TUAKIRITANGA & SOCIAL MEDIA

Navigating identity & communication, safely, on social media.

KEY MESSAGES

1.
We all have a role to play in supporting our tamariki as they learn and grow online/in an online world.

2.
Supporting our tamariki with their wellbeing, identity and communication online and on social media is an ongoing journey.

3.
Having access to social media might be a privilege, but the access you give to others to you through your social media is always a privilege.

4.
Maintaining a tone of curiosity rather than judgment towards their social media use will be much more meaningful when trying to build a positive and trusting relationship with your tamariki.

5.
The wellbeing of our tamariki is all of our responsibility.

6.
We need to understand and stay in touch with the ever-changing online world our tamariki live in so we can support them when they need it.

INTRODUCTION

This resource aims to support all those who care for our tamariki to teach them safe online social skills and how to navigate identity and communication on social media platforms. Whether you are a parent or a caregiver, a nanny, a big brother, aunty, koro or older peer – we all have a role to play in supporting our tamariki as they grow and learn in this world, particularly online.

Today, our tamariki have the added challenge of growing up online, navigating social media platforms and processing an increasing amount of information – all while learning real life skills and figuring out who they are along the way.

While there are challenges to navigate, social media is not all bad, it can have a positive impact on mental health and our identity, as long as we ensure we have some tikanga haumaru – protective and guiding mechanisms in place.

Tuakiri (identity) is an important part of the lives of our young people, it is not just who they are or how they see themselves – their tuakiri includes their inner being, their language, culture and relationships. It is their pepeha, their whakapapa, tapu, mana, mauri and the inner taonga, or treasures, that they possess and bring forth to the world. As our tamariki grow into their own tuakiri (identity), they will be navigating an online or digital identity also.

There are increasing social pressures and new challenges that our tamariki face online. There are also changing expectations on how they must represent themselves online and engage with others. So it's important we treat our tamariki online and social media spaces with the same consideration we give to their offline lives. For example – we wouldn't typically encourage our child or young teenager to walk up to an adult stranger on the street and show them a video of them dancing nor would we allow our child to stay over at a friend's house unless we knew or had spoken to the parents of the friend.

How can we support our young people to think about protecting their safety and wellbeing online in the same way we teach them to in the offline world?

Our role as parents, caregivers and whānau is to look after and look out for the safety and wellbeing of our tamariki. We can do the same for them online. Our tamariki are increasingly being exposed to harmful content that can be detrimental to their tuakiri – particularly their tapu, mana and mauri. This resource provides you some guidance on ways to create and nurture safer online spaces for your tamariki.

Step 1: Kia mātou, familiarise yourself with the apps or platforms your tamariki are using (See our Social Media 101 guides).

Step 2: Noho tahi, sit with your tamaiti and try to get into their world. This may mean putting aside your judgment and instead seeing the world through their eyes.

Step 3: Kōrero tahi, share the importance of gaining each others' trust with device and social media use, stay curious and ask them questions about what they use and why.

Step 4: Whai tikanga, use the tikanga haumaru shared throughout the resource (or create your own) to support an ongoing conversation about safe social media use and to support you to build a trusting relationship with your tamaiti.

HE TAPU TE TANGATA, HE MANA TŌNA

Each person is sacred and has innate potential and authority

The online world and the social media platforms your tamariki engage in are now so integrated in their everyday lives. This can make things a bit blurry when it comes to what they share with the world, what they consume online and how they engage with their peers both on and offline. Your young ones might find it harder to tell the difference between their online selves and their offline selves, and for them to understand how what they do or say online might impact someone.

We can use this as an opportunity to remind our tamariki of the tapu and mana of not only themselves, but the tapu and mana of those they interact with online. Whether there is a device or screen between them and the other person or not – he mana, he tapu hoki tōna - they have their own innate potential and authority as a person.

Tuakiri is something that is not fixed, while there are some parts of us that won't change, our tuakiri will change and shift over time as we learn and grow. It is important that our tamariki are intentional about the access they give others to themselves, to their identity, to their tapu and mana as this process naturally occurs.

Your tamaiti might not agree with you as to what is appropriate and what is not (e.g. slang/offensive/derogatory language they are using or hearing, or stories, videos or photos that they are sharing with others online etc.). However, it is our role as parents, caregivers and whānau to guide them and set some safe boundaries not only for themselves now, but also for their future selves.

Some examples that may be helpful for you to use when you have a kōrero with your tamaiti/tamariki about this:

- 'You might think that using the word _____ is just a joke, but it might be hurtful for someone else who reads it'
- 'You cannot trust that the person receiving that photo will keep it to themselves'
- 'Re-sharing videos with violence in them doesn't align with our values as a whānau and it doesn't uphold the mana of others'
- 'It's not always necessary to comment on posts that you have a negative reaction to, you might say something you regret, now or later'

DIGITAL MARAE

Work with your tamaiti to create their own digital marae. Marae are sanctified spaces that have clear boundaries, expectations and rituals of engagement. By creating a (metaphorical) digital marae, you and your tamaiti are able to work together to set some parameters of safety and guidelines of how to engage online. You might like to draw the marae, create a canva, or even just talk about it, whatever works best for you and your young ones.

My digital marae:

1. What is the kawa of my marae or what are acceptable and unacceptable things to do or say on the platforms I use
Identify the types of photos or videos that are acceptable to post or share on their profiles

2. Who are the manuhiri that I welcome into my spaces
Identify who I can be friends with, follow, or let follow me on each of the social media platforms I use

3. Who are my pou or my support people who I go to if I need some help or guidance
Saving phone numbers of key support people onto their devices or setting up a group chat with their support people

4. How do I whakanoa or return to a state of balance and mauri tau after being online
Having a short ritual I do when I finish spending time on my device, like having a stretch, saying a short karakia, taking a short walk outside or even having a conversation with someone nearby

HE MAURI TŌ TE TANGATA, HE WHAKAPAPA TŌNA

There is a life force and energy within everyone, and they each have their whakapapa.

Social media provides a space for people to connect and to interact – it can even be a way of strengthening or building our whakapapa. Whakapapa is not just your genealogy, it is a process, it is understanding how everything and everyone is connected, it allows you to identify your place, and your responsibilities in relation to others.

We can encourage our tamariki to see everyone they engage with online as a whole person, including their whakapapa and their mauri. By encouraging our tamariki to see everyone online in this way we are supporting them to be intentional with their connections.

There may be some pages or people they follow or are 'friends' with online that might bring negativity into their digital space, which can impact their mauri. There may be people they interact with online that they have never met. Or there may be content being shared carelessly by others that is harmful to your tamaiti.

By encouraging our tamariki to be intentional with the people they connect with online, this allows them to be more intentional with the content they consume or engage in, looking after their whole selves, including their whakapapa and mauri.

PROACTIVE PANUKU (SCROLL)

Take some time to check in – sit and scroll with your tamaiti:

- What pages do they follow?
- What types of videos do they watch or share?
- What types of TikTok videos do they make?
- Who are they friends with or connected to?

As you scroll with them, it may be helpful to ask them some questions along the way,

- After watching some TikTok videos (for example), ask how they feel?
- After reading someone's Instagram post (for example), ask what they think?
- After reading some comments from others on a post/video, ask what they might like to say?
- After seeing their friends list, ask who have they met in real life and who haven't they met yet?

These questions might prompt some further conversations, but at the very least you will be able to check how your tamaiti is responding to the online world/s they are a part of and how their mauri is positively or negatively impacted by what they are seeing, reading or hearing. You may even get a better idea of how mature they are.

He whakatūpato!

Remind your tamaiti, that everything we do, say, share, like or watch online becomes a part of our **digital footprint.** You may be able to delete or remove something from your device or social media platform – but there are many ways to trace things, someone may have taken a screenshot!

Consent is an important component of social media to discuss with your tamariki. Talk to them about their expectations of others (their friends, peers etc) with regard to consent. Do they ask their friends if it is okay to post photos of them before doing so? Or do they expect this of their friends? This might be an opportunity to review your own approach to consent as a parent, we often don't ask for our children's permission to post photos or videos of them on our own social media platforms.

There is no right or wrong way to support your tamariki to safely navigate the online world, their identity and communications. The best we can do is ensure we proactively check in and keep the kōrero going. You and your tamaiti/tamariki might stumble along the way – but that's okay! Stay open, curious and keep coming back to it.

Access to social media is a privilege, so is access to you!

HE MANA TŌ TE KUPU

Words have great power

YOUR WORDS HAVE POWER

Words have the power to heal, just as they have the power to harm. Words have the power to connect, just as they have the power to divide. This is something that is important for our tamariki to understand. Just as they themselves carry their own mana, so do their words. In a world that values instant communication, where socialising takes place online, where school work is completed in a Google Classroom, it is increasingly important that our tamariki are well prepared for effective, safe and meaningful online communication.

While many whānau do communication differently in their everyday lives, at home and at school, there are some universal rules or assumptions for online communication that are helpful to be aware of:

1. Whatever you write and send online as a private message, public post or comment - you can never 100% remove it or 'take it back'.
- Someone may have taken a screenshot
- You may have deleted it from your device, but you can't always delete it from the receiver's device

2. You can't always know who is actually receiving or reading the message, public post or comment on the other end. Even if you sent it to a specific person!
- Their phone may be in the possession of someone else
- They may have someone sitting with them reading
- They might forward it or screenshot it and send to someone else

3. There is a difference between the intent of something, versus the way it impacts someone.
- E.g. a photo caption, an emoji used, a comment.

4. People are not always who they appear.
- E.g. catfishing, false identities used for scamming

Follow Netsafe if you need to report anything:
https://report.netsafe.org.nz/hc/en-au/requests/new

Netsafe also explains what is illegal online through the Harmful Digital Communications Act:
https://netsafe.org.nz/what-is-the-hdca/

WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO

Work with your tamaiti/tamariki to set some communication guidelines. It is important as their parent/caregiver that you set some foundation rules and then perhaps ask some questions to allow them to extend on the guidelines as appropriate.

- Never give out, share or post your personal information (your home address, your school, where you work, any bank or card information, the address of family or friends)

It may be helpful to ask some of the following questions when coming up with your guidelines together,

- What kind of things are more appropriate to say face-to-face first? Communication in person is usually more meaningful, but remind your tamaiti that it does take practice.
- Have you ever received a message or comment that was hurtful? Your tamaiti might be more likely to commit to not sending or saying hurtful things if they remember how it may have felt for themselves.
- Have you ever misinterpreted or miscommunicated a message or comment online? Sometimes following up a message in person or over the phone might help to make sure the message was clear.

CONCLUSION

We all have a role to play in supporting our tamariki as they learn and grow online and in an online world. Encouraging conversations between older and younger siblings, grandparents, aunties, uncles, parents of friends and even teachers is important to ensure everyone is on the same page and has the same information and support, particularly in a rapidly developing online world.

You won't get it right every time, and that's okay, keep coming back to the kōrero or situation with an open heart and mind. Apply and adapt any of the tikanga haumaru or tips shared in this resource as they fit for your whānau. Supporting our young ones with their wellbeing, identity and communication online and on social media is an ongoing journey, kia kaha rā, kia ngākaupai, kia manawanui!

HE ORANGA NGĀKAU, HE PIKINGA WAIORA.

Positive feelings in your heart will enhance your sense of self-worth.