

Using Skype in school

Skype offers a free solution to communicate via instant message, voice and video with anyone, virtually anywhere in the world. For young people ICT is not a novelty but the way they engage with their 21st century world.

What's the risk?

Typically social networking sites like Skype give a user the ability to share personal information, photos, names addresses, etc. and because Skype is a form of synchronous communication, a young user is more susceptible to be caught off guard and:

- not realise that anyone on Skype who searches for you can add you as a contact and contact you
- may be attracted by the thumbnail photo of the person calling
- feel flattered that someone has contacted them
- may want to make a new friend
- think they had been referred by someone they know
- not be aware that snapshots, audio and/or video recordings or even full screen capturing of a Skype session could be made without their knowledge.

While social networking sites are fun and offer great possibilities for children, there are potential risks including cyberbullying, contact by adults with a sexual interest in children and the misuse of personal information. However there may not be an issue – a 9 year old using Skype may be doing so alongside an adult to keep in touch with distant friends or relatives.

What can schools do?

Schools have a duty of care - both inside and outside school. Head teachers have the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils off site (Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Most social networking sites and social media sites have age restrictions, typically 13+ and therefore their use is discouraged for primary school pupils. It is not recommended that schools use Skype – there are safer alternatives. Check that you state explicitly in your e-safety / behaviour / exclusion (and other related) policies that there is an expected code of conduct when using these technologies, whether the incident takes place in or out of school - if it impacts on the school.

However there may come a point when there is nothing you can do and there is no solution so you will need to manage the risk in school:

- Follow the normal child protection procedure
- If you are not confident about your judgement seek advice from a colleague, your Designated Person for child protection or The ICT Service via the helpline 0845 0450973



- If you know that children in your care are accessing Skype at home then recommend to parents that they update privacy settings using the information on the back of this sheet.

Updating Privacy Options in Skype

Your privacy settings control who can contact you via Skype, how long your IM history is kept and is used to manage blocked users. It's worth adjusting these before getting started using Skype.

To change your privacy settings select **Skype > Privacy** in the menu bar.

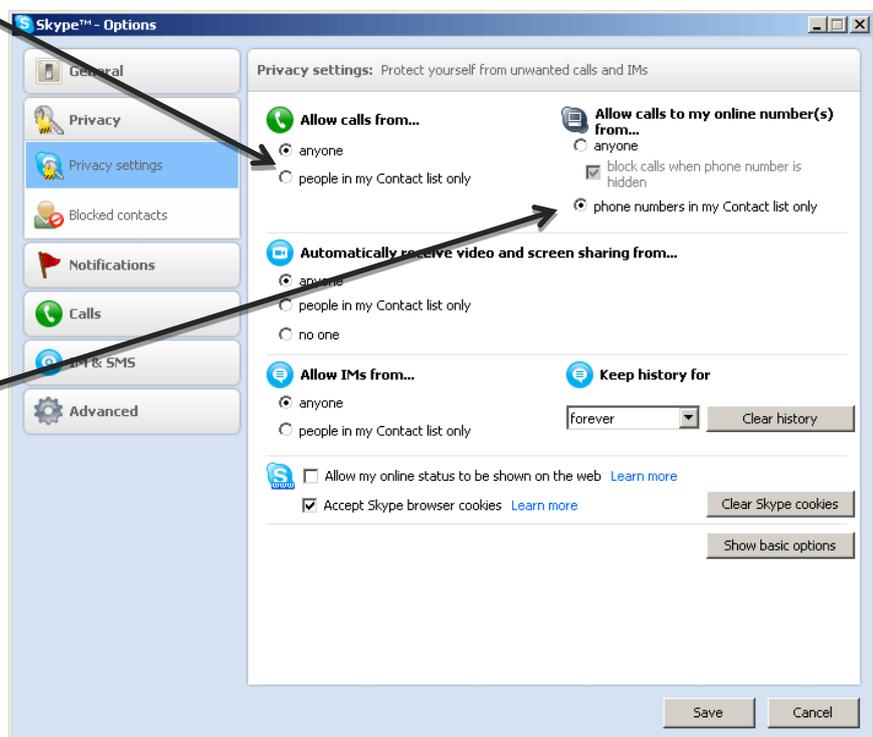
By default, only people on your Contact list are able to:

- See your profile picture
- Share their screen
- Video talk with you
- Send IM's

While anyone on Skype who searches for you can add you as a contact or call you.

To minimize unwanted calls you might want to change it to **“Allow calls from ...people in my Contact list only**

Always log out when you have finished your call. Simply closing your browser may not automatically finish your session.



More useful advice and documents/links:

- Has someone acted inappropriately towards you online, or to a child or young person you know? It may be sexual chat, being asked to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable or someone being insistent on meeting up. You can report it to <http://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>
- Childnet Internation produce a range of useful leaflets, videos and other materials for parents, teachers and children <http://www.childnet.com/resources>
- Safeguarding in Schools – Best Practice – Ofsted 2011 <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/safeguarding-schools-best-practice>