

# **ONLINE SAFETY**

**WHAT SITES/APPS MIGHT MY CHILD BE  
USING?**

# AGE RATINGS



## What are age ratings?

- Age ratings are recommendations for parents and carers to help them decide what is appropriate for their child depending on what stage of development they are at. Legally, schools and cinemas must follow the age ratings given on games, DVDs and computer apps.

## Why are age ratings important?

- Age ratings offer clear guidance to parents and children so that people can choose content well. We know that every family is different and that everyone is affected differently by content, so they offer parents, carers and children a useful guide to what's suitable and play a valuable part in helping them decide, and even negotiate, whether they can play video games, watch films or download apps.

# WHATSAPP



## What does it do?

- Lets you send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.

## What should you know about it?

- It has an age limit of 16+
- It automatically connects you to all your contacts that already use the app.
- It encourages you to invite people in your contacts to the app if they don't already have it.

# TIKTOK



**Tik Tok**

## What is it?

- A performance- and video-sharing social network that mostly features teens lip-synching to famous songs but also includes some original song writing and singing. Users can build up a following among friends or share posts publicly.

## What should you know about it?

- It has an age rating of 12+
- There is an app called 'TikTok for younger users' which has content suitable for under 13's
- As there is a mix of adult and teen users, swearing and sexual references occur a lot
- If the account is public, anyone can follow you and comment on your posts which can lead to comments about the user's body and sexual references.
- Children can become addicted to getting more followers as it makes them feel important. This can lead to children spending more time on the app or feeling bad if they don't get more followers.

# TIKTOK



## What do we suggest?

If you have allowed your child an account on TikTok we suggest the following:

- Know your child's password so that you can see what they are doing on their account.
- If you have a TikTok account yourself, follow your child so that you can see what they are posting.
- Ensure your child has their account set to private, this means that people have to request to follow them. Your child can then make sure that they are only followed by people they know.
- If someone your child doesn't know tries to follow them, block the user so that they can not ask again.

# TWITTER



## What is it?

- A microblogging tool that allows users to post brief, 140-character messages -- called "tweets" -- and follow other users' activities. It's not only for adults; teens like using it to share information about their life and keep up with news and celebrities.

## What should you know about it?

- It has an age rating of 13+
- Most children tweet publicly which means that anyone can see their tweet. It is possible to have a private account and tweet privately.
- Tweets are uploaded instantly and if you then delete it can have been read by anyone before it was deleted.

# SNAPCHAT



## What is it?

- A messaging app that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear. Most teens use the app to share goofy or embarrassing photos without the risk of them going public. However, there are lots of opportunities to use it in other ways.

## What should you know about it?

- It has an age rating of 13+
- **It's a myth that Snapchats go away forever.** Whenever an image is sent, it never truly goes away. It is also possible for deleted snapchats to be recovered.
- Anyone can ask to connect with you.
- There's a lot of content unsuitable for children. Snapchat's Discover feature offers a grab-bag of articles, videos, and quizzes from magazine publishers, TV networks, and online sources mostly about pop culture, celebrities, and relationships.
- It can lead to sexting which is the sending, receiving, or forwarding of sexually explicit messages or photographs.

# INSTAGRAM



## What is it?

- An app that lets users snap, edit, and share photos and 15-second videos, either publicly or within a private network of followers. It unites the most popular features of social media sites: sharing, seeing, and commenting on photos. It also lets you apply fun filters and effects to your photos, making them look high-quality and artistic.

## What should you know about it?

- It has an age rating of 13+
- **Teens are on the lookout for "likes."** Similar to the way they use Facebook, teens may measure the "success" of their photos -- even their self-worth -- by the number of likes or comments they receive.
- Photos and videos shared on Instagram are public unless privacy settings are changed. Hashtags (#) and location information can make photos even more visible to people beyond a user's followers if his or her account is public.
- You can send private messages to others.



# YOUTUBE CHANNEL



## What is it?

- YouTube allows you to watch, create and comment on videos. By creating your own channel you'll have a public profile which means that anyone can watch and comment on your videos.

## What should you know about it?

- It has an age rating of 13+
- Anyone can post comments and watch the videos. Some comments posted are unsuitable for children to be reading and can make them feel uncomfortable.
- If your child is wearing their school uniform anyone can find out roughly where they live.

# TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE

- Make sure that you know about the different apps that your child uses.
- Know your child's username and password for different apps so that you can keep an eye on what they are posting, who they are following and who is following them.
- If you are also on the app, make sure that you follow your child so that you can keep an eye on what they are posting, who they are following and who is following them.
- If you are unsure what apps your child is using ask them or set up parental controls.
- Parental controls are software and tools that allow parents to set controls on their children's internet use. They are a great way of helping prevent children from accessing unsuitable content online.
- The following link takes you to the NSPCC website where you can learn more about keeping your child safe online as well as step-by-step guides on setting up parental controls.
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>