

Young children are spending increasingly more time online during the course of a normal day. Huge leaps in online entertainment for children & young people has led to higher levels of screen time for children the world over. Learning how to keep your child safe online is vital for parents as we move forward into an increasingly digital world. Take a moment to read our Parents Guide to YouTube Kids & learn all about the safety features available on this site to help keep your child safe online.

## **What is YouTube?**

YouTube is a social media platform specifically created for sharing, viewing & commenting on user created videos. Users share their video content & gain followers to their 'channel', which sometimes leads to online content creators called 'Youtubers' often amassing huge, digital fan bases. Videos shared on the platform are based on every kind of topic imaginable and are usually free to watch. Users can like and comment on videos on the platform. Due to the loose nature of the content created on the site, there are plenty of safety concerns for parents around this platform, as content does not come with age appropriate tags in the same way traditional films & movies do. The platform has partially addressed these issues with the platform by releasing the 'YouTube Kids' site, which is a useful addition for parents to keep their child safe on the site.

## **How do I set up a YouTube Kids account?**

You can create an account through the YouTube Kids homepage. Navigate to the site and go to the top right of the page. Click 'Sign In' and you will have an option to create an account. Children under 13 cannot create their own channels or accounts and between the ages of 13 - 17 are only allowed to open them with parental permission.

To sign up, follow these steps:

- Select the lock icon at the bottom of the screen.
- Click Sign in.
- Select the account you'd like to use.
- Tap "Send parental consent email"
- Wait and check your email for the consent letter and activation code.
- Enter the code in the application.

## **What do I need to keep an eye on?**

### **Minimum Age Range**

YouTube does not allow children below the age of 13 to sign up for an account. The site requires users to enter their date of birth before signing up and bars users below this age from creating an account. Therefore, children 12 and under should use YouTube Kids.

### **Range of content**

As previously discussed, there is a huge range of content available for viewers to the site to watch and not all of this is suitable for a young audience. The easiest way to prevent your child viewing harmful content on this app is to use YouTube Kids - <https://www.youtube.com/kids/>. YouTube Kids has been specially created to help parents monitor their children on the app & has a variety of safety features, which are not available on YouTube.

### **YouTube Kids Safety Features:**

- Automated & human reviewed content filters which aim to eradicate inappropriate content
- Creators & content must be deemed 'Family Friendly' before it is shown on this site
- YouTube Kids has a speedy 'flag' option, so parents or kids can quickly flag anything that may have made it past the original filters
- Customisable options for parents that allow you to block channels or videos on your child's account
- Screen time limit
- Limited paid advertisements
- 'Approve content only' mode which allows you to have sole control of what your child is watching
- Multiple profiles for households with more than one child with different viewing preferences
- Content 'levels' can be chosen based on age groups, making it simple to allow your child to explore age appropriate video content
- Options to keep tags on your child's viewing history
- You can pay for membership, which will remove ads completely from your child's account

## **View or change settings on child's account**

### Parental controls and settings

- Select the Lock icon in the bottom corner the page
- Complete the math problem or read and enter the numbers that appear. Or, enter your personal parent passcode.
- Select Settings

### **Blocking a creator or video**

If you or your child has seen something that bothers you, you can block that video or all content made by that creator.

- Tap the more button (three vertical dots icon) beside the video.
- Select 'block this video' or 'block this creator' and then enter in the code shown on the screen, or your own custom parent passcode.

### **Flag a video or creator**

If you or your child has seen something that bothers you, you can flag that video or all content made by that creator. YouTube Kids will then review this video within 24 hours and take it off the site, if they deem it to be inappropriate.

- Tap the more button (three vertical dots icon) beside the video.
- Select 'flag this video' and then select your reason

### **Set a screen time limit**

This handy reminder will lock your child out of the account when they have spent a pre-specified amount of time on the app which you can set & adjust when required.

- Select the lock icon in the bottom corner of any page in the app.
- Read and enter the numbers that appear or enter your parent passcode.
- Select 'Timer'
- Use the slider or the plus and minus icons to set a time limit
- Select 'Start Timer'

When the time limit is reached, a "Time's up!" notification will pop up. The app will then lock, stopping your child from continuing using it. To unlock the screen, select the lock icon again, read and enter the numbers that appear or enter your parent passcode, select Timer and tap End Timer.

### **Choose content age ranges**

This is a useful feature, which allows you to select an age range for your child. The system will then only show content specifically aimed at this age range.

#### **To change age range settings:**

- Select the Lock icon in the bottom corner the page
- Complete the math problem or read and enter the numbers that appear. Or, enter your personal parent passcode.
- Select Settings
- Select your child's profile and enter your parent account password.
- Select Preschool, Younger, Older or Approve content yourself.

#### **Set up 'Approve content only' mode**

You can set your child's viewing options to be approved solely by you. You can choose creators or 'collections', made by trusted creators. Enabling 'approve content only' prevents your child from using the search bar function on this app.

- Select the Lock icon in the bottom corner of the app.
- Complete the maths problem or read and enter the numbers that appear. Or, enter your parent passcode.
- Select Settings
- Select your child's profile and enter your parent account password to modify settings.
- Select 'Approved content' only
- Click through the 'Getting Started' pop-up.
- Select 'Select'.
- Tap the plus icon on any collection, channel or video to add content you're happy for your child to view
- Exit by selecting the 'DONE' button.
- You can change your selections by selecting 'Manage' under the 'Approved Content' section

## **View your child's history**

Tap the 'Recommended button' which will be a small heart icon, located at the top of your home screen. You will be able to view all of your child's recent viewing history here.

## **Digital Safety**

Teaching your child to be safe online can start with a conversation. Don't be afraid of letting your child explore what is out there online. Youtube Kids has many security built-features which will reassure parents who are not as digitally aware. If you aren't confident online, ask your kids to teach you how to use their favourite apps! Children enjoy teaching their parents a new skill & you will learn why they enjoy using the app so much, which can be useful if they want to delve into new apps or online experiences. Age-appropriate app use that is monitored safely by parents with security features enabled can be a positive way for your children to interact with the digital world, learn new skills & interact with their peer group.

### **Some points to keep in mind:**

- Encourage your young person to talk to you if they see something that they are worried or scared about – open and honest communication is really important when keeping your child safe online.
- Take time out occasionally to monitor what your child is watching on the app. Although the filters on this app are intuitive & regularly reviewed, they may not catch everything that could be potentially harmful or upsetting for your child to view. Remember to flag anything untoward & block the content & creator to assist in keeping the app safe for other viewers.

### **More information:**

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/youtube/>

<https://www.youtube.com/kids/parent-resources/>

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801999?hl=en-GB>

<https://wellbeing.google/for-families/>

[https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en\\_uk](https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/en_uk)

<https://www.ceop.police.uk/Safety-Centre/>

<https://www.common sense media.org/learning-with-technology/is-it-ok-for-my-kid-to-start-her-own-youtube-channel>