How to use social media in a positive way and stay safe

Be your own person. Don't let friends or people you don't know pressure you to be someone you aren't. Be yourself and don't pretend to be like anyone else.

Be kind. Always treat people the way you'd want to be treated. People who are aggressive online are at greater risk of being bullied or harassed themselves, too. If someone's nasty to you, try not to react. It's good to talk to a trusted adult or friend who can help. Use privacy tools to block anyone being horrible to you and report posts if necessary.

Don't measure your own life based on what others post. People usually post their best photos and stories online and don't usually share their negative moments or unflattering photos. Don't assume that others have better lives than you do, based on what they post.

Think about what you post. Sharing provocative photos or intimate details online, even in private chats, can cause you problems later on. Even people you consider friends can use this info against you, especially if you fall out with each other.

Passwords are private. Don't share your password even with friends. It's hard to imagine, but friendships do change and you don't want to be impersonated by anyone. Pick a password you can remember but no one else can guess.

Be cautious. It may be fun to check out new people for friendship or more, but be aware that while some people are genuine, others put on an act because they're trying to get something. Flattering or supportive messages may be more about manipulation than friendship.

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Don't talk about sex. Be careful when communicating with people you don't know in person, especially if the conversation turns to sex or physical details. Don't lead them on – you don't want to be the target of a predator's grooming.

Avoid in-person meetings. The only way someone can physically harm you is if you're both in the same location, so, to be 100% safe, don't meet them in person. If you really must get together with someone you met online, do not go alone. Have the meeting in a public place, tell a parent or some other solid backup, and bring some friends along.

Be smart when using a smartphone. All the same tips apply with phones as with computers along with some extra precautions. Be careful who you give your number to and how you use GPS and other technologies that can pinpoint your physical location. Be sure to secure your phone with a PIN, password, fingerprint or facial recognition.