



Online Safety Newsletter

October 2023

Age Restrictions on Social Media

13

Facebook
Twitter
Instagram
Snapchat
TikTok
Kik
Ask.fm
Houseparty
Periscope

Tumblr
Pinterest
Reddit



13+

YouTube
WeChat
Whisper
Yubo



(13+ means with
parental consent)

16

LinkedIn
Whatsapp



18

Tinder
Bumble
Hinge



Age restrictions

WHY IS ONLINE SAFETY SO IMPORTANT?

Recent data shows that online grooming crimes recorded by the police continue to climb and have jumped by more than 80% in four years.

1 in 4 online grooming crimes in the last 5 years were against primary age children with 73% involving Snapchat and Meta.

Research has shown that offenders target children through well-established grooming pathways, such as contacting children on social media and gaming sites and coercing them to produce self-generated child abuse images

(NSPCC 2023)

The minimum age to open an account on nearly every social media platform—TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Kik, YouTube, Snapchat, Facebook, and more—is 13. Despite this requirement, displayed on each of these site's "Terms of Use," research has shown that many children of primary school age are accessing these apps.

When a child self-declares a false age to gain access to social media or online games, they are placing themselves at greater risk of encountering age-inappropriate or harmful content online, which is a safeguarding concern. Children are not old enough to think about the consequences of uploading photos, videos and messages both for themselves and their peers. It is our role, as adults, to help educate our children and keep them safe.



Roblox - new checklist

PEGI rate Roblox with a 'Parental Guidance' label because of the huge level of user generated content within Roblox. It is rated for 'Teens' on Google Play and 12+ on the App store. You can either use Roblox to create games or play games that other users have created. As a lot of the content is user generated, it may mean not all games will be suitable for your child to view/play. It is important to set up parental controls appropriate for your child.

New Roblox Checklist

The 2023 Roblox Checklist created by SWGfL and the UK Safer Internet Centre in partnership with Roblox is now available to download here: <https://swgfl.org.uk/magazine/new-roblox-checklist-available/>

PEGI Labels



PARENTAL CONTROLS

Does your child have a games console? If yes, have you set up age appropriate parental controls?

The controls vary across the different consoles, but all will allow you to restrict spending and communication for example:

PlayStation

Set up your account as a family manager and create a separate child account so you can tailor their activities. Find out more here: <https://www.playstation.com/en-gb/support/account/psn-safety-parents-guide/>

Xbox

You can download an app to manage your child's gaming experience. Find out more here: <https://www.xbox.com/en-GB/apps/family-settings-app>

Nintendo Switch

Nintendo also offer a free app to monitor what and how your children are playing. Find out more here: <https://www.nintendo.co.uk/Nintendo-Switch-Family/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls/Nintendo-Switch-Parental-Controls-1183145.htm>

CEOP

CEOP is a law enforcement agency and is here to keep children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse.



You can report online abuse/online safety concerns at: www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre or call Childline 08001111

TIKTOK

The dangers of TikTok



Children can be targetted by predators

TikTok allows users to contact anyone in the world. It has a direct message or commenting feature and so children could be chatting with anyone, including strangers. This platform encourages performance, and many of its users are excited to showcase their talents. This can make it easy for predators to use flattery and compliments as a way into children's lives.

It is easy to encounter inappropriate content

Even if you set your own account to private, you may still be exposed to sexual or violent content posted to the public feed. This can range from overtly sexual TikToks to physically dangerous stunts that children may want to recreate, to overtly racist and discriminatory commentary. There is a wide range of concerning content on the platform.

Conversations around mental health can be dangerous

Children and adults who admit to feeling depressed or anxious are often met with dismissive and sarcastic reactions, and some are even publicly encouraged to attempt suicide.

Children can be bullied by others

Due to their age, and emotional maturity, children often do not think about the impact unkind messages, photos and videos can have on their peers. Recently there has been a significant rise in reported online bullying on social media apps such as TikTok.

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, voice notes, photos and videos.



What are the features of WhatsApp?

Group chats: One of the key features is the group chat function. 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 chat.

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. You can leave groups silently (only the admin will be notified).

Location sharing: you can share your location on WhatsApp. 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.

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/bullying/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network>

Online Safety support and advice from school

If you have any concerns about online safety, and would like to talk to a member of staff, please contact your child's school:

Stifford Clays: admin@scp.swecet.org
Chadwell St Mary: admin@csm.swecet.org
Deneholm: admin@dps.swecet.org