

3 boundaries to help teens use social media safely

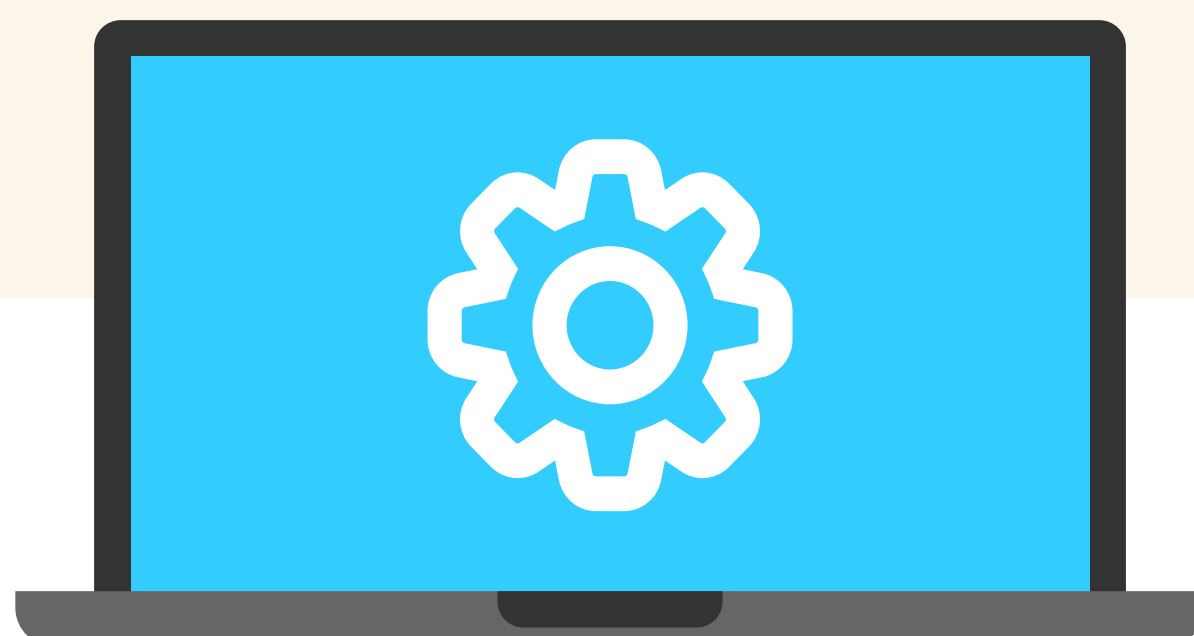


1. Set privacy settings to the highest level

Strong privacy settings reduce unwanted contact and exposure.

- Keep accounts private by default
- Turn off contact syncing and location sharing
- Limit contact to people they know offline and manage who can send them messages, comment on their posts and tag or mention them
- Keep their real name, school and location out of their bio or profile
- Review followers together and remove unknown accounts

► See our Social media parental controls advice hub for more support

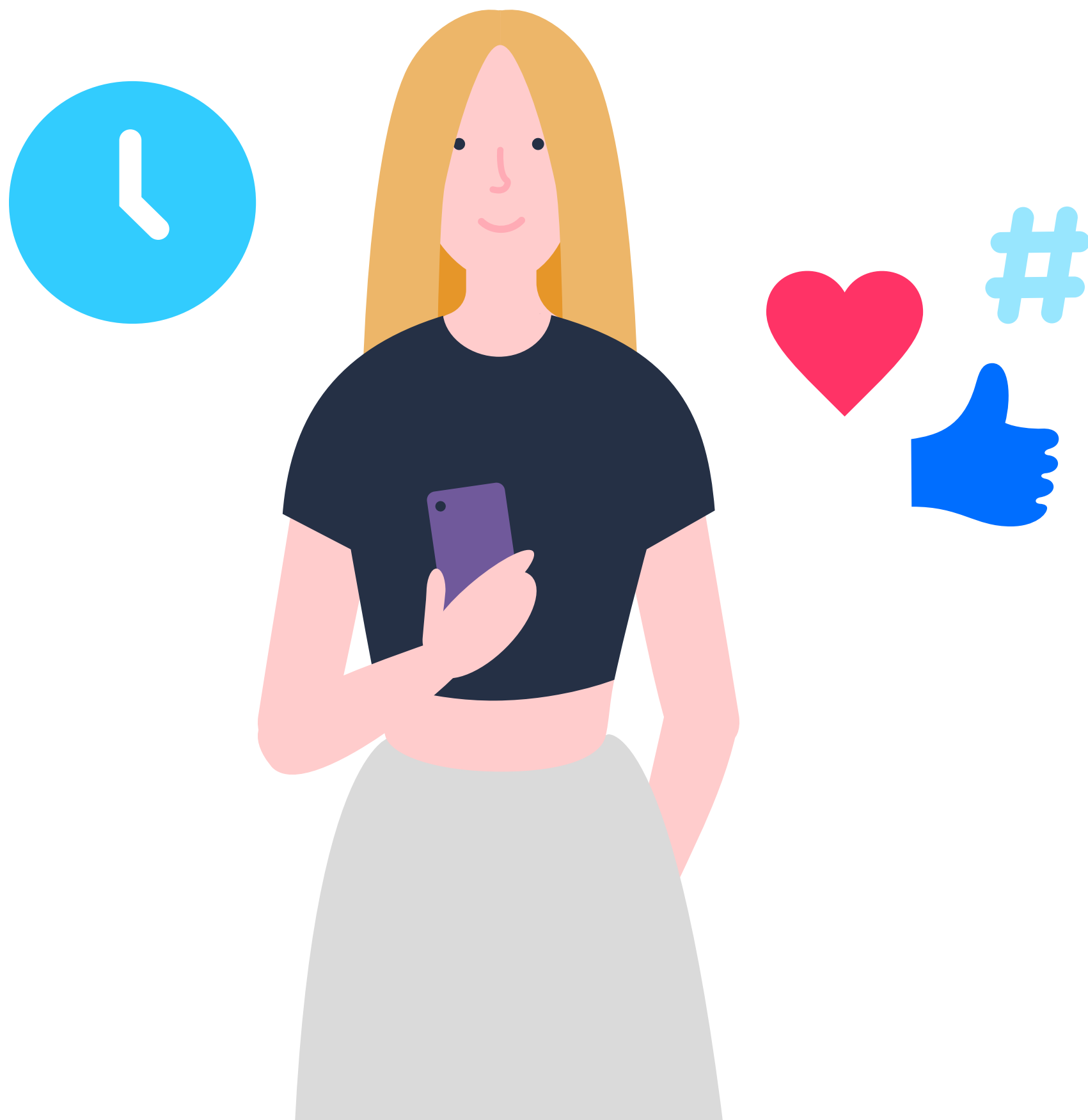


2. Encourage intentional use of social media (not just less use)

It's not just about time spent, it's about how children are engaging and how it makes them feel.

- **Agree on purpose, not just limits** – chatting, learning, creating (Gently ask: did you choose this, or did it choose you?)
- **Use screen time tools as a conversation starter, not just a limit** (What did you enjoy? What felt like a waste?)
- **Create natural stopping points** – after a video, not mid-scroll (Apps are designed to keep them going – so expect some resistance)
- **Check in on impact:**
 - “Did that leave you feeling better or worse?”
 - “Did you feel in control, or did it keep pulling you in?”

▶ [Go to our social media advice hub for bespoke advice](#)



3. Talk about what to do if something goes wrong

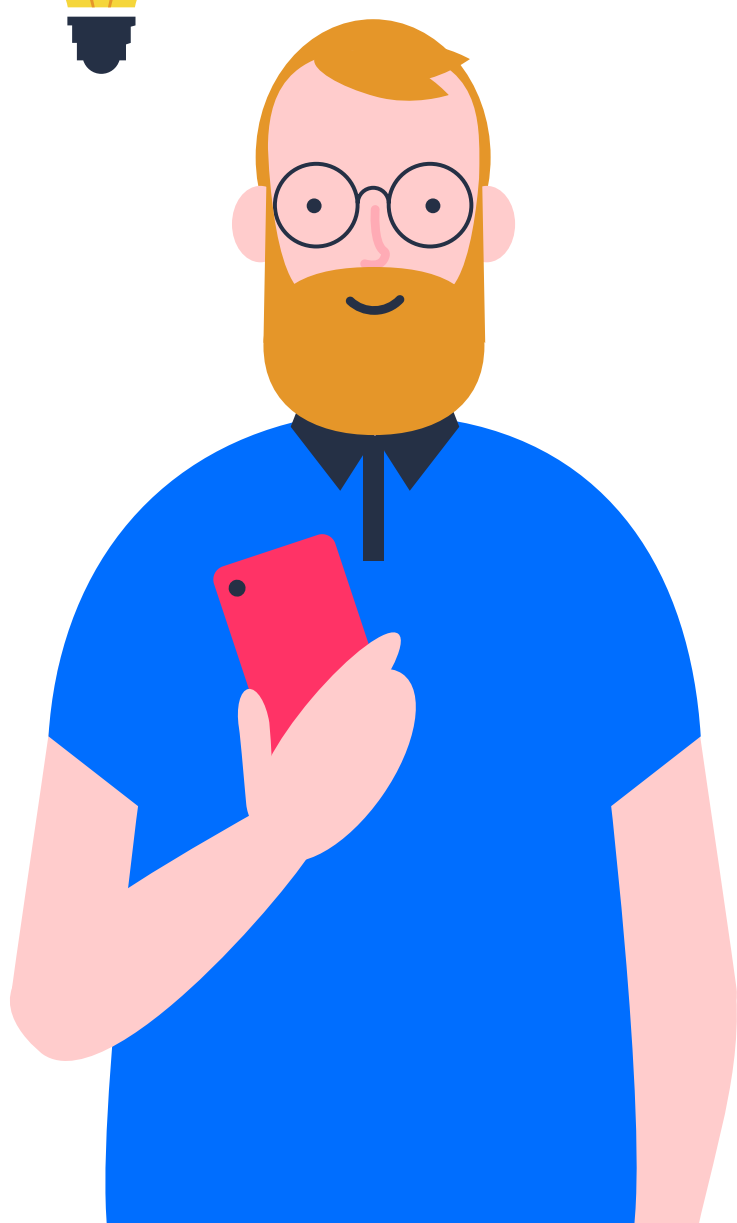
Children often don't speak up because they're worried their access will be taken away.

- Make it clear: they won't get in trouble for telling you
- Agree simple steps:
 - stop engaging
 - block the account
 - report the content
- Show them how to [report on the platforms they use](#)
- Keep communication open, don't wait for a problem



Make it stick: Turn rules into agreements, not punishments

- ▶ Use our family agreement to agree ground rules together.



Lastly, don't forget your own social media use

Ask yourself:

- Am I modelling healthy screen habits?
- Do we have device-free family time?
- How do I talk about social media?

Small change, big impact:
Children are more likely to follow boundaries they see.



Explore practical advice, parental controls and age guides at Internet Matters

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