Online Safety Newsletter

July 2022

TikTok

You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok. Some of the videos on TikTok may contain explicit language and sexual imagery, which may not be suitable for your child to view and there is also the risk of strangers contacting your child. If your child is using TikTok then make sure the appropriate security/privacy settings are on.

We recommend setting the account as private (this is the default setting for users under 16 since Jan 2021). Even with a private account, your child's profile information such as their photo are still visible so ensure your child understands the importance of not adding personal information (e.g. location, age and phone numbers) to this area. This article explains how you can strengthen your privacy settings and what features are turned off by default for accounts for children aged 13 – 15: https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/strengthening-privacy-and-safety-for-youth

Family Pairing
This allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode (limit the appearance of inappropriate content) and screen time management. You can find out more here: https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide/

Blocking and Reporting
Ensure your child knows how to use these features.

Bullying on TikTok
Make sure your child knows that help is always available. This article makes suggestions on appropriate settings as well as how to deal with bullying: https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en-sg/bullying-prevention/

WhatsApp

You must be at least 16 years old to register for and use WhatsApp. WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows you to send messages and videos.

Group chats: One of the key features is that WhatsApp has a group chat function that are set up by one person (the admin). Everybody in the group, even if they are not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see all messages within that group. *If your child is added to a group with someone that they have previously blocked, that person can still see their messages and send them messages within the group.*

In settings, you can change who can add your child to groups, for example, you can change it to 'my contacts', which means that only those in your child's contacts can add them to a group. You can leave a group chat at any point so talk to your child and encourage them to leave any chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Location sharing: If switched on, then when you share images/videos, it will show the location of where they were taken. This can be switched off in your phone settings. There is also a Live Location feature which allows you to share your location. Talk to your child about when this would be appropriate to use but also the potential danger of sharing their location, for example with strangers.

Blocking/Reporting: Show your child how to block and report.

Online Bullying: WhatsApp has been used in instances of online bullying, e.g. to send nasty messages or share images of other children without their permission. It is important to have regular chats with your child about their online life and that they understand that they must talk to you or another trusted adult if they are being bullied. This is a helpful article from BullyingUK, which talks about what to do if you are being bullied: https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network/

Be Kind: How we behave online should be the same as how we behave face to face. This YouTube video from Dr Linda Papadopoulos tells us how we can encourage our children to be kind online: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BqKi3J7g6Q

Further information
https://www.whatsapp.com/safety/

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into.
Current as of the date released 1.07.22.

Sendit

Have you heard of Sendit? It allows users to play games together and links with Snapchat. Although rated as 12+ by the App store, **Sendit state on their website that the app was made for 17+**. If you know that your child is using this app then you can contact Sendit to ask them to disable their account. The app does contain in-app purchases ranging from £0.89 to £25.99 so ensure payment details are not stored/accessible on your child's device to avoid unexpected bills.

Further information

https://www.getsendit.com/parents

Online Challenges/hoaxes

"The internet and social media provide a perfect platform for hoaxes, especially hoaxes about challenges or trends that are said to be harmful to children and young people to be spread quickly. You should carefully consider if a challenge or scare story is a hoax. Generally speaking, naming an online hoax and providing direct warnings is not helpful. Concerns are often fuelled by unhelpful publicity, usually generated on social media, and may not be based on confirmed or factual occurrences or any real risk to children and young people."

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes [Accessed 27.6.22].

Reassure your child that challenges that suggest that bad stuff will happen if they do not complete the tasks are not real.

It is important to talk to your child about hoaxes and challenges that may appear on the internet. Some challenges are fun and provide no risk, however there will be challenges that are risky/dangerous. Your child may see others complete certain challenges online without being harmed and therefore may want to repeat them **and not weigh up the potential risks to themselves**. Make sure they know that they should talk to you about what they see online, particularly if they plan to try a challenge or if something scares or upsets them.

The following links will provide you with further information as well as content to help you talk to your child:

- https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/theres-a-viral-scare-online-what-should-i-do/
- TikTok have produced this resource to help you talk to your child about challenges and the potential risks: https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en-sg/online-challenges/.

YouTube

YouTube is intended for users over the age of 13, however the App store rates YouTube as 17+ due to the content that can be found on there.

How can I make YouTube safer?

- Turn on Restricted mode as this restricts the availability of mature content. You will need to set up a Google account to do this.
- Explore YouTube together and see what they like to watch. Make sure your child understands that they can **talk to you** if they see anything that makes them feel uncomfortable online.
- Ensure your child knows how to **report inappropriate content**.

YouTube Kids

YouTube recommends that **YouTube Kids** is used for children under the age of 13. Find out more here: https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/6172308?hl=en-GB

Posting videos

You should be over 13 years of age to post videos. Talk to your child about posting videos, do they understand what information they should keep private? Check out these tips: https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802244?hl=en-GB

Screen time

We often spend too much time online, so it is important to set limits to ensure a balance between being online and offline. It is recommended that devices are switched off prior to bedtime and not left in their bedroom. You can read more about screen time based on your child's age from Internet Matters: https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/screen-time/

Comments

If you see an inappropriate comment, then remember to report it. You can also turn off comments on videos that you post.

Further information

Access the social media hub set up by Internet Matters here: https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/social-media-advice-hub/