



SEXUAL INTEGRITY INITIATIVE

A resource of CPYU and Project Six19

PROJECT
SIX19



HELPING TEENS SET SOCIAL MEDIA BOUNDARIES

| By Julia Feeser

As a parent, it can be difficult to know how to monitor your teens social media use without becoming overly involved. But as social media continues to dominate the way teens' friendships, romantic relationships and identities are formed and play out, it's important to be aware of just what is going on online and how they are being impacted by it.

While most teens are using standard social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, many teens also have accounts on sites you may be less familiar with, such as:

- **Snapchat:** App that allows users to take photos and quick videos and share them with other Snapchat members. Snapchat is known as the "disappearing photo" app because shared photos and videos will disappear after a certain number of seconds.
- **Ask.fm:** Site where users can invite questions from other users on the site or from anonymous users. Ask.fm has been the subject of much criticism because of the amount of cyber bullying it produces.
- **Yik Yak:** Allows users to anonymously create and view "Yaks" within a 10 mile radius. Differs from other anonymous sharing apps in that it is intended for sharing primarily with those in close proximity to the user, potentially making it more intimate and relevant for people reading the posts.
- **Tumblr:** Service that allows users to post multimedia and other content to a short-form blog.



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Keep in mind that social media trends are constantly in flux, so it's important to be as up-to-date as possible with what platforms your teen is using. One way to stay up-to-date is to use the tools that can be found online at CPYU's Digital Kids Initiative (digitalkidsinitiative.com).

Boundaries

Access to passwords: If your teen is going to have any type of social media account, require they provide you with their passwords. You may want to establish a routine of checking their accounts once a week, letting your teen know you will be doing so. This will also allow you to be familiar with how each social media platform works and how your teen may be using it.

Establish a schedule: Social media can easily be all consuming. Establish a daily cut off time when your teen is no longer allowed to access their main social media, such as after 9:00 PM on a school night or after 11:00 PM on the weekend.

Keep computers public: If you have a desktop computer in your home, keep it in a public area of the house or, if it's in an office, require your teen to leave the door open if they're using it. If your teen has a laptop, establish specific time limits for when they want to use it in their room.

Know the threats: For most tech savvy teens these days, online threats come primarily in the form of cyberbullying and peer relations. It's important to stay up to date with social media trends and be aware of your teen's interactions on their accounts.

One of the best things you can do for your teen when it comes to social media is establishing open communication about the boundaries you have created. The more trusted your teen feels, the less likely they will be to try to hide what goes on in their online world.

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For additional information or resources to help kids navigate their sexuality, visit the Center for Parent/Youth Understanding and Project Six19's Sexual Integrity Initiative website at SexualIntegrityInitiative.com.

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