

Your essay goals



June Spring
Does anyone
love me?



Should directors reduce age restrictions on social media sites?

Place the issue in a context and outline your point of view with supporting reasons.

Statistics reveal that up to 7.5 million children under 13 years of age now have a profile on social media sites such as Facebook. This is a disturbing trend and should be discouraged because of the risks involved. Children are not mature enough to understand the consequences of online activities. These activities can also lead to confusion of moral values and undermine parental authority. Furthermore, can we really trust the online directors to improve safety?

Topic sentence (*forthright tone*)



Most importantly, children under 13 years of age should not have a profile because they are too young to understand the consequences of anti-social conversations. Some children become, despite their best intentions, involved in bullying behaviour or become the target of such behaviour and lack the emotional skills to cope. For example, 10-year-old Raymond Tiff and Emile Badger were involved in an abusive string of correspondence on Instagram, which led to fights in the playground. Whilst this online interaction was identified as a problem by teachers, it could have been undetected on other social media forums.

Reasoning strategy: *common sense and real-life example of children.*



Persuasive strategy: *fear tactics and emotive language.*

Topic sentence



In addition, cybersites like Facebook can corrupt children's value systems. Strangers and viruses are just a click away as children explore their curiosity and push the boundaries. They may see inappropriate behaviour and listen to vulgar language. They learn that people cannot be trusted and that those who pretend to be "real" and genuine may be "fake" and perverted. According to psychologist Julie Meyer, such children can be encouraged to distrust their parents which can stimulate tension in the family. This makes it more difficult for parents to supervise their children's online activities.

Reasoning strategy:
(cause and effect)



Persuasive strategies:
(expert opinion, appeal to duty of care and moral values.)



Signpost the rebuttal.



Contrastingly, directors of social media sites maintain that they should relax age restrictions because there are already millions of children with a profile on social networking sites. **However**, it is difficult to trust the advice of such directors, who are motivated by profit rather than social values. Also, if there are ways to enhance online safety as they claim, why have they been so slack in the past? If we start lowering age restrictions, where will it end?

Persuasive and reasoning strategies: *attack on the directors' motives. Rhetorical question and provocative tone.*



Conclude with a statement(s) leaving readers in no doubt that there are too many risks.

Finally, it would seem appropriate that parents and policy-makers continue to insist on age restrictions. Any relaxation of the current rules will not only undermine parental control but will also expose children to inappropriate dangers that are best navigated throughout their mid-teenage years.