

Using Facebook and Social Media in a Mentoring Match

Social media sites, like Facebook, can be useful in connecting with your Little Sister; however, there are risks that are involved with using these sites to connect to your Little.

- **It gives her (and potentially all of her friends) a window into your personal life.** Be mindful of what people post on your wall or in what photos they tag you in.
- **It gives you a window into her personal life** and can show you a side of her that you don't normally see. This can be a benefit to getting to know your Little better, but can also be a hazard if you begin to see things that are out of character or could be alarming to you (for example, she and her friends getting in fights online, her expressing thoughts about boys, partying etc...). You need to think about how you would handle this.
- **Confidentiality can be breached.** We ask that our volunteers keep their Little Sisters identity and personal information confidential. If you are friends with her on Facebook, all the people you are friends with can now connect to her and can possibly see her profile (many youth do not have adequate privacy settings).

So, what can you do?

- **We strongly discourage you from becoming friends with your Little Sister** on Facebook or other social media sites because of the risks involved, however, if you choose to add her as a friend, we urge you to protect her privacy in the following ways (for Facebook):
- Messages between Little Sisters and Big Sisters/Study Buddies must be through **private messages**. Messages should never be written on each other's wall.
- To ensure confidentiality of Little Sisters, matches who do become friends on Facebook are highly encouraged to put each other on a limited profile. **This is found through Account → Privacy Settings → View settings (in Basic directory info section) → See my friend list → Customize → Hide this from → your sister's name.**
- When prompted to declare what your relationship is to your Little Sister, leave this section blank.

If your Little Sister talks to you about social media sites, you can talk to her about internet safety and how to keep herself safe. Encourage her, in a friendly way, to have high privacy settings, not to post personal information such as her contact info, and not to become friends with people she doesn't know online. You can set an example by using social media in responsible ways. If you have any questions about internet safety- ask your Big Sisters counsellor or check out this website: <http://www.cyberaide.ca/app/en/home>