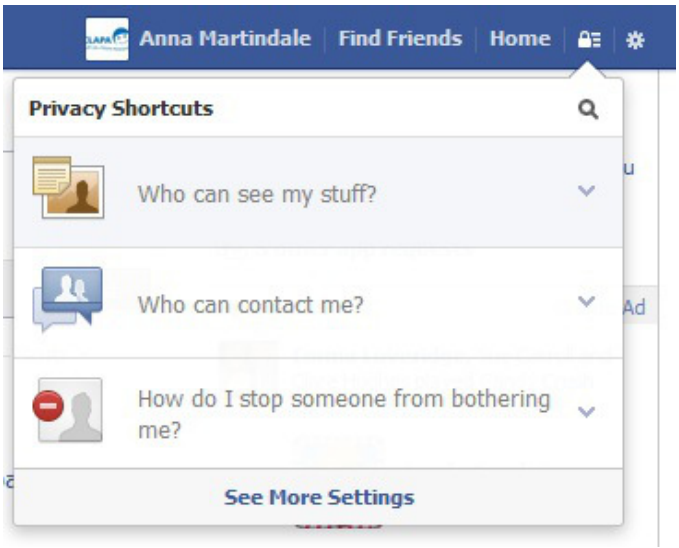
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Staying Safe on Social Media

Social Media sites like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have exploded in popularity over the past five years. Not only are they a wonderful tool for charities to start meaningful conversations with their supporters, but they're also a part of most people's everyday lives. With a whopping 98% of young people using social media in some way, it's important to know how to keep safe and create a fun and respectful environment online. Here are some of our tips to help you do just that:

Don't use social media websites if you're underage! The minimum age to set up a Facebook or Twitter profile is 13, and for good reason, as these sites aren't set up for younger people.

Privacy



Make sure you **understand your privacy settings**, and that you're not giving out a lot of personal information to people you don't know. Facebook's privacy setting often change without very much warning, so make sure you check often to see who can access what you post by clicking the security button at the top right. You can also make your tweets, blog and other profiles private to protect yourself.

Even if you're very careful about your privacy settings, a good general rule is that **you shouldn't post anything on the internet that you wouldn't want the whole world to see**, because once it's online it's very difficult to get rid of it completely. This includes photos, statuses and comments. Even in private messaging you should be careful, as all it takes are a few clicks to make the private public.

Be **very careful when giving out personal information** like your phone number, email or home address, and **never** give this out to people you don't know. You should also be careful when posting up information about events or parties, or when you parents will or won't be at home, as if this becomes public it could have serious consequences. The news is full of stories about teenagers who have found their parties gatecrashed by hundreds of strangers – keep the information **private** and don't let it happen to you!

Cyber Bullying

Your social media accounts are *yours*, and you can choose who you follow and friend. **Don't feel bad about blocking or removing someone who makes you feel uncomfortable**, especially if they're sending you nasty messages or posting things you'd rather not see. Social media should be a safe space for you to share with your friends, and you should do what you can to keep it that way! If you don't feel

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comfortable blocking or unfriending someone in case they get upset, most sites (including facebook) have a 'hide' function so you don't have to see anything they post.

Don't say anything online that you wouldn't say in your day-to-day life. It's easy to feel like the internet isn't the same as real life, but hurtful comments and messages are just as hurtful online, and they may come back to haunt you later on. As always, you should be polite, respectful and treat others how you would like to be treated.

If you're being **bothered or harrassed** by someone online, or if you have any other concerns about your safety on social media sites, always **tell an adult**. This doesn't have to be your parents, it could be someone else you trust like a teacher or counsellor at school. They will be able to take the appropriate steps to make sure you're safe.

If you receive any inappropriate, hurtful or offensive comments, pictures or messages, tell someone about it and always keep a copy somewhere safe as this may be needed as evidence. Remember that bullying online is the same as abuse offline – it's still a serious issue and you can still do something about it!



CLAPA's Young People Group

The Young People's CLAPA Group on Facebook is a private group which is moderated by CLAPA staff who try to make it as safe an environment as possible. We make sure that everyone who joins is under 18, and that anyone who shouldn't be in there is removed. The group is there for you to talk to other young people with a cleft safe in the knowledge that it's kept private and secure, but there are a few things you should still remember:

- The group is *private* but not *secret*. This means that while other people can't see the posts, they *can* see that the group exists and that you are a member, as well as who the other members are. This is so that other young people on facebook can find the group when they search for it, and can proactively ask to join.
- CLAPA Staff can't monitor the group 24/7, so if you see something inappropriate then please report it to facebook, mark it as spam, or message one of the admins. Remember – it's your space so help us make it safe for you!

To find out more about staying safe online, check out SaferInternet.org

If you have a smartphone, you can use a QR scanner to scan this code to visit the Young People's Facebook Group:

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