

KEEPING KIDS SAFE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



SET CLEAR RULES AND GUIDELINES

E.g. Set time limits and monitor their activity.



MONITOR ACTIVITY

Group Chats

Group Chats are available on various messaging apps, social media apps and in some games. When your child is part of these groups, they may not know all the other members and it may even include people that they have previously blocked. Your child may come across inappropriate content and bullying can take place within these groups. Talk to your child about how they speak to others online and encourage them to talk to people online with kindness, like they would if they were face-to-face. The NSPCC provide further information about group chats here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>

MANAGE PRIVACY SETTINGS

Show children how to adjust their privacy settings on social media platforms to limit who can see their posts and personal information



WhatsApp Group warning

Whilst WhatsApp has an age rating of 13+ (recently lowered from 16), a BBC investigation has found that children as young as nine have been added to WhatsApp groups and seen inappropriate content. If your child is using WhatsApp, check their group settings as by default, group privacy settings are set to 'everyone,' which means anybody can add your child to a group without their approval. You can change this setting to 'My Contacts' so only contacts can add them to groups without their approval and if somebody who is not a contact wants to add them to a group then they will need to send them an invite.

You should talk to your child about the risks of joining groups and show them how to use the reporting/blocking tools. You can find out more about the BBC investigation here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy0l4z8n1p9o>



WhatsApp: chat lock/secret code

You must be at least 13 years old to use WhatsApp. Did you know that you can lock chats as well as apply a secret code setting? If a user locks a chat, then the chat will appear at the top under locked chats but cannot be viewed without your device password or biometric (face id/fingerprint). Furthermore though, a user can apply an additional setting to hide the locked chat (so it does not appear in their chat list and can only be accessed via the search bar). Whilst this feature adds privacy, it can make it difficult to monitor what your child is doing on WhatsApp, which is why it is important to have regular chats with your child.



OPEN COMMUNICATION

Talk to children about their online experiences and encourage them to come to you if they encounter any problems.



SNAP CHAT



What is Snapchat?

Snapchat is a social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. You must be 13+ to sign up. Users can send messages (snaps) to others that can only be seen for a set time e.g., 10 seconds and users can also upload snaps to stories, which disappear after 24 hours. What should I be concerned about?

Risks of using Snapchat include your child viewing content that is not appropriate for them, location sharing and contact from strangers. NEW safeguarding features

Snapchat have recently announced their newest features to help protect 13-17-year-olds. The features include seeing a warning message if they receive a chat from someone who has been blocked/reported by others. Also, if a teen blocks a user, it will also now block any future friend requests sent from accounts created on the same device (to reduce the potential of bullying). These two features are available to users aged 13- 17-year-olds, this is one of the reasons why it is always important for your child to sign up with their correct date of birth, so they can benefit from such features.

You can find out more as well as about the other new features here:

<https://values.snap.com/?lang=en-GB>

TIKTOK

To use TikTok, users must be 13 or older. As a platform for sharing short videos, some content may be inappropriate, and strangers could contact your child. Ensure security and privacy settings are in place.

Key Points:

- Account Setup: Enter your child's real date of birth for age-appropriate features. For users under 16, accounts are private by default. It's recommended to keep privacy settings on.
- Family Pairing: Link your account with your child's to manage controls like restricted mode.
- Inappropriate Content: Explicit material and dangerous challenges may appear; regularly discuss what your child is viewing.
- Trends & Influencers: Be aware of trends or influencers promoting unsafe products or behaviors.
- Stranger Contact: Teach your child about online safety and the risks of sharing personal information.
- Blocking/Reporting: Make sure they know how to block and report inappropriate behavior.

For more information:

TikTok's [privacy settings guide](#)

ParentZone TikTok [safety article](#)

INSTAGRAM

- Age Requirement: Users must be 13+. Monitor your child's activity to ensure appropriate use.
- Privacy Settings: Set accounts to private to control who can view posts.
- Inappropriate Content & Influencers: Talk to your child about the content they view and avoid risky trends or influencers.
- Direct Messaging: Ensure they only message people they know in real life and avoid sharing personal details.
- Reporting & Blocking: Teach them how to report or block inappropriate content.

For more guidance, check out Instagram's <https://about.instagram.com/community/parents>

