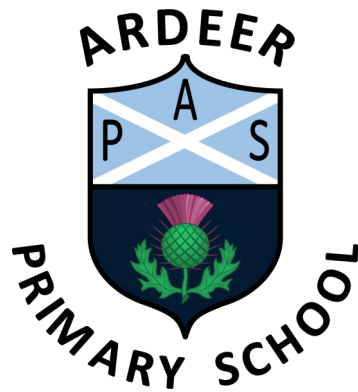


# Ardeer Primary School



## Safe Internet Guide

### For Parents

February 2019



At Ardeer we recognise the importance of internet enabled devices. They provide us with instant retrieval of information, many resources to help us further our knowledge and skills, we use it to play and express ourselves and it connects us to the rest of the world.

In today's digital world, e-safety is an integral part of children's education and is embedded in their learning at school. We also want to help our parents and children improve their own understanding of e-safety issues so that they can learn to use the internet and all digital media in a safe and secure way. The internet is a highly creative place of amazing opportunities. But the technology children use every day can seem a bit daunting and you might worry about the risks your child can face online - such as bullying, contact from strangers or the possibility of them seeing illegal or inappropriate content.

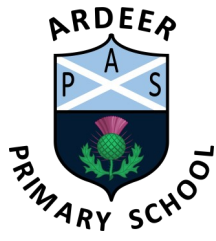
We have put together this guide for parents with up to date information, available from National Online Safety, on some of the issues, apps and games that children are becoming familiar with.



**National  
Online  
Safety**

*A whole school community approach to online safety*  
**[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)**

*Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061*



# Ardeer Primary School

## Safe Internet Guide For Parents

February 2019

Whilst this guide doesn't offer advice on every platform available to children, it does cover some which your child may have seen, heard or shown an interest in.

### Contents:

- ◇ 7 questions to start a conversation with your child
- ◇ Screen Addiction
- ◇ Fake News
- ◇ Online Bullying
- ◇ Catfishing
- ◇ Age Ratings
- ◇ FIFA
- ◇ Minecraft
- ◇ Fortnite
- ◇ ROBLOX
- ◇ YOUTUBE
- ◇ Snap Chat
- ◇ Instagram
- ◇ Twitter
- ◇ WhatsApp
- ◇ KIK
- ◇ TIKTOK
- ◇ REDDIT
- ◇ ETC





# 7 questions to help you start a conversation with your child about online safety

#WakeUpWednesday



1



Which apps/games are you using at the moment?

THIS WILL GIVE YOU A GOOD OVERVIEW OF THE TYPES OF THINGS YOUR CHILDREN ARE DOING ON THEIR DEVICES, ALONG WITH THEIR INTERESTS. REMEMBER THAT THEY MIGHT NOT TELL YOU EVERYTHING THEY ARE USING, SO IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO ASK THEM TO SHOW YOU THEIR DEVICE. BECAUSE NEW APPS AND GAMES ARE RELEASED REGULARLY, IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE THIS CONVERSATION OFTEN TO ENSURE YOU ARE UP TO DATE WITH WHAT THEY ARE DOING.

Which websites do you enjoy using and why?

AS IN THE TIP ABOVE, ASKING THIS QUESTION WILL ALLOW YOU TO FIND OUT WHAT YOUR CHILD IS DOING ONLINE, AND ENCOURAGE POSITIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THEIR ONLINE ACTIVITY. ASK THEM HOW THEY USE THE WEBSITES, AND TAKE AN INTEREST IN HOW THEY CAN USE THEM IN A POSITIVE WAY, ALSO ASKING THEM TO SHOW YOU IF POSSIBLE.



2

3

PLAY AGAIN?  
YES NO

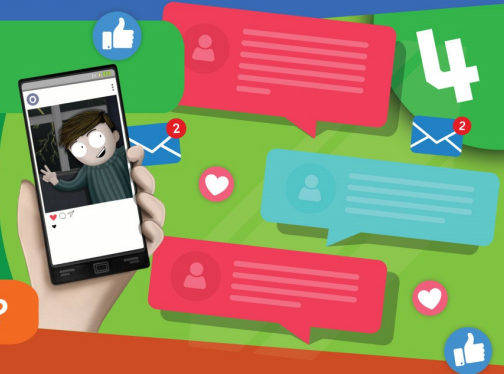
How does this game/app work?  
Can I play?

SHOW A GENUINE INTEREST IN WHAT THEY ARE DOING. WHILST YOU ARE PLAYING A GAME OR USING AN APP WITH THEM, IT MIGHT HIGHLIGHT SOMETHING THAT THEY DON'T NECESSARILY THINK IS A DANGER TO THEM. IF THEY ACT LIKE THEY DON'T WANT TO SHARE THEIR ACTIVITIES WITH YOU, QUESTION WHY.



Do you have any online friends?

CHILDREN CAN FORM POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE ONLINE, AND THIS HAS BECOME MORE COMMON THANKS TO ONLINE MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS, BUT THEY MAY NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FRIEND AND A STRANGER. YOU COULD MAKE THE QUESTION MORE SPECIFIC TO YOUR CHILD. FOR EXAMPLE: "HAVE YOU MET ANYONE ONLINE THAT YOU LIKE TO PLAY GAMES WITH?" THEY MAY NOT WANT TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOU, SO ENSURE YOU TEACH THEM ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.



4

5

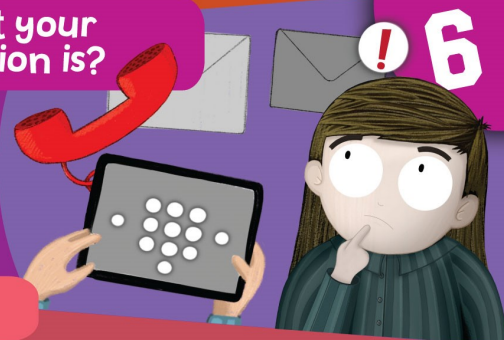
Do you know where to go for help?

ALTHOUGH YOU MAY BE THE ADULT THEY TRUST THE MOST, SOME CHILDREN STRUGGLE TO TALK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS ONLINE DUE TO CONFUSION OR EMBARRASSMENT. BECAUSE OF THIS THEY MAY STRUGGLE TO APPROACH THE NORMAL PEOPLE WHO WOULD HELP, SUCH AS YOURSELF OR A TEACHER. HAVE A CHAT TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT EXACTLY WHERE THEY CAN GO FOR HELP, AND HOW THEY CAN REPORT ANY ACTIVITY THAT THEY BELIEVE IS INAPPROPRIATE ONLINE.



Do you know what your personal information is?

YOUR CHILD MAY ALREADY KNOW WHAT THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION IS BUT THEY MIGHT NOT THINK ABOUT HOW IT CAN BE SHARED. HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT WHAT PERSONAL INFORMATION IS AND HOW THIS CAN AFFECT THEM IF IT IS SHARED BEYOND THE INTENDED RECIPIENT. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUR CHILD UNDERSTANDS THE DANGERS OF SHARING CONTACT DETAILS OR PHOTOS, AS INFORMATION SUCH AS THIS CAN SPREAD QUICKLY ONLINE.



6

7

Do you know your limits?

CHILDREN MAY NOT UNDERSTAND THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF DEVICE OR GAME ADDICTION. TALK TO THEM OPENLY ABOUT HEALTHY HABITS AND ASK WHETHER OR NOT THEM SPENDING TIME ONLINE OR PLAYING A GAME IS AFFECTING THEIR SLEEP, PERFORMANCE AT SCHOOL OR IF THEY ARE GENERALLY LOSING INTEREST IN OTHER ACTIVITIES. YOU MAY LEAD ON TO ENCOURAGING ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSING THE INTRODUCTION OF TIME LIMITS WHEN AT HOME.







It can be challenging for parents and carers to know whether children are spending too much time on their devices. Furthermore, it's even more of a challenge to know whether a child is addicted to the internet and social media. As technology is becoming more pervasive, children and young people are experiencing tech - related dependencies. Do we as parents and carers have the knowledge to identify and support children and young people who may be developing an addiction to their devices?



**47%**  
of parents  
said they thought their  
children spent too much  
time in front of screens



# What parents need to know about SCREEN ADDICTION



## SMARTPHONE ADDICTION IS A RECOGNISED HEALTH CONDITION

Children as young as 13 are attending 'smartphone rehab' following growing concerns over screen time. There are now help centers in the UK which deal with screen addiction for children and adults showing the seriousness of device addiction.

## IT CAN CAUSE SLEEP DEPRIVATION

7 out of 10 children said they had missed out on sleep because of their online habits and 60% said they had neglected school work as a result. It is important that children get the sleep they need in order to focus the next day.

## CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT & ACCEPTANCE

The Children's Commissioner report 'Life in Likes', explored how children aged 8-11 are using social media today. It showed that children are using their devices to speak to their online friends about their problems and seek acceptance and support, removing face to face interactions.

## LOSS OF INTEREST IN OTHER THINGS

Your child may become less interested in anything that does not include their device. You may notice that your child is missing school time and generally being less engaged with other activities in the home. It is important to discuss this with your child as soon as you notice a behaviour change.

## APPS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Apps have been designed with 'psychological tricks' to constantly keep grabbing your attention. One example of this is on the app Snapchat, where you can gain 'streaks' when interacting with your friends. If you don't respond, you lose the streak. This addictive nature of apps aims to engage children and keep them coming back for more.



# Top Tips for Parents



## LIMIT SCREEN TIME

In today's digital age, technology is an important part of a child's development so completely banning them from their device will mean they are missing out on a lot, including conversations and communication with their friends. Rather than banning them from using their devices, we suggest setting a screen time limit. Work out what you think is a suitable and healthy amount of time for your child to be on their device per week. Remember that your child may need to use devices for their school homework so only set screen limits on recreational time on their device. Once you have established this, have the conversation with them to discuss why you are implementing a screen limit. There will be others in your child's friendship group who will not have screen limits set and will be sending messages when they do not have access to their phones.

## LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children model their behavior on their peers, so if their parents are constantly on their device, they will see this as acceptable. Try limiting your own screen time and follow the same rules you have set for them. If you have asked your child to not use their device at the table, make sure you don't. Try setting house rules that the whole family abide by.

## REMOVE DEVICES FROM THEIR BEDROOM

Setting a rule about removing devices from bedrooms will help your child to get the sleep they need and be more focussed the next day at school. 20% of teenagers said that they wake up to check their social network accounts on their devices. Even by having a device switched off in their bedroom, they may be tempted to check for notifications.

## LESS TIME MEANS LESS EXPOSURE

There are many risks associated with devices, such as cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, viewing inappropriate content etc. Less time spent on a screen means that a child will be less exposed to these risks.

## ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

It may seem like an obvious solution, but encouraging children to play with their friends, read a book, or playing outdoors will help them realise they can have fun without their device. Playing football, trampolining, camping, going for a walk or swimming are all healthy replacements for screen time. Try to join them in their outdoor activities to show your support.

## MOBILE-FREE MEAL TIMES

Have you tried to settle your child by giving them a tablet at the dinner table or restaurant? This may seem like a quick fix to calm them down but in reality, it is encouraging them to use their device as a distraction from conversation and dealing with their emotions. We suggest removing all technology from the dinner table and having conversations with your family about how their day has been.

## STATISTICS

**53%** of children aged 3-4  
go online for nearly **8hrs** a week

**79%** of children aged 5-7  
go online for nearly **9hrs** a week

**94%** of children aged 8-11  
go online for nearly **13.5hrs** a week

**99%** of children aged 12-15  
go online for nearly **21hrs** a week

<https://www.independent.co.uk>  
Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2017: <https://www.ofcom.org.uk>  
<http://uk.businessinsider.com/how-app-developers-keep-us-addicted-to-our-smartphones>  
Journal of Youth Studies: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/one-five-kids-losing-sleep-9653986>  
University of Leeds: <https://medhealth.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/1296/lack-of-sleep-damaging-for-children>



**National Online Safety**

A whole school community approach to online safety  
[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)

Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061







How to spot

# FAKE NEWS

FREE  
item every  
Wednesday

Issue: #WakeUpWednesday

## WHAT IS 'FAKE NEWS'?

Fake news can be false information, photos or videos purposefully created to confuse or misinform. It can also be genuine information that has been manipulated to deceive. It is important that we learn how to distinguish between real news and fake news.

## DOES IT SOUND REAL?

Many fake news stories are written with appealing headlines and have content designed to create 'shock value' in order to spread like wildfire. Typically, fake news will include topics such as the 'death' of a famous person, company giveaways, news relating to supernatural events, or terror related posts that provoke a reaction. Have a look at other news sources to see if a story has been widely reported before sharing unsubstantiated claims. You can also check facts at websites, including snopes.com and factcheck.org.

## CHEK 4 SPELIN AND GRAMMATICAL MISTKS

Not always, but poor spelling, grammar and vocabulary on articles may indicate that an item is not from a reputable source. Be wary!

National  
Online  
Safety

## Read more than just the headline!



Some news sites will post stories with 'click bait' headlines to grab your attention and make you click on them. These headlines might not even be relevant to the story. Studies show that almost 60% of links that people have shared on social media have never actually been clicked before sharing, so it's really important that you read the article first before you share it to make sure the news is real.

## Have you checked the URL?

https://

Does the website address at the very top of the page look real? One of the easier ways to spot suspect stories is if they're located on a news site with an odd domain name. So, check the URL. Some dodgy websites will try to incorporate a legitimate news source into its URL, such as [www.therealbbc.co.uk](http://www.therealbbc.co.uk), or will slightly misspell a popular website domain, e.g. [www.bbcc.corp](http://www.bbcc.corp).

## Check the comments!



Have a read through the comments on a news story - either at the bottom of the article or on a social media share. Reactions and comments can often show if other people don't believe the story is true, or whether someone has confirmed it is fake news. Of course, you can't always know if a comment is real!

## How long has the page existed?

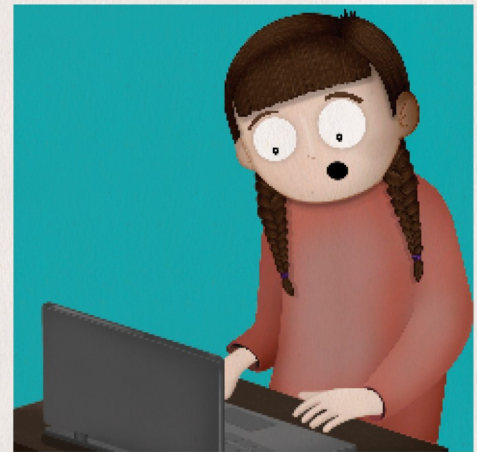


Be wary if a story comes from a news organisation you have never heard of. Some hoaxers will set up a quick website to spread fake stories and so-called 'breaking news'. So, if a story with bold claims originates from a website that has only just launched, you would be wise to doubt its authenticity. There are online tools, such as the internet archive, that display the approximate age of a website on the internet and allow you to view how it looked before.

## Who wrote it?



Make sure that the website that published the story is a credible source, i.e. a major news network or local paper which has the resources to fact-check published stories. If you get your news primarily via social media, always check the source and use caution if the story comes from a news organisation you have never heard of. If the article has a byline, you should be able to research to see if the writer is a genuine reporter by searching for them on Google.



## Is it a joke?

While most fake stories are designed to make you believe them, it's important to know how to spot when the content has been written as a joke on purpose. Articles from joke news websites (such as 'The Onion' or 'The Daily Mash') are hugely popular on social media but some people may think their stories are real. Always read joke articles with a pinch of salt.





What children need to know about

# ONLINE BULLYING



## Why does it happen?

GOING ONLINE MAKES IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE TO SAY AND DO THINGS THEY PROBABLY WOULDN'T DO FACE TO FACE. ONLINE BULLIES DON'T GET TO SEE THEIR VICTIMS' REACTIONS IN REAL LIFE, SO THIS CAN COCOON THEM FROM THE REAL DAMAGE THAT THEY ARE DOING. QUITE OFTEN, PEOPLE BULLY BECAUSE THEY ARE GOING THROUGH SOMETHING DIFFICULT THEMSELVES AND TAKING IT OUT ON OTHERS IS THE ONLY WAY THEY KNOW HOW TO GET CONTROL OF THEIR OWN EMOTIONS.



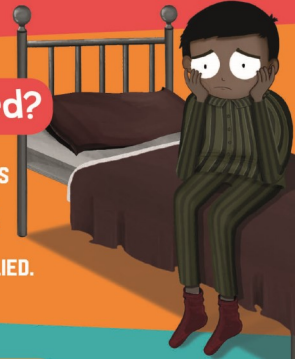
## What is online bullying?

ONLINE BULLYING – ALSO KNOWN AS CYBERBULLYING – IS BULLYING THAT TAKES PLACE ON THE INTERNET OR VIA ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND MOBILE PHONES. IT CAN INCLUDE:

1. SENDING SOMEONE MEAN OR THREATENING EMAILS, DIRECT MESSAGES OR TEXT MESSAGES
2. HACKING INTO SOMEONE'S ONLINE ACCOUNT
3. BEING RUDE OR MEAN TO SOMEONE WHEN PLAYING ONLINE GAMES
4. POSTING PRIVATE OR EMBARRASSING PHOTOS ONLINE OR SENDING THEM TO OTHERS
5. CREATING FAKE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS THAT MOCK SOMEONE OR TRICK THEM
6. EXCLUDING SOMEONE FROM AN ONLINE CONVERSATION OR BLOCKING THEM FOR NO REASON

## How does it feel to be bullied?

BEING BULLIED CAN IMPACT ON YOUR SELF-ESTEEM, CONFIDENCE AND SOCIAL SKILLS. BECAUSE IT HAPPENS ON YOUR PHONE, TABLET OR COMPUTER, IT CAN FEEL LIKE YOU ARE UNDER THREAT EVEN WHEN YOU'RE IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT, SUCH AS YOUR BEDROOM. DON'T FORGET...IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT IF YOU'RE BEING BULLIED.



## Am I an online bully?

SOMETIMES IT ISN'T OBVIOUS THAT WHAT YOU ARE DOING IS WRONG, BUT IF YOU USE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO UPSET, ANGER OR EMBARRASS SOMEONE ON PURPOSE, THIS MEANS YOU'RE INVOLVED IN ONLINE BULLYING. IT MIGHT BE AS SIMPLE AS 'LIKING' A MEAN POST, LAUGHING AT AN ONLINE VIDEO, OR SPREADING A RUMOUR, BUT THE PERSON BEING BULLIED COULD FEEL LIKE THEY ARE BEING GANGED UP ON. THINK ABOUT HOW IT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL IF IT HAPPENED TO YOU. EVERYONE CAN MAKE MISTAKES, BUT IT'S IMPORTANT TO LEARN FROM THEM – GO BACK AND DELETE ANY UPSETTING OR NASTY POSTS, TWEETS OR COMMENTS YOU'VE WRITTEN.



## Who do I tell?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE BULLYING ON YOUR OWN. TALK TO AN ADULT THAT YOU TRUST – A PARENT, GUARDIAN, OR TEACHER. MOST WEBSITES, SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITES AND ONLINE GAMES OR MOBILE APPS LET YOU REPORT AND BLOCK PEOPLE WHO ARE BOTHERING YOU. YOU COULD ALSO CONTACT CHIDLIN (WWW.CHIDLIN.ORG.UK), WHERE A TRAINED COUNSELLOR WILL LISTEN TO ANYTHING THAT'S WORRYING YOU – YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO GIVE YOUR NAME.



## BE KIND ONLINE

BEFORE PRESSING 'SEND' ON COMMENTS, ASK YOURSELF THESE 3 QUESTIONS...

1. WHY AM I POSTING THIS?
2. WOULD I SAY THIS IN REAL LIFE?
3. HOW WOULD I FEEL IF SOMEBODY SAID THIS TO ME?

## How do I prove it?

WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAPPENS, IT IS IMPORTANT TO DOCUMENT AND REPORT THE BEHAVIOUR, SO IT CAN BE ADDRESSED – RECORD THE DATES AND TIMES WHEN CYBERBULLYING HAS OCCURRED, AND SAVE AND PRINT SCREENSHOTS, EMAILS, AND TEXT MESSAGES.



## How can I stay safe?

MAKE SURE YOUR PRIVACY SETTINGS ARE SET SO THAT ONLY PEOPLE YOU KNOW AND TRUST CAN SEE WHAT YOU POST. NEVER GIVE OUT PERSONAL INFORMATION ONLINE, SUCH AS IN PUBLIC PROFILES, CHAT ROOMS OR BLOGS, AND AVOID FURTHER COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE SENDING THE MESSAGES. KEEP AWARE OF FAKE PROFILES AND INTERNET USERS PRETENDING TO BE SOMEONE THAT THEY ARE NOT.



#WakeUpWednesday





**WARNING!**  
Catfishers will target ANYONE OF ANY age

# What parents need to know about CATFISHING



In this technological era, making friends online and communicating with them are normal parts of life. Unfortunately, there are people out there who may try and exploit your trust. Catfishing is when someone creates a fake online profile to trick people into thinking they are somebody else. They assume a fake identity and goes the extra mile to make their victim believe that they are exactly who they say they are.



## WHY DO PEOPLE CATFISH?

The term 'catfish' was coined in a 2010 documentary about a man who developed an online relationship with a woman, only to discover the person he thought he was communicating with was someone else. Catfishers make up life stories and use photographs of unsuspecting victims to create fake identities. They will share life experiences, jobs, friends and photographs to the fake accounts. The aim of the perpetrator may be to lure victims into a sexual relationship, but they can also be part of social engineering to trick people out of money. After building up trust and developing an online relationship, a catfisher may ask for cash for a loan, money for travel, or some other form of payment.

## OTHER CONCERNS & WORRIES

Catfishing can escalate very quickly. As someone executing a catfishing scam is looking to achieve a goal - whatever that may be - they are likely to want to get things moving as quickly as possible. The victim may be encouraged to develop a relationship faster than they are comfortable with. In addition to this, people who create fake identities could also be taking the victim's photos and pretending to be them. It is common for fraudsters to post pictures stolen from social media sites, including Facebook and Instagram.

## HOW TO SPOT CATFISHING

Profile pictures and other photos that are posted can be big indicators. To avoid revealing their real identity, a catfisher may use 'stock' images of models, other people's photos or photos in which it is difficult to see their face. They may try to limit chat to text-based messaging and anything involving video is likely to be shunned for fear of revealing their true identity. Through the course of conversations, there may be inconsistencies with what is said, or instances of people being very vague in response to specific questions about themselves.



# Top Tips for Parents

## MONITORING & CONVERSATION

Encourage your child to talk to their trusted adults about anything that has made them feel uncomfortable online, particularly if someone they don't know has contacted them. Remind them that they should not accept friend requests or communicate with anyone they don't know online, and to ask a parent or carer if they are unsure. It is also very important to closely monitor their internet usage so you are aware of who they are communicating with, especially if they are being secretive. Have regular and honest conversations with your child about what is safe to share with people online; the importance of keeping private information private; and that anything that could identify them should not be shared online.

## PRIVACY & SECURITY

Go through your child's security and privacy settings thoroughly to ensure that their online profiles are set to private. This means that only friends can see their profile and can contact them. It may also be a good idea to check through your child's friends list with them - do they know and trust everyone on the list? In some cases it's difficult to stop young people from talking to new people. In these circumstances, encourage your child to be curious and ask lots of questions rather than rely on the information given in someone's online profile. Do they have any mutual friends? If not, how did that person find them and why did they reach out? It's vital that they know never to arrange to meet up with people they meet online, and never to send money to them - either their own, or from your account.

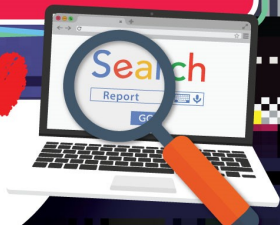
## BE ALERT & REPORT

Make sure that you and your child is aware of how to report and block accounts on all platforms that the child uses. You can report fake accounts and block users to prevent them from viewing your child's profile. If you are concerned that someone is using your child's photographs for their own benefits, you can check by using Google image search. You can upload a photograph and Google will show related images used on other websites. This will show you if anyone else is using photos that your child has previously shared online. If this is the case, you need to report the user directly to the platform. If you suspect that any fraudulent, illegal or inappropriate activity has taken place, you should report to the police immediately.

SOURCES:  
<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4303893/student-17-catfished-facebook-year/>  
<https://www.thesun.co.uk/fabulous/1754916/catfishing-meaning-identity-steal-online-dating-law/>



A whole school community approach to online safety  
**www.nationalonlinesafety.com**  
Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061







# What parents need to know about AGE RATINGS



If you have children, it is understandable to have concerns about the films and TV shows they watch, as well as the games they play. In this guide, we take a look at the two official ways you can assess if a particular title is suitable for your child. Both the BBFC and PEGI have search facilities on their websites that can be used to look up individual titles so you can check their ratings.



## RATINGS FOR FILMS, TV & MUSIC VIDEOS

Since 1912, the BBFC (British Board of Film Classification) has informed UK residents of the age suitability of films, TV and music videos - providing parents with the information needed to assess whether or not it is appropriate for their child's age. This applies to cinema releases, DVDs and streaming video services such as Netflix.

## RATINGS FOR GAMES

PEGI (Pan European Game Information) is a content rating system that ensures all video games are labelled with a minimum age recommendation. These age recommendations are based on the types of content featured within a game. With each game, PEGI also provide a content descriptor that indicates the potential issues and concerns, including sex, violence, bad language and drugs.

### WHAT ARE THE BBFC RATINGS?

BBFC ratings are broken down into seven age categories:

Universal, suitable for all ages	Parental Guidance required	Suitable for people aged 12 and over	Suitable for people aged 12 and over; anyone younger must be accompanied by an adult
Suitable for people aged 15 and over	Suitable for people aged 18 and over	Adult content only available in specially licenced cinemas and specialist retailers	

### WHAT ARE THE PEGI RATINGS?

PEGI ratings are split into age restriction and content descriptors. Additional 'content descriptors' help parents and children to understand the type of content featured within a particular game, including sex, fear, bad language, discrimination, gambling, drugs, violence, and in-game purchases. In combination, the two different ratings can provide a good level of information to help make informed decisions regarding the suitability for your child.

PEGI age ratings are broken down into five categories:

<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>	<a href="http://www.pegi.info">www.pegi.info</a>

PEGI content descriptors are broken down into eight categories:

FEAR	DRUGS	IN-GAME PURCHASES	VIOLENCE	BAD LANGUAGE	DISCRIMINATION	GAMBLING	SEX

### WHAT ELSE CAN BBFC REVEAL?

Accompanied with the age suitability rating, BBFC also provide an additional warning regarding the content and what to expect, such as swearing, sexual content, violence and anything you may consider to be inappropriate for your child. In addition to this, the content is also rated in three levels: frequent, mild or strong.

### LIMITATIONS OF PEGI RATINGS

It's possible for young people to buy games online without a required proof of age, opening them up to age-inappropriate content without you knowing. We advise that you regularly monitor your child's gaming activities and maintain a honest and healthy dialogue with them about the online world.

### LIMITATIONS OF BBFC RATINGS

It's important to note that there is no obligation on streaming video services to use or display BBFC ratings. Due to this, we advise that you check the rating online before your child streams the content. It may also be a good idea to watch the content first yourself or discuss it with other parents to help you decide whether or not it is suitable for your child.

### PARENTAL CONTROLS

It is a good idea to put in place parental controls for all online accounts which your child may use to purchase or download online games e.g. The App Store, Google Play Store, PlayStation Store and Microsoft Xbox Store etc.

Source: [www.bbfc.co.uk](http://www.bbfc.co.uk)

Source: [www.pegi.info](http://www.pegi.info)



National Online Safety  
A whole school community approach to online safety  
[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)  
Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061





# FIFA 19

EA SPORTS

You don't need to be the biggest football fan in the world to have heard of FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) - the governing body for football. And, the video game series bearing the organisation's name is one of the most successful ever. The lure of this football series is that official licensing gives your child the opportunity to play games in the role of their favourite players. They can either work through a story mode version of the game or play online in competitions against other players. The game, released annually by Electronic Arts under the EA Sports label, is available for a range of consoles, and there are also mobile versions available for smartphones and tablets. The most recent version is FIFA 18, but FIFA 19 is due for release later in the year.

AGE RESTRICTION  
**3+**



# What parents need to know about FIFA

## CONSTANT SERIES REFRESHES

The big selling point for the FIFA range of games is that it includes current players; a feature which no other football video game offers. However, this means that a new version of the game is released every year, with updated teams, players and stadia, plus new gameplay features and tweaks. And, with every annual update of the game, there is an expectation that it will be far better than the previous one, so the pressure to upgrade and buy the new version is likely to be immense!

\* # " @ \$

## IN-GAME CHAT

While the FIFA video game is suitable for children of all ages as it does not include any inappropriate content, there is the issue of in-game chat. Your child can play with other people online and chat with them using headsets. As this is largely unregulated, it could mean that your child is exposed to language or conversations that you deem unsuitable.

\* # " @ \$

## FAKE EMAILS, SCAMS AND COPYCAT WEBSITES

Your child may receive an email or see a message on social media or in forums which appear to be a genuine FIFA promotion. While the link may seem like a FIFA login page, it's a phishing scam to capture a login name and password. Scammers may use names that sound legitimate, like 'EA Admin' or 'FIFA Developer'.

## BUYING ADD-ONS

In-game purchases are to be expected in any modern game and FIFA is no different. FIFA Ultimate Team (commonly called FUT) is a mode in FIFA that lets gamers build teams of players from any league, playing both offline and online to win coins. These can be used to buy better players or packs containing random players. While some purchases can be made using in-game currency, other purchases involve spending with real world money, which could become expensive. There have been reports of parents receiving large credit card bills resulting from in-game purchase made by their children.

## JUST ONE MORE GAME

Your child could be playing FIFA games on their computer or console for very long periods of time. That's not to say that computer-based matches are a full 90 minutes long, but a series of 20-minute matches can very quickly fill up a day! The World Health Organisation has classified 'gaming disorder' as a mental health problem - this is when children have trouble controlling their gaming behaviour and let it reign over their lives and daily routine.

## FIFA GAMEPLAY

The FIFA series has been criticised for the competitive nature of gameplay leading to aggression in some players. Add to this the chance to converse with other players via in-game chat, and the potential for anger levels is likely to rise... especially if you're losing heavily!



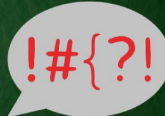
# Top Tips for Parents

## CONSTANT SERIES REFRESHES / WHAT TO DO?

As a parent, the implications of this really depends on the age of your child and your relationship with them. It may be that playing and sharing games is part of your family life and so this isn't a problem, but just be mindful that being involved with the FIFA franchise is unlikely to be a one-off event - it's the start of a gaming journey that could last for many, many years and involve numerous (potentially expensive) upgrades.

## IN GAME CHAT

It's unlikely that you'll be able to convince your child to play FIFA without making use of the chat facility - it's something that adds to the experience. However, you should ensure your child is aware of how to silence any abusive players and how to report anyone who becomes problematic.



## FAKE EMAILS, SCAMS AND COPYCAT WEBSITES

You should teach your children to stay clear of scams. Explain to them that they must be wary of any link which asks them to either verify their username and password or provide other sensitive information; game developers will never send a message asking for login information. Console messages, emails and websites, or social media posts promoting contests for in-game content, such as packs, players, or coins requiring login information are fake.

## BUYING ADD ONS

To spend real money in FIFA, a credit or debit card must be linked to a gaming account, so ensure that your card is not being used for this! There's also support for PayPal payment, so also check who has access to this type of account. Depending on the platform your child is using to play FIFA, there are different parental controls that can be put in place to restrict spending should you allow them to link a card to their account. There is also a payment option called Paysafecard, which allows you to make payments online without the use of a bank account or credit card. As you can top up balances, this makes it easy to control spending.

## JUST ONE MORE GAME

The parental controls on consoles can be used to restrict the amount of time spent playing. Physically monitoring how much time your child is spending in FIFA is recommended - just as you might monitor how much time they spend watching TV. Keep an eye out for warning signs, such as a lack of interest in other activities, tiredness or fatigue, neglect of personal hygiene, changes in character or anger issues when your child is told to stop playing a game.

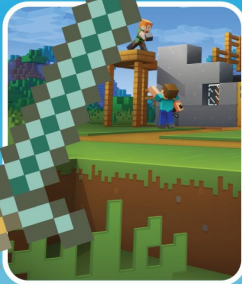
## FIFA GAMEPLAY

Monitoring in-game chat may be difficult as you're likely to only be able to hear one side of a conversation. However, noticing how your child is reacting may be a reasonable indicator of the general mood. Dealing with both the frustrations of a game as well as troublesome people can serve as useful life lessons, but as a parent, you know your child better than anyone else. If you notice your child is getting too upset or angry, that's the time to intervene and try to encourage them to take a break from the game.

### SOURCES

- <http://press.ea.com/products/p1532/ea-sports-fifa-18>
- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/relationships/fatherhood/10886939/My-son-spent-hundreds-of-pounds-on-in-app-purchases-without-me-knowing.html>
- <https://help.ea.com/en-gb/help/fifa/be-safe-with-fut-coins-and-fifa-points/>





Minecraft is played by millions of children around the world, who use their imagination to build three-dimensional worlds with virtual building blocks in a digital, pixelated landscape. It is classed as a 'sandbox game', which means players have the freedom to build their own creations with 'blocks' they collect and also have the opportunity to explore other people's creations with their characters. Players can choose from thousands of different 'servers' to join, which are created by other players, making every experience of Minecraft unique.

Minecraft has approximately **74m** users each month



# What parents need to know about MINECRAFT

## GROOMING

As the majority of users who play Minecraft are children, this makes it an 'appealing' gateway for groomers. It has been reported that some users have created worlds in Minecraft to lure young people into a conversation to ask for explicit photos. There have even been more serious cases in which children have been persuaded to meet these people in real life.

## CYBERBULLYING & GRIEFING

In multiplayer mode there is a live chat feature which allows players to talk to other players through text. This chat functionality includes basic filtering to block out external links and offensive language being shared, but varies between each server. Griefing is when someone purposely upsets another player during the game. This can be done by ruining somebody's creation or generally doing something to spoil gameplay for another. Essentially, 'Griefing' is a form of cyberbullying and can be extremely frustrating for players.

## COMMUNICATING WITH STRANGERS

Minecraft incorporates thousands of servers to choose from which are a single world or place created by the public and allow users to play the game online or via a local area network with others. No two servers are the same and each has its own individual plug-ins which are controlled by the creator. This means that some servers will allow communication with strangers.

## VIRUSES & MALWARE FROM MODS

There are several websites that offer downloadable 'mods' which modify gameplay in a number of ways. Most of the mods will be safe to use, but as they have been created by the public, they will often contain viruses that can infect your child's device and potentially try and find personal information about you or your child.

## AGE RESTRICTION & 'FANTASY VIOLENCE'

According to the 'Entertaining Software Rating Board' (ESRB), Minecraft is suitable for users aged 10+. Due to its 'Fantasy Violence', the ESRB states that this rating has been given as 'players can engage in violent acts such as setting animals on fire and harming them with weapons. Mild explosions are occasionally heard as players use dynamite to fend off creatures and mine the environment.'

## CHILDREN MAY BECOME ADDICTED

As with other games, Minecraft is a game where players can keep returning with constant challenges and personal goals to achieve. Children may find it difficult to know when to stop playing, becoming absorbed in the game and losing track of time.



# National Online Safety

# Top Tips for Parents

## DISABLE OR MODERATE CHAT

To avoid potentially inappropriate comments in a live chat, you can follow these steps to turn live chat off: 1. Select 'Options' 2. Toggle the Chat button to 'Hidden' or 'Commands Only'. Bear in mind that the chat feature is also where your child can enter commands during the game, so this may restrict their game play.

## MONITOR YOUTUBE TUTORIALS

Many Minecraft users turn to 'YouTube' for video tips on improving their game play and discovering new techniques. Although many videos are age-appropriate, some include sexual references and bad language. We suggest watching Minecraft tutorial videos together with your child. If your child is under the age of 13, we suggest installing 'YouTube Kids' which provides a safer platform for children to safely find the content they want.



## SCAN 'MODS' FOR MALWARE

Minecraft 'mods' add content to games to give extra options to interact and change the way the game looks and feels. However, although 'mods' can bring fun for a child, it's important to consider that downloading and installing 'mods' could potentially infect their device with a virus or malware. In 2017, security company Symantec stated that between 600,000 and 2.5 million Minecraft players had installed dodgy apps, which hijacked player's devices and used them to power an advertising botnet. Install a malware scanner on every device that your child plays Minecraft on and make sure it's regularly kept up-to-date.

## PLAY IN 'CREATIVE' OR 'PEACEFUL' MODE

Even though the age limit is 10+, Minecraft can be quite overwhelming at times, especially for younger players or SEND children. We suggest restricting your child to play in 'creative mode' or 'peaceful mode' which takes away the survival element and removes the 'scarier' monster/zombie characters.

## SET TIME LIMITS

With 'Gaming Disorder' becoming an official health condition, we suggest setting a reasonable time limit when playing Minecraft. Parents can use parental controls on devices to limit the time a child plays games. It is worth having a conversation with your child to understand which 'mode' they are playing the game. This may help you decide on the amount of time you would like them to play. For example, a mini game will have an 'end', but this will depend on how long the game creator has made the game last. In 'survival mode', the game has no end as there is no goal to be achieved other than the child's own e.g. after they have built something.



## CHOOSE SERVERS CAREFULLY

To protect your child from engaging in conversation with strangers, advise them to only enter servers with people they know and trust. Your child can also create their own multiplayer server and share this with their friends, which is safer and more controlled than joining a stranger's server.

Sources:  
<https://minecraft.net/en-us/article/minecraft-multiplayer-server-safety>  
<http://parentinfo.org/article/staying-safe-on-minecraft>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-38284216>  
<https://support.xbox.com/en-GB/xbox-one/security/cannot-change-my-privacy-settings-1>  
<https://lifehacker.com/a-parent-s-guide-to-playing-minecraft-with-your-kids-1788022798>

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/tech/new-minecraft-game-needs-caution-11251242>  
<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/paedophiles-using-online-computer-games-1023355->  
<https://minecrafttoys.com/is-minecraft-dangerous-for-kids-a-parents-guide>  
<https://leahnieman.com/4-fabulous-family-friendly-minecraft-servers/>  
<https://www.howtogeek.com/289985/how-to-set-up-minecraft-so-your-kids-can-play-online-with-friends/http://minemum.com/chat-settings>

THIS IS AN INDEPENDENT ONLINE SAFETY GUIDE AND IS NOT AN OFFICIAL MINECRAFT PRODUCT. THIS GUIDE HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED BY NOR IS IT ASSOCIATED WITH MOJANG





## FORTNITE BATTLE ROYALE



'Fortnite - Battle Royale' is a free to play section of the game 'Fortnite.' The game sees 100 players dropped on to an island from a 'battle bus,' where they have to compete until one survivor remains. The last remaining player on the island wins the game. Players have to find hidden items, such as weapons, to help them survive longer in the game. To make the game more challenging, there is an added twist called 'the storm' which reduces the size of the island from the start of gameplay, bringing the players closer together in proximity. The game is available on PC, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, Mac and iOS.



AGE RESTRICTION  
**12+**

# What parents need to know about FORTNITE: BATTLE ROYALE

### MICROTRANSACTIONS

Newly featured items are released daily and are only available to purchase within 24 hours of their release. These are cosmetic items, called 'skins,' 'gliders' and 'emotes,' which change the characters' appearance, but do not improve the game play. Once purchased, the player has full use of these in the future. The designs are attractive for players to purchase and even celebrities are endorsing them. Also available to purchase in the game is a 'Battle Pass.' When a new 'Battle Pass' is released, users can take part in a series of challenges, receiving more rewards (cosmetics) by progressing through different tiers. Whichever rewards they achieve can then be used in the game.

### HACKER ATTACKS

News site Forbes stated that it had seen "dozens" of online reports from people who said their accounts had been compromised by hackers, who had gained access to user's accounts in the game and accrued hundreds of pounds in fraudulent charges.

### NO PROOF OF AGE REQUIRED

Signing up to the game is relatively simple. Users have the option to log in with either their Facebook or Google accounts or their email address. When signing up with an email address, no proof of age is required. If your child is under the age of 12, it is important to check whether your child has the game downloaded.

### TALKING TO STRANGERS DURING SQUAD MODE

Interacting with other players in the game is part of the fun as players can communicate with their friends and other players in the game. Players will benefit from wearing headphones to hear footsteps from other players trying to compromise their game. Wearing headphones makes it difficult for parents to hear what exactly is being said and children may be exposed to inappropriate language. Fortnite includes really good reporting features for players either cheating or misbehaving, and works towards having one of the best online gaming communities.

### TALKING TO STRANGERS DURING SQUAD MODE

There are many accounts on Facebook and Twitter which claim to give away free money (known as 'V bucks') for games which will be transferred to their Xbox Live or PSN cards. Any giveaway promotion from Fortnite will be in the game. It is important to check the authenticity of these accounts before giving away personal information in order to claim 'V bucks.' The websites or accounts may ask you to share your account name and password in order to claim the money; if these offers seem too good to be true, they usually are.

### IT CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Games can last around 20 minutes but this varies according to the game. Children may feel angry if they lose the game and will want to continue playing until they achieve their desired result. The competitive nature of the game may make it difficult for them to stop playing halfway through as their position in the game could be affected.

### AGE RESTRICTIONS

PEGI has given the game a rating of 12+. Even though the game includes violence and weapons such as crossbows, grenade launchers, rifles, pistols, shotguns and more, PEGI say "more graphic and realistic looking violence towards fantasy characters is allowed. Any violence towards human characters must look unrealistic unless it consists of only minor or trivial injury such as a slap," making the game 'suitable' for children aged 12 and over.

### IT CAN BE PLAYED ON THE GO

The game was released on mobile devices in April 2018, meaning it can be played without the need for a home games console. Some schools have reported that the game is distracting their students whilst in the classroom. As the game is available outside of the home, parents may not be aware of how long their child is playing this game.

### 'FREE' TO PLAY

The game IS free to play. However, if playing on Xbox, you will need an Xbox gold subscription, which does require a fee.

# Top Tips for Parents



### LIMIT GAME TIME

Parents can use parental controls on Xbox and PC to limit the time a child is playing games on these devices. Be aware that the game is available on iOS and will soon be available on all mobiles. With this in mind, it is worth having a conversation with your child to discuss and agree how long you would like them to play the games for. Even though the games last around 20 minutes, it may be difficult to take them away from a game mid play. It may be worth imposing a limit on the amount of matches they play rather than a time limit.

### LOOK OUT FOR VBUCK SCAMS

It is important that your children are aware of the scams that they may come across online in association with the game. Open up conversation with them about scams and how they should never share their username or password with people in order to gain anything for the game.

### SHOW THEM HOW TO MAKE A REPORT

If your child believes a player is playing or talking inappropriately, you should advise them to report them. To report a player, you can use the in-game feedback tool located in the Main Menu of the game. Additionally, you can report a player in-game when spectating them.

### PREVENT YOUR CHILD FROM TALKING TO STRANGERS

There is an option to turn off the voice chat feature, which means your child wouldn't be able to talk to anybody, including their friends. However, they would still be able to use the in-app chat and hear other people's conversations. To turn off voice chat, open the Settings menu in the top right of the main Fortnite page, then click on the cog icon. Open the Audio tab at the top of the screen. From there, you can turn off voice chat.

### RESTRICT PAYMENT METHODS

'Fortnite: Battle Royale' is a free to play game, but there are still options to make additional purchases. If you do not want your child to make payments, ensure your card is not associated with their account. If you are happy for your child to make payments in the game, but want to restrict spending, we suggest using a paysafecard, or a games console gift card. These can be purchased in specific amounts, which will allow you to restrict the amount your child spends and removes the need for a credit/debit card to be used with their account.

### USE A STRONG PASSWORD

It may seem like a simple tip, but it is important that your child selects a strong password when creating an account, particularly if a credit/debit card is associated with the account. This will help reduce the risk of their account being hacked.



National Online Safety

A whole school community approach to online safety  
[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)

Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061





**ROBLOX**  
Powering Imagination

According to the Roblox website, 'Roblox is the world's largest interactive social platform for play.' For those of you who are unfamiliar with the game, it is a multi-player online gaming platform which allows children to play and create a variety of games in a 3D world. Roblox is free to play and available on all modern smartphones, tablets, desktops, Xbox One, Oculus Rift, and HTC Vive.



AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

# What parents need to know about **ROBLOX**

## ROBLOX STUDIO

The Roblox Studio allows users to create their own games and 'worlds' for others to play on the platform. As the games are user generated, it gives users the freedom to potentially include things you do not want your child to be exposed to, for example, weapons, violence and even pornographic content. There are no age restrictions on the games created in the Roblox Studio and to remove games from the platform Roblox relies on people reporting negative/violent content.



## CHATTING & FRIEND REQUESTS

Whilst the games in Roblox are aimed at 8 to 18-year-olds, there are currently no age restrictions for signing up. This means that both adults and young people can play and communicate with each other and send friend requests through the platform. Once a friend request is accepted, this means that they can communicate with each other outside of gameplay.



## ROBUX ONLINE PAYMENTS

When a user creates a game, they earn something called 'Robux,' which works as a currency within the platform and enables the purchase of upgrades and memberships. If the created game is of good quality and attracts multiple players and in-game adverts, children have the ability to earn a lot of 'Robux.' Once a user has earned a certain amount of Robux, they can convert this to real cash and withdraw it to a PayPal account. To withdraw money, users need to be over 13, have a PayPal account and have paid for the Roblox premium subscription.



National  
Online  
Safety

# Top Tips for Parents

**ALERT!**  
Tell your children to be careful and to think twice before they click any random advert or popup. There a lot of phishing scams that advertise free roblox etc. with the intent of stealing your child's personal information.

## UNLIST SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Make sure your child's social media accounts are not listed in the settings/account information. If they are, advise them to set them to private or remove them from their account. This will ensure that nobody will be able to find and contact them on their social media platforms outside of Roblox.



## CHECK SHARED INFORMATION

In the account settings, check that your child is not giving away any personal information in their bio/profile. For example, their full name, phone number or snapchat name. If you see that they have, explain why this is potentially dangerous and remove immediately.

## 2-STEP VERIFICATION

Roblox has a great two-step verification security feature which we recommend you enable to add an extra layer of security to your child's account.

## HAVE A CHAT ABOUT 'GRIEFING'

Griefing is when someone purposely upsets another player in a game. This can be done by setting traps, damaging or stealing something from another player, intentionally killing them and generally doing something in the game to spoil their gameplay. Essentially, 'Griefing' is a form of cyberbullying and can be extremely frustrating and upsetting for players.

## RESTRICT PAYMENT METHODS

Roblox is a free to play game, but there are still options to make additional in-game purchases. If you do not want your child to make payments, ensure your card is not associated with their account. If you are happy for your child to make payments in the game, but want to restrict spending, we suggest using a games console gift card. These can be purchased in specific amounts, which will enable you to restrict how much your child spends and removes the need for a credit/debit card to be used with their account.

## DISABLE IN-GAME CHAT

Roblox is great for children to play together and chat to each other. However, if you want to completely turn off in-game chat for your child (meaning they cannot contact anyone, including their friends) you can do so by following these steps: When logged in, go to the Account Settings page by clicking on the gear icon at the top right corner of the page, then click Settings. Next, click on the Privacy tab and under 'Who can chat with me in game?' select 'No one' and this will disable in-game chat.

## IS YOUR CHILD UNDER 13?

Unfortunately, there are hundreds of YouTube videos showing children how to change their age settings on Roblox, so firstly, you should talk to your child to set up some rules/an agreement. There are additional safety features for children under 13, for example having their posts and chats filtered for inappropriate content and behaviour, so it is worth checking that your child has set up their account with the correct age. You can find this in their account settings.

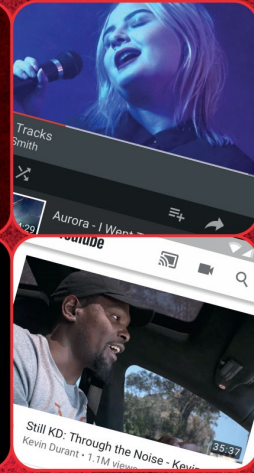
SOURCES: [corp.roblox.com](http://corp.roblox.com) and press kit - All images shown belong to Roblox ©2018 Roblox Corporation. Roblox, the Roblox logo, Roblox, Bloxy, and Powering Imagination are among our registered and unregistered trademarks in the U.S. and other countries.



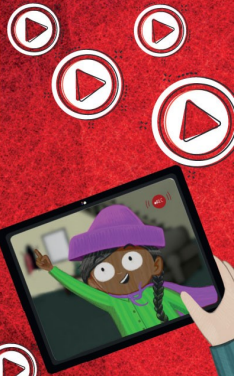
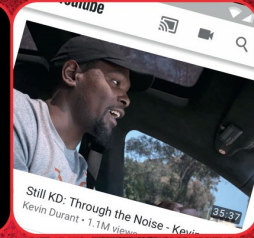
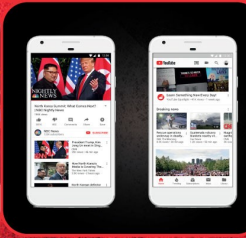




YouTube is a video sharing site/application that enables you to upload, view, rate, share and comment on a wide variety of videos. Consisting of a huge resource of information, advice and entertainment, YouTube now has 1.9 billion logged-in monthly users who watch a billion hours of video daily. Most of the content on Google-owned YouTube is uploaded by individuals, but organisations and media companies also offer some of their content via this platform.



AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**



# What parents need to know about YouTube

## SPENDING A PREMIUM

YouTube Premium (formerly YouTube Red) is a new paid streaming subscription service in the UK, offering a three-month free trial to tempt viewers into a £12-per-month plan. This includes the ability to download videos, stream videos with the app in the background, gives exclusive access to original content and a separate music streaming service and gaming app.



## DANGEROUS 'CHALLENGE' & VIRAL VIDEOS

On YouTube, 'challenge videos' are shared quickly and can be very dangerous. One person may post a video of themselves doing something unusual like eating a hot chilli or jumping in a river and before you know it, the video goes viral and everyone wants to join in and share their videos. The speed in which challenge videos spread across the Internet makes it difficult to keep up with the latest ones.

## SHARING VIDEOS

As well as watching videos, many children are keen to share their own videos online, emulating their YouTube heroes, such as Stampy or DanTDM. However, if they post something on YouTube, they may later regret it or feel embarrassed about what they have shared. There is also a risk that they will receive hurtful or negative comments regarding not only their content, but also their appearance. YouTube's comment section is infamous for being one of the most opinionated on the Internet.

## IN-APP MESSAGING

When your child is logged into their Google account and browsing the YouTube website, they can share and talk about videos with their friends using the chat bubble. This can be found at the top right of the desktop site or through in-app messaging on their mobile or tablet. When they tap on the 'Friends' icon, they have a list of suggested people from their contacts - which can be any contact they've had on Google or somebody who has sent them an invite link.

## AGE-INAPPROPRIATE VIDEOS

As YouTube is the biggest video sharing website in the world, there is content available for all ages, meaning that some content will not be appropriate for your child. If you think that content is unsuitable, there is a flagging feature to submit it for review by YouTube staff, but you will need to be aware that just because video is not appropriate for a younger audience, it may not violate YouTube's policies. YouTube has mechanisms in place to automatically remove explicit and harmful content, yet offensive content may still slip through.



National Online Safety

# Top Tips for Parents

## TURN ON 'RESTRICTED' MODE

'Restricted Mode' is an optional setting you can use to help screen out potentially mature content you may prefer your child not to see. Restricted Mode works on the browser or device level, so must be turned on for each browser or device your child uses. To do this, follow these steps:

### Desktop:

- Go to the bottom of any YouTube page and switch 'Restricted Mode' to 'ON'.
- To make it more difficult for this to be turned off, you will be given the option to lock restricted mode onto your browser.

### Mobile:

- Tap the three vertical dots at the top-right on the screen and press, 'Settings'.
- Click on 'Restricted mode filtering'.
- Press 'Restrict'.

Please note that you can't 'lock' restricted mode on a phone in the same way that you can on a desktop. You will need to turn this on each time your child uses it.

## CREATE A FAMILY GOOGLE ACCOUNT

By having a shared family Google account, checking the history will enable you to see exactly what your child is watching and sharing on YouTube. To see the history on a computer, on the right hand menu under the library section, click 'History'. On mobiles, the viewing history can be found by clicking on the 'Library' tab.

## YOUTUBE KIDS - PARENT APPROVED CONTENT

On the YouTube Kids platform, parents can now handpick videos and channels for their children to view, giving parents and guardians full control over what their children view on the app. Simply enable the feature within the account settings and select 'approved content only'. It's important to note that this feature is only currently available on Android devices.

## BLOCKING ACCOUNTS

When using YouTube, there may be instances where your child receives negative comments. If somebody's giving your child a difficult time, here's how to block them and prevent future comments and replies:

- Go to their channel/account by clicking on their name.
- Click on 'About'.
- Tap the dropdown box with an image of a flag on it.
- Press 'Block user'.
- Tap 'Submit'.

## MONITOR WHAT YOUR CHILD IS WATCHING/POSTING

The only way to truly know what your child may have been watching is to regularly monitor them. You can do this by checking their viewing history. YouTube videos can also be easily downloaded, so it is important that your child understands the associated dangers of content they are uploading and that it could harm their online reputation in the future. Show them how to set their videos to private or choose a small network of YouTubers to share with. To get started, your child can use YouTube Studio which offers learning modules on creating a YouTube channel, however, you should encourage them not to use their real name.

## DIGITAL WELLBEING

YouTube has launched a tool called 'Time Watched' that allows you to see how long has been spent on the platform. Once you have discovered how much time has been spent on the app, there is the option to set a time limit. Once the limit is reached, a reminder will pop up on the screen. You can also disable sounds and vibrations to help resist the urge to check for notifications.

## OPT FOR A FAMILY PREMIUM PLAN

A YouTube family Premium plan may be a cost-effective option if you have more than one child. For £17.99 a month, it allows you to share a YouTube paid membership with up to five other family members - aged 13 and older - living in the same household. As the account holder, or family manager, you must create a Google family account.

## MANAGING IN-APP MESSAGES

If your child is accessing YouTube via your account, bear in mind that they may be contacted by Google contacts who are complete strangers to them. You can remove someone from the suggested contacts list by pressing and holding the person's name and tapping on the red 'x'.

## YOUTUBE GAMING

YouTube has created its own destination for gamers, which highlights the top gaming videos from the user's subscriptions, including live streams. There are hundreds of YouTube accounts which show other people playing and commenting on games. These are called 'Let's Play' videos. While YouTube can be a great resource for hints, tips and news for games, it is a good idea for parents to keep a close eye on what YouTube's are posting. Often, the games they are playing will contain strong language and violence. A few examples of popular YouTube gamers for you to have a look at are:

- Stampy
- Yogscast Lewis & Simon
- PewDiePie
- EthanGamer
- Markiplier

- PopularMMOs
- Captainsparklez
- Jacksepticeye
- LtCorbis
- Dan TDM



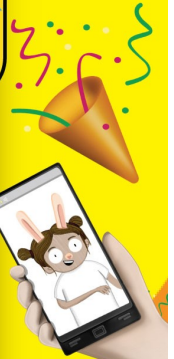
SOURCES: <https://www.thesun.co.uk/tech/6702517/youtube-prem-videos-roblox-sex-games-watch-online/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-frgnP96M>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2xy7hc-hc>, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5126833/Terrifying-truth-child-watches-YouTube.html>, <https://www.todaysparent.com/family/crazy-youtube-challenges-kids-are-doing/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4yek0Jb0Sg>, <https://tocaboca.com/magazine/common-sense-media-youtube/>, <http://familytech.com/so-your-kid-wants-to-start-their-own-youtube-channel/>, <https://www.laptopmag.com/articles/block-someone-youtube>, <https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-gb/yt/about/brand-resources/#logos-icons-colors>, <https://www.common SenseMedia.org/blog/popular-youtube-gamers-kids-cant-get-enough-of-stamp>





AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

Snapchat is a photo sharing app for mobile phones and tablets. The app allows users to share images, videos and chat with friends. Users can share images and videos directly to specific friends, or through a 'story' shared with their entire friend list, which documents the previous 24 hours. In a study, Snapchat was ranked the 4th most negative app in terms of having an impact on young people's health and wellbeing, with children feeling that they can use the app Snapchat to "make you look pretty."



# What parents need to know about SNAPCHAT

## EXPOSING YOUR CHILD'S EXACT LOCATION

The 'Snap Map' lets you share your EXACT location in real-time through a map on the app. The user's location updates when the app has been opened on the device. There is a warning on the Snapchat website about uploading images and videos to 'Our Story', stating that "snaps you submit to 'Our Story' can still show up on the Map, no matter which location setting you choose!" When uploading to 'Our Story', your child's image or video could appear in "Search results and Stories on or off Snapchat - today or in the future."

## LENS EXPLORER

The 'Lens Studio' on Snapchat gives users the freedom to use their imagination to design their own filters for themselves and others to use. Snapchat states that the lenses users create "must comply with our Lens Studio Submission Guidelines and Community Guidelines and must be appropriate for Snapchatters ages 13+." The 'Lens Explorer' in the app now enables users to choose from thousands of these creations to alter their snaps. Anyone can create a lens for Snapchat, which gives opportunities for age-inappropriate content to be uploaded.

## SCREENSHOTS & SAVED MESSAGES

While Snapchat's gimmick is that all photos, videos and text disappear eventually, users still have the capability to screenshot or record anything which has been sent to them. Users may sometimes forget that screenshotting is possible and send a compromising image or message to somebody who they think they trust. They may also accidentally send an image or message to somebody who they do not trust. Simply by pressing and holding a message, the user is able to save a message they have received, which can be screenshotted or used against them at a later date.

## SNAPSTREAKS & ADDICTION

'Snap Streaks' are gained when snaps have been sent back and forth consecutively between friends. The longer that snaps are sent between users, the longer the streak becomes. Furthermore, Snapchat rewards users who have achieved high Snap Streaks, by gifting emojis, adding incentives for users to keep the streaks. Children invest time into making their streaks as long as possible, which can put an incredible amount of pressure on both themselves and their friendships.

## SEXTING

Due to 'Snaps' disappearing, (users can even send a one-second photo or video), Snapchat has become the chosen platform for children and young people to send sexually explicit images or 'selfies.' Once a photo/video has been screenshotted, or recorded using another device or software, this can lead to further dangers, such as blackmail and cyberbullying. It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images, photos and videos that a child may have taken of themselves. However, if a young person is found creating or sharing images, the police can choose to record that a crime has been committed, but taking formal action isn't in the public interest.

## SNAP ORIGINALS

Through 'Snap Originals', users can watch content which has been created by Snapchat on the app, including comedy shows, drama, news and more. Additionally, there are new lenses and filters available, inspired by the 'snap originals' shows. This is another feature to encourage addiction.



# Top Tips for Parents



## THE RISKS OF SEXTING

It can be slightly awkward talking about this topic with your child, but if it helps them protect themselves, it is worth it. Talk to them about the consequences of sexting and make sure that they're aware of the risks. Ensure your child knows that 'Snaps' can be screenshotted. Teach them that if they post anything potentially embarrassing or harmful (either of themselves or someone else) it can have severe consequences as the message, image or video can be shared further.

## REPORTING A STORY, LENS, FILTER, SNAP OR MESSAGE

If your child comes across inappropriate Snapchat content sent directly to them or in another person's story, advise them to report it immediately. This may include an inappropriate lens, filter, message or snap. To report an offensive lens, they should open the app and select the lens they want to report. An info button will appear above the lens. Click this, followed by the flag icon. This will send a report to Snapchat for further investigation. Reports can also be made on the Snapchat support website: [support.snapchat.com](http://support.snapchat.com).

## USE 'GHOST MODE'

We highly recommend enabling 'Ghost Mode' on the app so that your child's location will no longer be visible to anyone on the 'Snap Map.' To enable this, go onto the Snap Map and tap the cog in the top-right corner. Here, change the setting to 'Ghost Mode.'

## HOW TO DELETE A MESSAGE

Advise your child never to send any negative messages (or images through gallery in the chat on the app) as screenshots can still be taken. You should also advise your child to screenshot any negative comments they receive as the sender can also delete them. To delete a message, simply press and hold the sent message and press delete.

## TURN OFF 'QUICK ADD'

'Quick Add' helps friends find each other on the app. This is based on mutual friends or if their number is in their phone book. Explain to your child that this feature can open up their profile to strangers. We highly recommend that your child turns off the 'Quick Add' feature. This can be done in the settings.

## RESTRICT STORY VIEWS

Your child can add videos and images to their 'Story' throughout the day which will last for 24 hours. By default, anyone in a user's friends list can see their story. We recommend checking the privacy settings to ensure that this has not been edited. This can simply be done in the app's settings under the 'Who Can View My Story' section. The options to choose from are 'My Friends', 'Everyone' or 'Custom' - we suggest that it is set to 'My Friends.'



\*#~@!



**National Online Safety**

A whole school community approach to online safety  
[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)

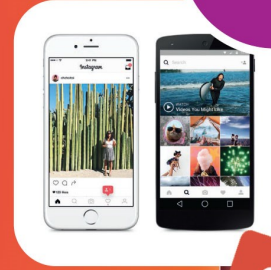
Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061



AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**



Instagram is an image and video sharing app that allows users to share moments with the world. The app has a live streaming feature and additional add-ons, such as 'Boomerang,' 'Hyperlapse' and 'Layout,' which can be used to enhance their feed. Users can choose to add filters and make adjustments, such as brightness / contrast to their photos. To make their content more 'searchable,' users can include hashtags in their uploads to make them easier to find.



# What parents need to know about INSTAGRAM



## LIVE STREAMING TO STRANGERS

The live stream feature on Instagram allows users to connect with their friends and followers in real-time. Followers can comment on the video during the broadcast (which can be turned off in the settings). If your child has a private account, only their approved followers can see their story. It is important to note that they still may have followers that they do not know, which means they could be live streaming to strangers. A public account allows anybody to view their story. We suggest that your child goes through their followers list and blocks anyone they do not know. An additional risk with live streams is that your child may do something that they regret. This could be captured by a viewer taking a screenshot and then shared around the Internet.

## IN-APP PAYMENTS

Instagram allows payments for products directly through the app. It operates under the same rules as Facebook Payments, which state that if you are under the age of 18, you can only use this feature with the involvement of a parent or guardian.

## DAMAGE TO CONFIDENCE, BODY IMAGE & MENTAL HEALTH

When people use filters on their photos on Instagram, it can set unrealistic expectations and create feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem in children. Children may strive for a comparable number of 'likes' to a realistically edited with the risk of drastically lowering your child's confidence or sense of self-worth.

## PHOTO / VIDEO SHARING

Posting photos and videos is Instagram's biggest selling point, but with sharing images comes risks. A photo which includes landmarks in the area, their school uniform, street name, house and even tagging in the location of the photo uploaded to Instagram can expose the child's location, making it easy to locate them. If their account is not set to private, anyone can access their account and see their location.

## LOCATION TAGGING

Public locations can be added to a user's photos/videos and also to their stories. While this may seem like a good idea at the time, it can expose the location of your child. This is particularly more of a risk if it is on their story, as it is real time.

## HIJACKED HASHTAGS

Like Twitter, hashtags are also an extremely prominent tool in Instagram and with that comes dangers for your child. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag with one particular thing in mind, and before you know it hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that your child certainly shouldn't be exposed to.

## INSTAGRAM TV

Instagram TV works similarly to YouTube. Users can watch videos from their favourite accounts on the platform, or create their own channel and post their own videos. It's important to note that anyone can create their own Instagram TV channel and you don't have to be friends with a person to follow an account and watch their videos. Ultimately, features are encouraging users to spend more time on the app, therefore it's important to set time limits and ensure their devices are not disturbing their sleep and performance at school.

# Top Tips for Parents



## REMOVE PAYMENT METHODS

If you are happy for your child to have a card associated with their Instagram account, we suggest adding a PIN which needs to be entered before making a payment; this will also help prevent unauthorised purchases. This can be added in the payment settings tab.

## RESTRICT MESSAGES

If your child's account is not set to private, anybody can message them and reply to their stories. If they do wish to keep their account public, we strongly recommend changing the message reply settings to restrict who can message them.

## USE A PRIVATE ACCOUNT

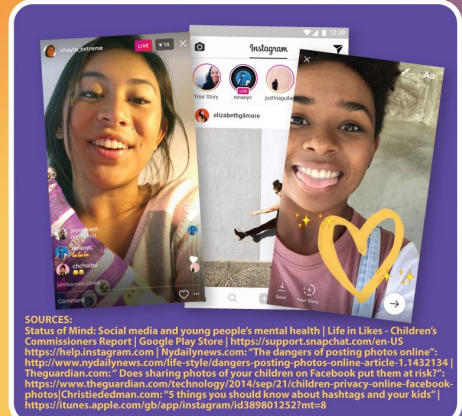
By default, any image or video your child uploads to Instagram is visible to anyone. A private account means that you have to approve a request if somebody wants to follow you and only people you approve will see your posts and videos.

## FILTER INAPPROPRIATE COMMENTS

Instagram announced on 1st May that they now have an 'anti-bullying' filter on the app. This new filter hides comments relating to a person's appearance or character, as well as threats to a person's wellbeing or health. The filter will also alert Instagram to repeated problems so they can take action against the user if necessary. This is an automatic filter, but it can be turned off. Make sure this is turned on in the app's settings.

## TURN OFF SHARING

Even though this feature will not stop people from taking screenshots, it will stop others being able to directly share photos and videos from a story as a message to another user. This feature can be turned off in the settings. We also recommend turning off the feature which automatically shares photos and videos from a story to a Facebook account.



SOURCES:  
Status of Mind: Social media and young people's mental health | Life in Likes - Children's Commissioners Report | Google Play Store | <https://support.snapchat.com/en-US>  
<https://help.instagram.com> | <http://nydailynews.com>: "The dangers of posting photos online"  
<http://www.nydailynews.com>: "Life-style dangers: posting photos online article - 1,143,134 | Theguardian.com: "Does sharing photos of your children on Facebook put them at risk?"  
<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/sep/21/children-privacy-online-facebook-photos>: "ChristieEdman.com: "5 things you should know about hashtags and your kids"  
<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/instagram/id38901252?mt=8>

\* # @ \$



A whole school community approach to online safety  
**www.nationalonlinesafety.com**  
Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061





AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**



Twitter is a social networking site where users can post 'tweets' or short messages, photos and videos publicly. They can also share 'tweets' written by others to their followers. Twitter is popular with young people, as it allows them to interact with celebrities, stay up to date with news, trends and current social relevance.



What parents need to know about

# Twitter



## TWITTER TROLLS

A 'troll' is somebody who deliberately posts negative or offensive comments online in a bid to provoke an individual for a reaction. Trolling, can include bullying, harassment, stalking, virtual mobbing and much more; it is very common on Twitter. The motive may be that the 'troll' wishes to promote an opinion or make people laugh, however, the pragmatics of what they post could be much more damaging, posting anything from racial, homophobic to sexist hate. Trolling can lead to devastating consequences for some victims.

## INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Twitter gives users the opportunity and freedom to post their personal thoughts and opinions, meaning they can pretty much post anything they want despite restrictions on the platform. Swearing and inappropriate language is allowed if it does not violate the rules. If your child sees any inappropriate content, they might feel the need to replicate it at home or amongst their peers. Additionally, there are also a number of unofficial pornographic profiles on the platform that can easily be found and viewed without restrictions.

## FAKE PROFILES

Fake Twitter accounts are made to impersonate a person, celebrity or public figure. As the accounts are not endorsed by the person they are pretending to be, they can often be used to scam or take advantage of young people who think that they're the real deal.

## FAKE NEWS

The speed in which 'tweets' are shared on Twitter can be unbelievably fast, meaning that fake news can often be circulated across the platform very quickly. Fake news articles and posts can often be harmful and upsetting to young people and those associated with the fake news. In addition to this, it's very easy for people to quickly and unexpectedly retweet a tweet posted by your child, meaning there is no going back.

## HIJACKED HASHTAGS

One of the most commonly used aspects of Twitter is the hashtag (#) - these allow users to easily search for specific trends, topics or subjects. However, due to the astronomical number of Twitter users, many hashtags can have 'different' intentions. One person may use a seemingly innocent hashtag, and before you know it, hundreds of people could be using the same hashtag for something inappropriate or dangerous that your child shouldn't be exposed to. This is common with 'trending' tweets, as people know that their tweet will be seen by a greater number of people.

## MEMES NORMALISING RACISM, SEXISM AND HOMOPHOBIA

Twitter is a popular platform for sharing internet memes, helping to make concepts or ideas go viral across the internet. However, despite most memes being innocent and harmless, some often include sexist, racist or homophobic messages. Although they are typically sent as a joke, this type of content is contributing to the normalisation of topics including racism, sexism and homophobia.

## PROPAGANDA, EXTREMISM & RADICALISATION

Social media offers a continuous stream of real-time coverage of extremist activity. Twitter is one of the many platforms that is exploited by extremist groups to help promote violence, radicalise and recruit people to support their cause. These groups cleverly target vulnerable victims, often young people, and find a way to manipulate them into supporting their beliefs.

## EVERYONE HAS ACCESS

Twitter has over 335 million monthly active users across all age groups. When a user signs up, tweets are public by default, meaning anyone can view and interact with posts instantly. Your child may change their mind about a tweet they have posted but even if they delete it, there's always a chance that someone can screenshot, retweet it or post it onto another platform.

# Top Tips for Parents

## CHECK ACCOUNT SETTINGS

We strongly advise that you thoroughly check your child's privacy settings. To take away some of the fear of your child's tweets being shared by anyone, you can always make their account protected. This means that anyone who wants to view what your child has posted, it requires approval from them. In addition to this, you can change the settings so that they cannot receive 'direct' messages from anyone on the platform and that their location is not shared.

## BLOCKING & REPORTING

If a particular account is causing your child trouble on Twitter, whether it's cyberbullying or upsetting content, you can simply block and report them. Blocking them will help to prevent them from viewing, messaging or following your child, and vice versa. Reporting an account will alert Twitter to investigate the profile.

## MUTING ACCOUNTS

The 'mute' feature allows your child to remove an account's tweets from their timeline without unfollowing or blocking them. This means your child will stop getting notifications about a particular conversation but can still view it in their timeline. This can be useful if they are friends with someone but don't really like what they share. The other user will not know that they have been banned.

## TWITTER TROLLS & THE LAW

From 2016, the CPS were able to exercise new laws that could see those who create 'derogatory hashtags' or post 'humiliating' photoshopped images jailed. They also announced the launch of a hate crime consultation, issuing a series of public policy statements centred on combating crimes against disabled people, as well as racial, religious, homophobic and transphobic hate crime. It's important your child knows about building a positive online reputation, as well as showing respect for others online and offline.

## SENSITIVE CONTENT

By default, if Twitter has found a tweet that 'may contain sensitive content', Twitter will hide the content in the news feed and you will be shown a warning that states the content is sensitive. You then have the option to view it or not. This gives a chance for you to moderate potentially harmful images/videos before your child sees them. Unfortunately, some content may slip through the cracks and will be shown in the news feed. So, if you do see any sensitive content, you can report it. Twitter should then inspect the tweet and decide whether they deem it to be 'sensitive'.

## MUTE HASHTAGS & PHRASES

Within the account settings, you have the ability to block certain words, hashtags or phrases from your child's timeline or notifications (e.g. swear words, inappropriate phrases, emojis, etc.).

## TURN OFF VIDEO AUTOPLAY

'Autoplay' is a feature that automatically starts playing a new video seconds after another one ends on the platform. To avoid your child going from watching something innocent and harmless to something much more graphic or disturbing, you can turn this feature off in the settings and easily moderate the videos your child watches before they see them.

## CONVERSATION & MONITORING

We always promote that you have regular open conversation with your child about their online activity, ensuring that they understand what healthy relationships are, what respect is, and how to be sensitive towards others' feelings. It's also important to monitor what they're doing online, including what they use the platform for, who they are talking to, and if they are viewing/taking part in anything that they shouldn't be. Discuss the dangers of the online world, such as fake news and online bullying - why do people involve themselves in these activities and what your child can do to prevent them.

## TWITTER LISTS

Twitter lists allow your child to create other feeds besides the main timeline that only include certain accounts - this is a great way to segment followers based on common topics and interests.

SOURCES: Sources: <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/blocking-and-unblocking-accounts> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/twitter-location-services-for-mobile> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/managing-your-account/two-factor-authentication> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/using-twitter/advanced-twitter-muteoptions> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/how-to-make-twitter-private-and-public> | <https://help.twitter.com/en/safety-and-security/public-and-protected-tweets> | <https://www.statista.com/statistics/493795/twitter-most-retweeted-posts/> | [Smallbiztrends.com: 'What is Hashtag Hijacking?'](https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html) | <https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html> | [Christiededman.com: '5 things you should know about hashtags and your kids'](https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html) | <https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html> | <https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/08/what-is-hashtag-hijacking-2.html>



A whole school community approach to online safety  
**www.nationalonlinesafety.com**

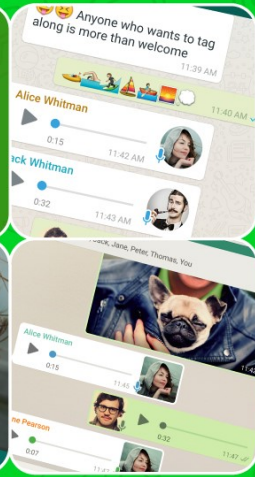
Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061



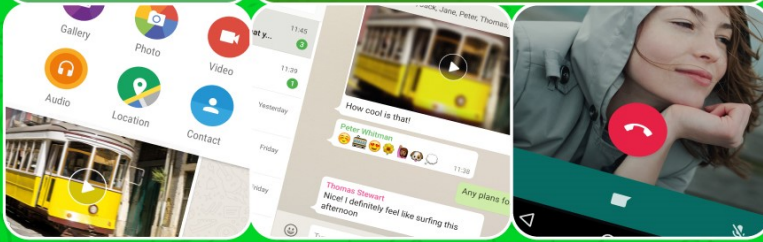




WhatsApp is one of the most popular messaging apps in the world, with more than 1.5 billion people in more than 180 countries using it to send and receive text, photos, videos and documents, as well as make voice and video calls through an Internet or Wi-Fi connection. The free app offers end-to-end encryption, which means that messages can only be read by the sender and the recipient in one-to-one chats, or all members if it is a group chat. Not even WhatsApp can read them.



AGE RESTRICTION  
**16+**



What parents need to know about

# WhatsApp



**AGE LIMIT CHANGE**  
Since May 2018, the minimum age for using WhatsApp is 16 years old if you live in the European Union, including the UK. Prior to this, the minimum age was 13, which still applies for the rest of the world. WhatsApp has not yet stated whether it will take action against anyone aged between 13 and 16 who already hold accounts under the old terms and conditions, such as closing their account or seeking parental permission.

**FAKE NEWS AND HOAXES**  
WhatsApp has been linked to enabling the spread of dangerous viral rumours. In India, for example, a number of attacks appear to have been sparked by false rumours shared on WhatsApp.

**CONNECTING WITH STRANGERS**  
To start a chat in WhatsApp, you need to know the mobile number of the contact you want to speak to and they also need to have the app downloaded. WhatsApp can find contacts by accessing the address book of a device and recognising which of those contacts are using WhatsApp. If your child has shared their mobile number with somebody they don't know, they can use it to get in touch via WhatsApp.

**SCAM MESSAGES**  
Occasionally on WhatsApp, people receive spam messages from unauthorised third parties or from fraudsters pretending to offer prizes to 'lucky people', encouraging recipients to click on a link to win a prize. A common scam involves messages warning recipients that their WhatsApp subscription has run out with the hope that people are duped into providing their payment details. Other scam messages include instructions to forward the message in return for a reward or gift from WhatsApp or another person.

**THE 'ONLY ADMIN' FEATURE AND CYBERBULLYING**  
Cyberbullying is the act of sending threatening or taunting text messages, voice messages, pictures and videos, with the aim to hurt and humiliate the receiver. The group chat and group video call features are great for multiple people to chat simultaneously, but there is the potential for people to hurt others with their comments or jokes. The 'only admin' feature gives the admin of a group chat greater control over who can send messages. Whilst this can be good for one-way announcements, the group admin has the power to block somebody from responding to an offensive message in a chat, which could result in a child being upset and unable to reply.

**LIVE LOCATION SHARING**  
WhatsApp's 'Live Location' feature enables users to share their current location in real time to their contacts in a chat, allowing friends to show their movements. The feature, which can be found by pressing the 'attach' button, is described by WhatsApp as a "simple and secure way to let people know where you are." Location-sharing is already a common feature on other social apps, including Snapchat's Snap Map and Facebook Messenger and can be a useful way for a child to let loved ones know they are safe. However, if your child is in a group chat with people they do not know, they will be exposing their location.



National Online Safety

## Top Tips for Parents



**CREATE A SAFE PROFILE**  
Even though somebody would need your child's phone number to add them as a contact, as an extra security measure we suggest altering their profile settings to control who can see their profile photo and status. The options to choose from are 'Everyone', 'My Contacts' and 'Nobody'. We suggest selecting 'My Contacts' or 'Nobody' to ensure their profile is protected.

**EXPLAIN HOW TO BLOCK PEOPLE**  
If your child has received spam or offensive messages, calls or attachments from a contact, they should block them. Messages and status updates sent by a blocked contact will not show up on the phone and will stay undelivered. Blocking someone will not remove this contact from the contact list – they will need to be removed from the phone's address book. To block a contact, your child needs to open the person's chat stream and tap on the settings.

**REPORT SCAM MESSAGES**  
Advise your child not to tap, share or forward any message that looks suspicious or sounds too good to be true. When your child receives a message from an unknown number for the first time, they will be given the option to report the number as spam directly inside the chat. They can also report a contact or a group as spam using the following steps: 1) Open the chat. 2) Tap on the contact or group name to open their profile information. 3) Scroll to the bottom and tap 'Report Spam'.

**LEAVE A GROUP**  
If your child is part of a group chat that makes them feel uncomfortable or has been added to a group they don't want to be part of, use the group's settings to show them how to leave. If someone exits a group, the admin can add them back in once, if they leave again, they cannot be added again.

**USING LIVE LOCATION SAFELY**  
If your child needs to use the 'Live Location' feature to share with you or a friend, advise them to only share it for the amount of time they need to. WhatsApp gives the options of either 15 minutes, one hour or eight hours. However, your child can choose to stop sharing at any time.

**DELETE ACCIDENTAL MESSAGES**  
If your child has sent a message to the wrong chat or if a message they sent has contained a mistake, they can delete it. To do this, simply tap and hold on the message, choose 'Delete' and then 'Delete for everyone'. The app allows seven minutes to delete the message after it has been sent, but it is important to remember that recipients may have seen and screenshot a message before it was deleted.

**SET TIME LIMITS**  
A 2017 study found that by the age of 14 the average child will have sent more than 35,000 texts, 30,000 WhatsApp messages and racked up more than three solid weeks of video chat. Although it is inevitable that your child will use technology, you can still set boundaries. This is not easy, especially since teens use their devices for both schoolwork and free time, often simultaneously.

SOURCES: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/apr/26/whatsapp-plans-to-ban-under-16s-the-mystery-is-how>, <https://whatsappbrand.com/>, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/gadgets-and-tech/news/whatsapp-update-latest-india-hoaxes-forward-messages-app-download-a8456011.html>







# kik

Kik (or Kik Messenger) is a free messaging app used by 300 million people worldwide that lets users exchange messages, photos, videos, GIFs and webpages via a Wi-Fi connection or data plan. Kik is unusual in that your child can sign up without a phone number and then find and message other people via just their username. Kik is aimed at anyone aged 13 years and older – the app says teens between 13 and 18 years old will need parental permission but it does not verify ages.



AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**

1 new message

## What parents need to know about

# Kik



### CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & GROOMING

Police in the UK have warned that Kik has featured in 'more than 1,100 child sexual abuse cases in the last five years' and that 'children are at risk' on the app. Offences involving the app include child sexual exploitation, grooming, and image violations. Kik has also been identified by US police as being used by sex predators, and they say it is responsible for several recent incidents involving children, including the murder of a 13-year-old girl by a man she met via Kik.

### FAKE OR ANONYMOUS PROFILES

What makes Kik unique to most other private messaging apps is the fact that it doesn't require a phone number as it works through Wi-Fi instead. By using a username, your child can avoid sharing personal information with others on Kik, but on the flipside, this makes it far easier for people to remain anonymous or to create a fake persona.

### SEXUAL PREDATORS

Some people may use Kik with the intention of targeting children. Typically, this is a subtle and a potentially dangerous individual who will initially portray themselves as a friend who 'understands' a child. They may also lie about their age and it's possible that your child could be manipulated by a stranger into doing regrettable or illegal activities, and maybe even meeting them in real life.

### JOINING PUBLIC GROUPS

As soon as Kik is downloaded, your child can join public groups to chat with up to 49 others about anything from music, to sports, to travel by searching for topics they are interested in. However, groups can include inappropriate names and content. There are also private groups on Kik that can be joined by scanning a group Kik code or if they're added by someone on their contact list.

### SEXTING

Due to the general ease of sharing photos and videos, sexting has been reported on the app. These messages can be screen-captured or copied at the press of a button, which could lead to further dangers, such as blackmail and cyberbullying. It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images, photos and videos that a child may have taken of themselves.

### KIK 'BOTS'

Users can add 'bots' to their friends list and communicate with them on the app. 'Bots' are automated software programs built into the app that mimic conversation – developers, brands and Kik can create 'bots' to communicate with any Kik user who has opted to start a conversation with them. Kik has been associated with 'pornbots' and 'spambots', which try to lure users into clicking on links or porn websites by using suggestive and often personalised messages.

### VIDEO CHAT

Your child can take part in a live video chat with their friends in a one-to-one chat, or with up to six friends at a time in a private group chat. There is the danger that conversations can be recorded and shared without their knowledge, and with live video conversations, your child is at risk of seeing or hearing content that is inappropriate, sexual or violent.

### PERSONAL OR COMPROMISING USERNAMES

As Kik works with usernames and not phone numbers, some people may search for clues as to who someone is in real life, based on their name. For example, if your child uses their real name or something similar, strangers could potentially find out their identity and even start looking for them on other social media platforms.

## Top Tips for Parents

### CHOOSING A USERNAME

When setting up a Kik account, ensure that your child knows the importance of a secure username and why it shouldn't contain ANY clues as to who they are in real life – especially their first or last name. Get them to choose a username that is hard to guess, using a combination of letters and numbers.

### SHARING USERNAMES

Explain to your child that sharing usernames on social media channels, such as Twitter, Instagram or Facebook, will make it visible to people they might not know – and they'll be able to message your child. If your child joins a group, anyone within that group will be able to see their username. Your teen will have a Kik Code that's unique to them and lets your child connect with anyone that scans the unique code; encourage your child not to share their Kik Code with anyone they don't trust.

### DEACTIVATING ACCOUNTS

If your child is under 13, you can submit a deactivation request to Kik by emailing [support@kik.com](mailto:support@kik.com). Use the subject line 'Parent Inquiry' and include your child's Kik username and age in your message. If your child is over 13 and you want to close their account, you will need access to the email address registered to their account before you visit <https://ws.kik.com/deactivate>.

### FIND GENUINE FRIENDS

The Kik app includes an optional feature that your child can turn on to help find real friends on Kik. The feature works by checking for accounts in Kik that match an email address or phone number stored in contacts (on a smartphone). If the app finds a match, it will notify both your child and their friend with a Kik message.

### SHOW HOW TO BLOCK & REPORT

Teach your child how to block and report users on the app. Kik's 'block' feature lets users block all contact with another user, without revealing to the other user that they've been blocked. The blocked user's name will no longer appear in contacts in Kik. Your child can also report a group if they think it's offensive or being used for abuse. Some users of Kik have reported that they receive sexually explicit, automated messages over the app – this is when automated spam bots have been created to distribute explicit images and texts using the service. Your child can use the 'Report' feature to report spam. Once reported, there's the option to keep or remove the chat from the conversation list. If conversations are saved, Kik will automatically block the spam account but save the chat history.

### DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS

If your child knows not to talk to anyone they don't know in real life, the risks of using Kik are drastically lowered. Alternatively, if any stranger happens to send your child a message, teach them to ignore it.

### COMMUNICATION IS KEY

If your child sees something disturbing, pornographic, deviant or otherwise troubling, they may be left confused and in need of somebody to explain it to them. As such, tell your child that you are always there to help them if they need it, and if they start acting differently to normal, calmly ask them why.

### AVOIDING UNEXPECTED IMAGES

Kik censors images from strangers to limit lewd content being shared by surprise. The app will blur all photos in messages when users who have never interacted before contact each other for the first time. Users can only share unblurred images after they have both approved each other.

### USING A VALID EMAIL

According to Kik, it is really important for users to provide a valid and accessible email address when registering their account. This will help to make sure your child is able to receive important emails from the service, such as a link to reset their password, when they need them.

### MUTING OR LEAVING A CHAT

If someone has said something inappropriate to your child through Video Chat, they can mute the user or leave the Video Chat. Tap on the person's Video Chat bubble and a mute icon will appear. When a child mutes themselves, their microphone will be disabled and nobody else in the chat will be able to hear them.

SOURCES:  
<https://www.teensafe.com/blog/everything-a-parent-needs-to-know-about-kik/>  
<https://help.kik.com/hc/en-us/articles/11506089388-Keep-your-Kik-account-private>  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45568276>



National Online Safety

A whole school community approach to online safety  
[www.nationalonlinesafety.com](http://www.nationalonlinesafety.com)

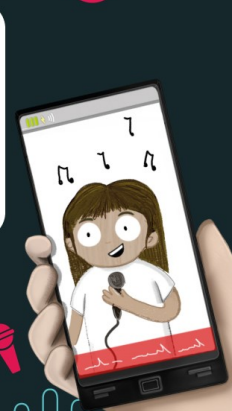
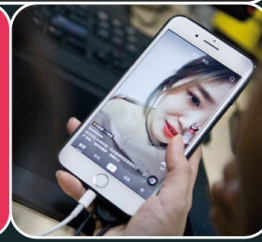
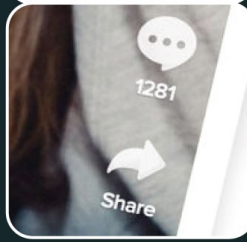
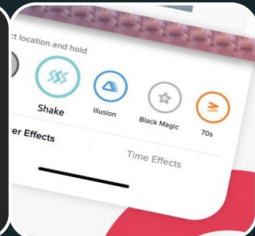
Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061







TikTok is a global video community where users create, share and discover 'funny and memorable moments' via short video clips – typically about 15 seconds long. Videos can be 'spiced up' with special effect filters, stickers, music and sound clips. Currently one of the world's most popular apps, TikTok was formerly known as Musical.ly, before it was rebranded by the Chinese company that acquired it in November 2017. If your child had previously had a Musical.ly account, all of their videos and personal settings will have automatically been moved to TikTok.



## What parents need to know about

# TikTok

**BEING INFLUENCED**  
More than one third of children aged 6-17 consider 'social media stars' to be among their top role models. There are millions of creators on TikTok, showcasing their 'talents, moments and knowledge', from singing to dancing to stunts and comedy skits, which receive thousands of likes and comments from around the world, quickly turning people into 'stars'. There is the danger that children may develop unrealistic expectations of how they should look and behave on the app in order to become the next 'star'. They may have feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem or become swayed by certain opinions.

**INAPPROPRIATE SONG LYRICS**  
TikTok lets users lip-sync to their favourite songs and produce their own music videos. Some of the music choices contain swear words or sexual themes. So not only can children be exposed to potentially inappropriate content but they can broadcast themselves miming or singing these lyrics.

**CONCERNING CONTENT**  
Some of the outfits and dance moves in videos can be overtly sexual and provocative. There have also been reports of some users sharing concerning content, such as videos that promote anorexia, porn, self-harm and violence.

**DANGEROUS TRENDS & CHALLENGES**  
On TikTok, there are always 'trending challenges' and hashtags that users can copy or build upon, and sometimes, these challenges can pose risks to young people.

**STRANGERS CAN FOLLOW YOUR CHILDREN**  
If your child's profile is open, strangers can use the app to comment on your child's videos. While this isn't always sinister, it gives potential predators the ability to contact your child through the platform.

**IN-APP PURCHASES**  
Of course, as with many apps, there's a paid element to TikTok. Users can buy virtual coins to be exchanged for virtual gifts – for example, if they like a specific video, your child can use coins to purchase emojis to show approval. These can be expensive and easily purchased – there is the option to buy 10,000 coins for £97.99 with a one-click buy button.

**ANYONE CAN SEE YOUR CHILD'S CREATIONS**  
TikTok encourages users to 'share their passion and creative expression through their videos' and while something may seem fun at the time, videos can get in the wrong hands and cause embarrassment in the future. If posted publicly, anyone in the world can see your child's homemade music video and potentially cause bullying within personal friendship groups or even online.



## Top Tips for Parents



**TALK ABOUT THE PITFALLS OF OVERSHARING**  
Encourage your kids to always think before they do, say, like or post anything online, explaining that their 'digital footprint' can shape their online reputation and the way that other people see them. Something they may find funny and entertaining now may impact them in the future. Talk about how to deal with peer pressure and how doing something they think will impress others could affect them.

**HANDLING CRITICISM**  
While it's fantastic to see your child being creative and expressive and bonding with people with similar interests, they need to be aware that not everyone will be supportive online. Comments can be negative or even cruel. Make sure they know how to comment respectfully and handle negative feedback. In the app's Privacy and Safety settings, your child can decide who can react to their videos, who can comment, and who can send them private chat messages. We suggest using these settings so only their friends can interact with their posts.

**SIGNING UP WITH THE CORRECT AGE**  
When signing up to TikTok, you are prompted to input your birth date. If your child inputs their age as 'under 13', the app will not allow them to sign up and will be locked for 24 hours. The app is intended for users aged 13+, so explain that the rating is there for a reason; to keep them protected from online dangers. It is actually possible to watch TikTok videos without even creating an account, so it's important to check if your underage child has downloaded the app to their devices.

**USE THE 'DIGITAL WELLBEING' SETTING**  
If you're concerned about the amount of time your child is spending on TikTok, in the app's setting, you can switch on a feature called Digital Wellbeing. This includes 'Screen Management' to limit the amount of time your child spends on the app.

**SET THE ACCOUNT TO PRIVATE**  
This means that only people who you and your child approve of can see their creations. To make an account private, tap the three dots at the top right of the screen to access settings. Click 'Privacy and Safety'. Scroll down until you find 'Private Account' and turn this setting on.

**REPORT INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**  
If you or your child see something on TikTok that appears to be inappropriate, they can report content in different ways within the app. They can report an account, video, comment or chat conversation by simply tapping 'Report'. In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' feature, there is also an 'Enhanced Restricted Mode', which limits the appearance of videos that may not be appropriate for all audiences.

**AVOID IDENTIFIABLE OBJECTS**  
To ensure that there's no way of anyone tracking your child's location or identity, make it clear to them that they should never film a video in their school uniform or near a landmark that gives away where they live.

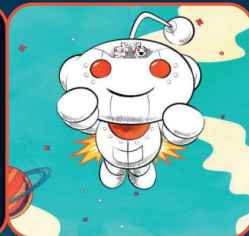
**DISCUSS IN-APP PURCHASES**  
To lower the risk of your child making accidental in-app purchases, teach them exactly what in-app purchases are and the risks of making them without permission. Tell them that they are not essential to enjoy the app and that if they want to make a purchase, they should always ask you beforehand. In the app's 'Digital Wellbeing' feature, there is the option to disable the function of purchasing coins and sending gifts.

SOURCES: [mediapost.com/publications/article/319720/social-media-stars-influence-kids-but-parents-still.html](https://mediapost.com/publications/article/319720/social-media-stars-influence-kids-but-parents-still.html), [commonsensedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-musically-ly-metro.co.uk/2017/03/17/musical-ly-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-app-your-children-are-obsessed-with-6516068/](https://commonsensedia.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-musically-ly-metro.co.uk/2017/03/17/musical-ly-everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-app-your-children-are-obsessed-with-6516068/), [youtube.com/watch?v=aN06s4FCdUs](https://youtube.com/watch?v=aN06s4FCdUs), [youtube.com/watch?v=YV6Z1ZQ4jQm](https://youtube.com/watch?v=YV6Z1ZQ4jQm), [static.musicdn.com/website/pdf/creatorPlaybook.pdf](https://static.musicdn.com/website/pdf/creatorPlaybook.pdf), [youtube.com/watch?v=8TaiQQCNtaM](https://youtube.com/watch?v=8TaiQQCNtaM), [support.musical.ly/knowledge-base/community-guidelines](https://support.musical.ly/knowledge-base/community-guidelines)

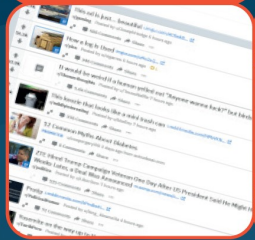




Reddit is a rather unique site that blends the idea of a social network with news, discussion forums and various other media. The site is broken down into a huge number of categories covering every topic imaginable. Each category is treated as a community and users can submit content for others to see and comment on. This can take the form of links to existing online content or user-generated text and image-based submissions. Submitted content can not only be commented on by others, but also rated using the upvote/downvote system.



AGE RESTRICTION  
**13+**



# What parents need to know about **REDDIT**



## SUB-REDDITS

Each community (known as a sub-reddit) has its own set of moderators and its own set of rules, opening up the opportunity for your child to see inappropriate content or something they may find upsetting. Almost every sub-reddit is user-run, with practically no involvement from reddit employees. Anyone can submit content to a sub-reddit and it's not filtered.

## REDDIT GOLD AND GIFTS

Reddit Gold is a premium membership scheme that gives 'extra features to improve the reddit experience,' such as no adverts, custom themes and avatars, and the ability to create Reddit 'secret societies.' Payment costs \$3.99 a month (around £3), or \$29.99 a year (£23). Users can reward each other for content they post by giving Reddit Gold, a process dubbed 'gilding.' Reddit Gifts is a giant online gift exchange for sending a gift to a randomly assigned user. Reddit recommends that you spend around \$20 on a gift, so there is a concern that your child could rack up expenses if unmonitored.

## ADULT AND NSFW CONTENT

While there are moderators in place for sub-reddits, they are not necessarily going to ensure that the sort of content you wouldn't want your child to see is banned. Reddit is concerned with free speech and light-touch moderation, so even the most open-minded of people may find deeply offensive content. Reddit generally provides a lot of leeway in the type of content which is acceptable. Some members choose vulgar usernames, while some communities have controversial or rude titles. Some content or communities are marked with 'NSFW' (Not Safe For Work) which means they may contain nudity, pornography, or profanity; it is easy for users to claim to be aged 18 and over to view this content.

## REDDIT LINGO

Children and teenagers often manage to mask what they are talking about by wrapping it up in language their parents do not understand. While Reddit is certainly not used just by children and teenagers, like any online community there are words, phrases and abbreviations that may seem impenetrable to start with, such as TL;DR: Too Long; Didn't Read and ITT: In this thread.

## CONTENT BIAS AND FAKE NEWS

Subreddits are particularly prone to bias - to the extent that some of them could be seen as propaganda. Reddit has been mentioned as one of the platforms used to promote Russian propaganda, for example. Other news stories can be completely false and not based on any evidence at all - known as fake news - these are written and posted online deliberately to create an impact. Both are nearly impossible to avoid.

## TROLLS AND STRANGERS

Globally, millions of people of all ages use the Reddit platform to discuss any topic imaginable from just about every possible viewpoint. Although people can find users who have similar interests, some will choose to abuse the platform. Talking with strangers can lead to trolling and abuse, or your child encountering unsavoury subjects. Reddit users can also send each other private messages, so there is a danger of your child receiving inappropriate or unwanted communication.

**NOS**

**National Online Safety**

# Top Tips for Parents



## TURN SAFE BROWSING MODE ON AND ADULT CONTENT OFF

Some sub-reddits are marked as 'adult-only' and in order to access them users must be (or at least say they are) 18 or over. Within your child's user profile, it is possible to indicate that they are not 18 and this will block access to some sub-reddits, but certainly not everything you might consider to be unsuitable. Firstly, to protect them from unsuitable content, check that they have used their correct age when signing up. Secondly, turn off 'adult content' which will disable adult and NSFW (not safe for work) content from showing in the feed and search results. If you are happy to leave 'adult content' turned on, we highly recommend turning on 'safe browsing mode'; this blurs thumbnails and media preview for anything labelled NSFW (not safe for work).

## REPORTING CONTENT

To a certain extent it can be useful to learn to just walk away from conversations that take a turn for the worse, but this is not always possible. Learn how to use the blocking feature and teach your child how to use it if someone becomes a problem. Beneath all content and comments that have been submitted by other users, there is an option to report it. Advise your child to report any form of abuse or harassment that they encounter on the platform. It is a good way to alert moderators to the user and hopefully, action will be taken against them.



## SPOT FAKE NEWS

Encourage your child to read around topics and not to take something at face value. Just because something is said by someone on Reddit, in no way does this mean that it is true. Remember that the links people post and the comments they leave will cover the full range of political views, intelligence levels and opinions.

## LEARN THE LINGO

It is impossible to provide a guide to all the vocabulary and language used on Reddit - it is something that is constantly evolving. There are some words and abbreviations that have become common Internet parlance (such as NSFW). If you want to check anything which your child has accessed (which can be seen in the 'Recently viewed links' panel on the front page of the site), be prepared to do a little searching if you encounter things you are unable to make sense of. There's probably a sub-reddit all about acronyms!

## BLOCKING STRANGERS

Short of blocking access to Reddit completely, or blocking individual sub-reddits, it's difficult to police your child's use of the site without physically monitoring what they are doing. It is important to let your child know that there are unpleasant people out there and they need to take care about sharing personal information. Should someone start to be a harassment, you can control who can send you private messages and add users to a blocked list by simply clicking on the 'Block User' button.

SOURCES: [https://www.reddit.com/r/announcements/comments/827zqc/in\\_response\\_to\\_recent\\_reports\\_about\\_the\\_integrity/](https://www.reddit.com/r/announcements/comments/827zqc/in_response_to_recent_reports_about_the_integrity/), <https://www.reddit.com>, <https://www.reddit.com/gold/about>







AGE RESTRICTION  
**18+**

# What parents need to know about GRAND THEFT AUTO (GTA)



**grand  
theft  
auto**

Grand Theft Auto is an action-adventure video game series where players control criminals and wreak havoc in order to complete missions and progress through the game. During the early stages of the game, it solely focuses on completing missions to go up a level. However, as the game grew more popular the makers of GTA decided to introduce a narrative to each edition of the game. The aim of this was to increase user engagement, making gamers believe that they were not just playing as the character, but they became the character. Grand Theft Auto is accessible on a number of devices including: PlayStation and Xbox, desktop computers, PSP, Nintendo DS, and Mobile.



## Top Tips for Parents

### THE RISK - PLAYING WITH STRANGERS

When buying GTA V you automatically have access to Grand Theft Auto Online, a version of the game that allows players to play online. They can play alone, invite players to a game, or be involved in public 'sessions' where people will be picked at random to play. When you first load into a game you are automatically placed into an open lobby, meaning you play with random people. The 'social club' is GTA's very own social platform where users can bet money, share in-game photographs (which users can like and comment on), and even message other users directly.

#### What parents can do

To prevent your child playing with strangers on the game, you can change the settings to ensure they only play with their approved friends list. Upon signing up to the 'social club', it automatically sets a player's visibility settings to 'everyone', meaning their name and profile information is made public. Parents can alter this by changing the visibility settings to 'only me'.

## WARNING!

Due to the nature of the game and the age restrictions, GTA includes content that is inappropriate for anyone under the age of 18, including sex, nudity, violence, profane language, and substance abuse. These are the main components that make up the game - you have to do certain things and witness certain things in order to move on in the game. Exposing your child to this type of content could affect their morals and understanding of right and wrong. Additionally, your child could become desensitised to similar situations, reinforcing the fact they they would find it hard to differentiate between right/wrong and good/bad.

### THE RISK - ONLINE HACKERS

Hackers can make money by helping users cheat in the game. They can do a number of inappropriate things, including killing people, stealing weapons, spawning money into the game, and even raping other characters. Spawning money tends to be a gamer's most popular choice, being able to buy \$100,000,000,000 (of in-game currency) for as little as five US dollars.

#### What parents can do

Actively monitor your child's online activity. These websites are very easy to find, meaning children and young people can easily navigate their way to these websites and pay for hackers. Not only is this an illegal activity, but you have the risk of giving your personal information to someone who may misuse it.

### THE RISK - ADDICTION

Addiction is a risk with any game. Game developers use persuasive design techniques to force users to invest their time, and often money, in a game. Within GTA, your character is able to progress through the game for completing missions within a certain time frame, encouraging children to keep returning to the game. Gaming addiction is now a recognised health condition and the side effects are concerning, including sleep deprivation, decreased attention span and erratic emotional behaviour.

#### What parents can do

There are a number of things you can do if you are concerned about your child's screen time, including setting time limits within the home, especially during meal times and before bedtime. Talk to your child and ask why they are spending so much time on the game, and encourage healthy alternatives such as outdoor activities and spending quality time with friends and family.

### THE RISK - LIVE CHAT

When playing GTA online, players have the option to use a microphone to broadcast their voice live to other players involved in the 'session'. These live voice chats are not moderated, meaning anything could be said, including inappropriate language, as well as verbal forms of bullying.

#### What parents can do

Talk openly with your child about not giving away personal information. Also remind them that conversations can be recorded, which could damage their online reputation. Depending on the device/platform, there will be ways to mute conversations. Make yourself aware of the device's/platform's individual settings and ensure that your child knows how to block and report.

### THE RISK - MICROTRANSACTIONS

By completing missions and partaking in certain activities you earn in-game currency. This allows you to buy things such as prostitutes, vehicles, weapons, ammo, new outfits, cars, apartments and more. However, the items that are available to buy often have a high price that require a lot of game time, meaning the items are pretty unrealistic to buy.

#### What parents can do

If you do not want your child to make payments, ensure your card is not associated with their account. If you are happy for your child to make payments in the game, but want to limit spending, we suggest purchasing a pre-paid gift card for your child. These can be purchased in specific amounts which will allow you to limit how much your child spends and removes the need for a credit or debit card to be used with their account.

**SOURCES:**

- <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2103188/parentalguide>
- <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/gaming/news/grand-theft-auto-v-has-made-money-film-history/>
- <http://www.techaddiction.ca/addiction-to-video-games.html>



**National  
Online  
Safety**

*A whole school community approach to online safety*

**www.nationalonlinesafety.com**

*Email us at [hello@nationalonlinesafety.com](mailto:hello@nationalonlinesafety.com) or call us on 0800 368 8061*

