



13- What Is So Special About That Number? (Social Networks and Your Child)



Parents- Did You Know?

Facebook, MySpace, Bebo, Xanga- Almost all online social networks set a minimum age of 13 to join. Why age 13? COPPA (Children's Online Privacy Protection Act) is a federal law that is meant to protect children on the Internet. The government considers anyone under the age of 13 to be a "child". Students 13 and older are not considered children that need as much protection as younger children. Websites that target children as their audience must follow strict guidelines to assure their safety including parental consent, monitoring, and limiting personal information collected.

Most social network Websites do not want to be responsible for following these COPPA rules so they instead limit their members to those who are 13 and older. It is estimate that millions of underage children have accounts in these social online networks.



Question- What is a social network site? It is a virtual community where people create "profiles" to post pictures, videos, blogs, and information about themselves to share with friends and family.

Question- Is it ok for a child (12 and under) to have a Facebook or Myspace account of their own with parent's consent? According in Federal COOPA laws and Website terms of agreement- **the answer is no.**

Some things to consider- Most social networks do not monitor videos and pictures uploaded nor do they monitor chat rooms or instant messaging.

Question- Are there social network sites designed for and safe for children under the age of 13? **Yes!** [Club Penguin](#), [Webkinz](#), and [Neopets](#) are a few examples. Other Websites such as [ed.voicethread.com](#) and [wikispaces.com](#) are designed for children and teens to use in an educational setting where a teacher monitors their communication.

Please visit Mr. Lyons' Internet Safety for Kids Webpage for several great safety sites, brochures, and documents for parents.

<https://staff.canoncityschools.org/internet-safety-for-kids/>



Mark Lyons

McKinley Technology Teacher