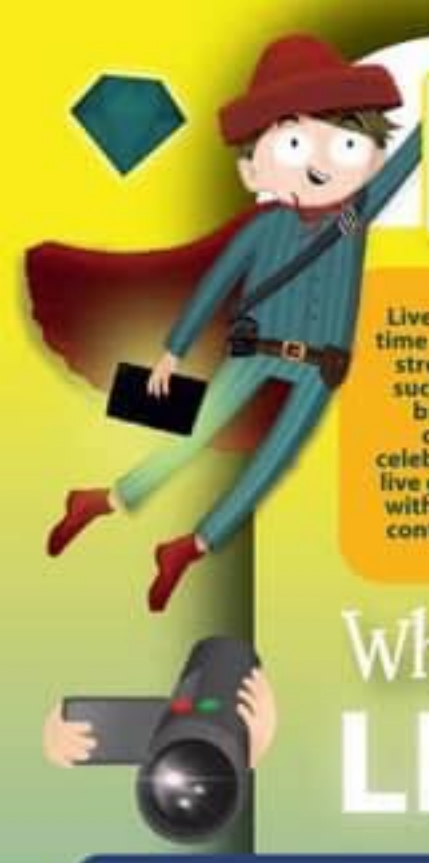


BIGO LIVE 17+ | Facebook 13+ | Youtube 13+ | YouNow 13+ | Twitch 13+ | Steam 13+ | Instagram 13+

Live streaming is the term used to describe the broadcast of a real time video from a mobile device, tablet or games console. Many live streaming apps have functionality for interactions from viewers, such as commenting, live chats and sending reactions during the broadcast. Live streaming opens up a world of excitement for children, where they can watch live concerts, their favourite celebrities and bloggers/vloggers, connect with their friends, watch live gaming and much, much more. Whilst there are many positives with live streaming, it creates a worldwide platform for unsuitable content to be streamed and creates a host of dangers for children.

98% of child sex abuse live streaming victims are 13 or under

IWF Internet Watch Foundation

Omegle 13+ | Periscope 13+ | Live.me 17+

What parents need to know about LIVE STREAMING

SIGN UP PROCESS & AGE RESTRICTIONS

Most live streaming apps have an age restriction of 13 and above. It is important to note that some platforms do not require proof of age when signing up to the app, meaning that anyone can register for an account. This also opens up the opportunity for people to lie about their age to seem older or younger.

WHO IS WATCHING YOUR CHILD?

If your child's privacy settings are not set up effectively, anybody can be watching their live streams. One of the main characteristics of live streaming is its ability for videos to be instantly shared all over the world, but this creates the opportunity for more people to watch anybody regardless of whether they know them.

LIVE CONTENT

As the streams are live, children can instantly be exposed to anything inappropriate. Most live streaming apps will have filters, rules and guidelines in place to ensure their services are monitored. They will also have report buttons where inappropriate content will be sent for review. Bear in mind that a report may not be dealt with instantly, which means your child may be further exposed to inappropriate content during a live stream.

RECORDINGS OF YOUR CHILD

Each streaming app and website that allows live streaming has different rules about how they store their live videos once completed. For example, a live stream on Periscope will be automatically deleted after 24 hours, but apps such as Facebook and YouTube allow the video to be posted on the app and will only be deleted once the creator decides. It is important to realise that deleting a video will not stop it from being shared. A live stream can be recorded (or screenshots can be taken) by other viewers using certain software and then shared on other platforms. Research conducted by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) discovered that apparently recorded illegal videos of live streams were redistributed on other sites.

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD WATCHING?

Live streaming apps don't just allow children to stream their own videos, they can also watch other people's streams. Anything can be streamed at any time and any place, including violence, graphic imagery, nudity, illegal behavior, drug use, profanities etc. Most live streaming apps claim to monitor live streams and will take action to stop any that do not adhere to their guidelines. However, with millions of live streams each day, it is extremely difficult to monitor them all.

GROOMING

There have been recent reports of paedophiles coercing children as young as three on live streaming apps. Due to the anonymous nature and lack of identification needed to sign up to some apps, almost anyone is able to sign up and use the service. Users can use fake identities to sign up to the apps and watch/stream videos. Recent research by the IWF revealed that children may be asked to do things and perform 'suggestive acts' during their live stream by strangers.

Top Tips for Parents

BE PRESENT

In a recent three month study by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), 96% of streams showed a child on their own, often in their bedroom or bathroom. If your child is going to conduct a live stream, ask them if you could be present for it. This will give you a greater knowledge of what your child is doing during their live streams and who they are streaming to.

PROTECT THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Your child may unknowingly give away personal information during a live stream, including their location. Talk to them about what constitutes 'personal information' and make sure they do not disclose anything to anyone during a live stream, even to their friends. Advise them to remove any items in their live stream (school uniform, street name, posters etc.) that could potentially expose their location or personal information.

TALK REGULARLY WITH YOUR CHILD

Ask your child which live streaming apps they are using and how they are using them. Are they watching live streams or making their own? What types of live streams do they like watching? If they are under 13, it is strongly advised that they are not using any live streaming apps due to the dangers involved, but you may feel that they should not be using the apps even if they are over the age limit. With live streaming being such a popular feature on apps, it is important that you are aware of the dangers associated with it in order to protect your child effectively.

PRIVACY SETTINGS

Each live streaming app will have its own privacy settings with options varying from platform to platform. Generally, we advise that your child's account is set to private. This will ensure that only their friends/followers will see their live stream. It is important to check each app to ensure that the privacy settings are in place to protect your child from strangers viewing their streams and engaging in conversation with them. The settings on most apps will allow you to turn off the chat feature during a live stream, restricting conversations, but live chat is part of the 'fun' when it comes to live streaming.

PROTECTING THEIR ONLINE REPUTATION

What your child does now may affect their future opportunities, and it is important that they have a good understanding of this. As the videos are live, it may lead to the misconception that whatever happens in the video will disappear once the live stream ends. This is incorrect. Tell your child that their live streams cannot be undone and this has the potential to affect their online reputation.

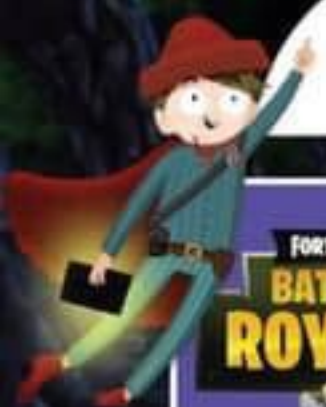
REMOVE LINKS TO OTHER APPS

Some live streaming apps/websites give users the ability to link and share the content through other social media platforms to share their video further. For example, a live stream on Periscope, can be shared on Twitter and Facebook during the stream if the accounts are connected. While it may seem like a good idea to show the video to more people, the privacy settings may differ on each app, opening up the potential for unwanted viewers to join the stream. We suggest checking the privacy settings on each app and where possible, only streaming on one app at a time in order to have greater control over who sees the live stream.

https://www.iwf.org.uk/ https://www.pscp.tv/content https://www.channel4.com/news/children-bombarded-with-sexually-explicit-chat-on-musical-ly-and-live-ly

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/paedophiles-child-sex-abuse-live-stream-direct-webcam-mobile-online-a8351986.html
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44233544?utm_content=71916416&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter

AGE RESTRICTION 12+



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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

'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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

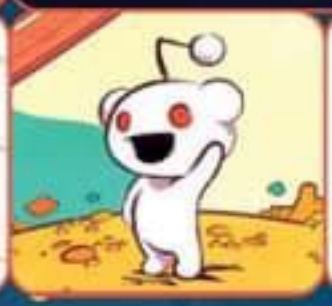
www.nationalonlinesafety.com

Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061

https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/store/p/fortnite-deluxe-founders-pack http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-43626075
https://fortnitetracker.com/ https://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2018/01/22/fortnite-accounts-hacked-how-to-protect-yourself-and-what-to-do-if-youve-been-compromised/#14b9e7ca7ff9

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 subreddit 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.

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/827agc/in_response_to_recent_reports_about_the_integrity/, https://www.reddit.com, https://www.reddit.com/gold/about

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

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.

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 nude 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. 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 is 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:
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https://help.kik.com/hc/en-us/articles/115000289588-Keep-your-Kik-account-private
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-45166279

National Online Safety

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YouTube

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 YouTuber'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/6702337/youtube-porn-videos-rotikbox-sex-games-watch-online/, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajeEPKM, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2xuyfhc-kc, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5126835/Terrifying-truth-child-watches-YouTube.html, https://www.todayspaper.com/family/crazy-youtube-challenges-kids-are-doing/, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyokEb0dlg, https://rocklocal.com/magazine/common-sense-media-youtube/, https://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.commonsensemedia.org/blog/popular-youtube-gamers-kids-cant-get-enough-of-gaming

What parents need to know about CATFISHING

WARNING! Catfishers will target ANYONE OF ANY age

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.

1 new friend request

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.

Hi, I'm Adam!

You're a catfish!

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/10339915/dylan-17-catfished-facebook-year/
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/jan/07/catfishing-meaning-identity-theft-online-dating-law

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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 some- body they don't know, they can use it to get in touch via WhatsApp.

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.

AGE RESTRICTION 13+

yubo

Yubo is a location-based social networking app previously known as 'Yellow.' It has been dubbed 'Tinder for teens' due to its similarities with the adult dating app, in which users swipe to find matches. Yubo allows users to livestream themselves to anyone watching, and rate other users.

What parents need to know about YUBO

(Formerly 'Yellow')

WHO IS USING YUBO?

Although its official guidelines suggest the app is for people aged 18+, those aged between 13 and 17 can create a profile with parental permission. Furthermore, the app does not verify ages or identities upon sign-up, leading to fears that it could be exploited by those seeking to target children. Adults can set up fake profiles for sexual reasons, while children younger than 13, with access to the Internet, could pretend to be older than they are.

LIVE-STREAM FOOTAGE

Yubo states that it uses a combination of technical tools and human moderators to check the content created by Yubo, but since users can comment on footage in real-time this could mean that children could be exposed to derogatory or unpleasant language. Media reports indicate that teens are being pressured into undressing live on camera for strangers, sending nude photos, and are even lured into face-to-face meetings on Yubo. Any users can take screenshots or copies of live streams, alter them and share them with others.

SNAPCHAT

While the Yubo app doesn't directly link to Snapchat anymore – users still tend to share their Snapchat usernames on their profiles, making them very easy to add on Snapchat without ever speaking to the individual. On Snapchat, if your child's location feature is switched on, there is a high chance that strangers can find your child's exact location.

BULLYING & MENTAL HEALTH

The way Yubo works is that users 'swipe' to accept or decline to talk to someone. Whether users accept or decline is all based on their profile picture, meaning there is the potential that children could be left with low self-esteem if declined. Receiving comments about their appearance can have a negative impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, leaving them feeling less confident about how they look or how interesting they are. Bullying includes actions such as making threats or spreading rumours about people. As users have the ability to screenshot copies of live streams and private messages etc., they can use these screengrabs as forms of blackmail, making the person feel victimised, embarrassed and unsafe.

Top Tips for Parents

HAVE A CHAT

Start a conversation with your teenager so that they know how to stay safe online. Don't be embarrassed to talk about inappropriate online content with your children and look out for secretive or reserved behaviour when it comes to their Internet devices.

DISCUSS YUBO GUIDELINES

Take time to go through Yubo's Community Guidelines, which all users receive a link to, when they sign up to the app. Anyone who does not follow the guidelines may have their content removed or account suspended. Guidelines include advice on not posting any fake pictures or pretending to be anyone else.

YUBO GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

Yubo offers a guide (http://parents-guide.yubo.live) to reassure parents about their child's usage. It explains how the app works, how children can stay safe and outlines its 'five-step approach to safety,' including Sign-up, Profile Settings, Community Guidelines, Moderation and Reporting.

REMOVE LOCATION FEATURE

In their 'Profile' settings, children can hide their city and choose to connect with people who are only located within a certain radius of their location.

PROOF OF AGE

Yubo recently updated its security settings so that users who attempt to change their date of birth after signing up now have to send proof of ID to the app in order to verify the change.

ENCOURAGE RESPECT

Remind your teenager to always consider anything they are about to share online and to think about whether they would do that in the 'real world', or whether they are posting something they may regret at a later date. Encourage your child to think about the language they use online and to think carefully before making a comment on content posted by someone else.

AVOIDING UNEXPECTED IMAGES

Yubo suggests that teenagers ask the person they are talking with to share a picture of themselves with a spoon on their head to prove they are really who they say they are in their picture. Another tip is to avoid profiles with only one photo as these are often 'catfish' - someone who pretends to be somebody else by creating false identities.

AVOIDING UNEXPECTED IMAGES

Report any suspicious activity. You can report any concerns by clicking on the 'flag' icon within the app or by visiting 'Yubo's SafetyCentre' at http://safety.yubo.co. This includes pornographic, sexually implicit content, bullying, grooming and fake accounts.

PREPARE FOR 'GOING LIVE'

Yubo users can 'Go Live' during a chat with friends or choose to live stream 'Anyone' on Yubo. To help your child avoid sharing too much, help them to consider whether they really want the world seeing what they are doing. If they are going to watch streams they should also know how to report anything that makes them feel upset, uncomfortable

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http://teens.yubo.live/ http://community.yubo.live/ https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/news-blogs/yubo-formerly-yellow-dating-app-teens/

AGE RESTRICTION
13+ with parental permission

What parents need to know Twitch

Twitch is a gaming-focussed live-streaming service, owned by Amazon, where you can watch others play games live and listen to commentary as they play. It has 15 million daily active users and more than three million people live broadcast video game streams and other content on Twitch, with channels dedicated to just about every popular video game imaginable – both modern and retro. There are also shows that feature gaming competitions, professional tournaments, game-related chat and news. Plus, numerous non-gaming channels covering everything from cookery and music to art and travel. But Twitch is not just about watching other people's shows – anyone can broadcast their own gaming action.

Top Tips for Parents

THE RISK - IT'S LIVE & UNCENSORED

As gamers get engrossed in their games, it is very common to hear rather choice words, so the chance of your child encountering swear words and bad language is extremely high. There is not only the language of the person running the stream that you need to consider, but also the language of other Twitch users in the text-based chat that accompanies streams.

What parents can do

There's not much you can do to reduce exposure to bad language on Twitch, but if there are any troublesome users, it is possible to block them. It is a good idea to spend a little time with your child as they explore different channels on the platform, as this will give you an idea of the sort of content they are being exposed to. As Twitch does not offer any parental control options, this is the best way to police what your child is doing. If your child is overwhelmed or disturbed by comments that are being posted in the stream chat, it is possible to hide it from view by clicking the little arrow to the right of the Subscribe button.

THE RISK - VIOLENT GAMES & ADULT CONTENT

Like so many websites, Twitch does not allow children under the age of 13 to create an account, but in practice, there's nothing to stop anyone signing up by simply entering a false date of birth. In addition to swearing, commentary provided by other Twitch users may well contain adult content, and the games themselves can be rather violent. Bear in mind that many of the games on the market these days have an age rating of 18, and this is indicative of the bad language, sexual content and violence that they may contain.

What parents can do

There is nothing that can be done to prevent your child from accessing whatever channel they want – short of using your router settings or parental control software to block access to the site completely. One of the problems with Twitch is that while there is plenty of child-friendly content out there, it is not at all easy to quickly identify what might not be suitable. Spend some time working with your child to help identify channels that will be appropriate for them. While it may be hard to ensure they stick to these channels, it is useful for them to know that there is content available that is not overtly adult in nature.

THE RISK - POTENTIAL COSTS

By default, Twitch is ad-supported, but there is a monthly subscription option – called Twitch Turbo – that offers an ad-free experience. On top of this, it is possible to subscribe to individual channels, and each one is chargeable individually. There's also Twitch Prime, a premium experience included with the Amazon Prime and Prime Video subscription memberships, which offers bonus games and exclusive in-game content and Twitch Merch – an online store offering merchandise, such as T-shirts and hoodies. Twitch Bits is a virtual currency that gives your child the power to encourage and show support for streamers – through 'cheers' – and get attention in chat through animated emoticons. Bits cost real money and there's one option to buy 25,000 Bits for £288. It's easy to see how costs could very quickly mount up the more involved your child gets into Twitch.

What parents can do

Take steps to restrict access to your credit/debit card, as well as your PayPal account, to avoid getting hit by a large bill. If you are able to access your child's Twitch account, it is possible to check their purchase history, so you can see if they are spending too much money on subscriptions or donations. Explain to your child that subscribing to channels and purchasing Bits for cheers is optional, and that they can watch and enjoy a stream without doing either.

THE RISK - UNWANTED CONTACT FROM OTHER USERS

Just like any website or platform with a social element to it, there is the risk that your child will not only come into contact with the sort of people you might rather they didn't, but also that they could be harassed, groomed or bullied online.

What parents can do

Within Twitch settings, in the Security and Privacy section, it is possible to block messages – known as 'whispers' – from strangers. It's worth noting that this option only blocks messages by those who are not 'your friend, someone you follow, someone you subscribe to, one of your mods, or one of your editors'. Taking things further, it is possible to completely block users who become problematic. Show your child how to make use of this option by clicking on a user's name and in the little pop-up that appears, click the icon that looks like a little speech bubble to block them. If your child wishes to report the user to Twitch, click the three dots button beneath the block option and click Report.

THE RISK - WEBCAM SHARING

As well as seeing streaming footage of games, Twitch also lets users share their webcam, so people can see them. This gives yet another way for people to share inappropriate content, and it also gives another way for streamers to subject your child to advertising, sponsored content and product placement.

What parents can do

Getting involved in your child's use of Twitch is the best way to keep an eye on the sort of content they are consuming and intervene if anything inappropriate crops up. As part of your conversations with your child about what is appropriate to share online, try to educate them about careful use of their own webcam if they choose to stream their own gaming. As well as ensuring they are not encouraged into doing anything inappropriate on camera, it is also important to check that anything that can be used to identify them is not included in shot.

THE RISK - TWITCH EMOTES

Twitch's interactive chat feature is littered with emoticons or 'emotes', which for first time users will be completely bewildering. They typically feature faces of notable streamers, Twitch employees or fictional characters, such as a grey-scale photograph of a game developer known as Kappa, which is often used in Twitch chat as a symbol of sarcasm or mockery. Your child may be upset or sensitive if they are the target of negative emotes while chatting with other gamers, or they may find some emoticons offensive.

What parents can do

Chat to your child about how they use Twitch and show an interest in understanding how it works. There are lots of online guides to Twitch emotes if you really want to get clued up on what your child is talking about in chats. Twitch's terms of service dictate that emotes must not be used for harassment – defined by 'targeted insults, defamation, intimidation, and threats of any nature'. If your child finds an emoticon that violates guidelines, they can report it via the 'User Report' tool. Channel owners can also add specific emotes to their 'Channel Banned Words' list.

SOURCES:
https://www.twitch.tv/

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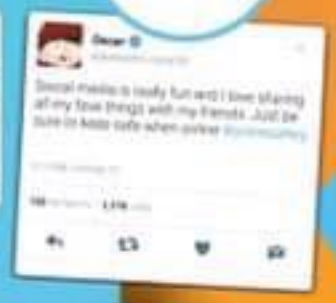
AGE RESTRICTION 13+

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 racist, 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 these 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 muted.

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 transgender 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.

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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

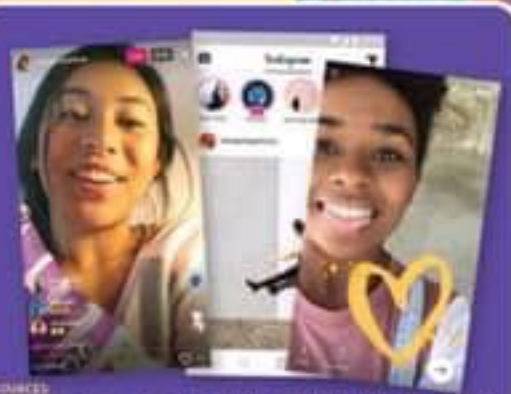
By default, any image or video your child uploads to Instagram is visible to anyone. A private account means that you have to approve a request if somebody wants to follow you and only people you approve will see your posts and videos.

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.



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The Momo Challenge – A Factsheet For Parents

What It Is

Coined the "suicide challenge", Momo is a new viral game that encourages players to perform a series of challenges in order to meet 'Mother Bird' - a disfigured character (inspired by Japanese art) with bulging eyes and untidy black hair on a chicken-like body.

Light-hearted and fun at the outset, this game experience quickly darkens, absorbing players who are encouraged to perform acts of violence and self-harm through a series of progressively risky challenges. Originating in Mexico, it is easily accessed through social media shares (predominantly Facebook and YouTube) and is rapidly spreading across the world.

Why It's On Our Radar

The challenges issued in this game present a serious risk to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people in our schools here in the UK, as does the distressing content when a player refuses to carry on.

With worrying similarities to the 'Blue Whale challenge', it has also been linked to at least five cases of childhood suicide.

The Low Down

- Players are encouraged to contact Momo and provide their mobile number.
- They will then receive instructions to perform a series of challenges, via SMS or Whatsapp.
- Player refusal can trigger severely abusive messaging and their mobile device being hacked.
- The final challenge is to commit suicide in order to meet 'Mother Bird'.

Why Children Like It

Sharing and commentary on Social Media platforms has created a level of intrigue and curiosity about this game, which is initially light hearted and fun.

Fundamentally, however, this is a game that targets vulnerable children and young people online, as those with mental health issues are more likely to be drawn to the psychological nature of the challenges.

What to Do

A person doesn't have to be searching for Momo themselves to be exposed to it and, unlike other games that children enjoy, there is no positive side to this.

Teachers and parents need to educate/reinforce online safety, and in this way encourage children and young people to make the right choice and avoid this game:

- The importance of confidently saying "no" to invitations to play games from strangers
- Knowing why they should not click on unidentified links.
- Knowing how to 'block' unknown numbers and friend requests.