

Keep your child safe on YouTube

YouTube is a video hosting platform, owned by Google, which is popular for sharing music videos, gaming streams, video blogs and essays, tutorials and entertainment. You can't have a YouTube account without a Google account.

Children under the age of 13 need to have parental consent to make an account. Part of that parental consent is the agreement that parents/carers will supervise their child's account.

To help safeguard children, YouTube does not allow users under the age of 13 to upload videos.

What's the problem?

- Videos that look like they're child-friendly can include violent or disturbing content, and it's difficult for YouTube to catch all of these videos before children see them
 - Inappropriate videos may be suggested videos, or appear in search results
 - Adults may use YouTube to contact children and 'groom' them into sharing explicit pictures or videos of themselves
 - Children might see videos with extremist content
 - Children can share personal information, e.g. the street they live on or their school, which could put them in danger
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Understand your options

YouTube has three 'tiers' of accounts for children. These are:

- YouTube Kids – a separate app designed to deliver a child-friendly experience for under 12s
- Pre-teen supervised experiences – a limited account that blocks some content and functionality for children under 13
- Teen supervised experiences – voluntary supervision for children over 13. Parents/carers can use parental controls, but these can be turned off

You can learn more about these accounts and the safeguarding options available in each here:

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/10315420>

This factsheet provides guidance if you decide to use YouTube and its supervised experiences. If you need help setting up a YouTube Kids account, ask your school for the relevant factsheet.

Set up supervised accounts

1. Create your own account

If you don't have your own account, you'll need to make one to supervise your child's account. You can find instructions on Google Account Help:

<https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/27441>

2. Create a new Google account for your child

If your child doesn't have a Google account, you can make a supervised account for them. This allows you to set an appropriate content level and control other settings through your YouTube app or Google Family Link app.

Family Link is a free app provided by Google that groups Google accounts together and allows parents/carers to change settings on supervised accounts (see step 5 below).

Follow the instructions below to set up a child account and link it to your parent account:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/10314074>

3. Or, add supervision to your child's existing account

If your child already has an account, you can add supervision to it. Find instructions on how to do this, what you can check on your child's account and what settings you can control here:

<https://support.google.com/families/answer/9055704>

4. Or, set up teen supervised experiences for older children

After they turn 13 your child will be able to disable supervision features and must agree to allow supervision from your account. Find instructions on how set up and use teen supervised experiences here: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/15252891>

5. Tailor your parental controls through Family Link

The level of supervision you want will depend on your child. Through Family Link you can control screen time, remote lock devices, track app usage and get email notifications when supervised accounts upload videos or start live streams. These controls are set by managing the child's Google account.

Explore your Family Link options and decide which settings are right for your child by accessing the link below: <https://support.google.com/families/answer/7103262>

5 more steps to take

1. Turn on 'Restricted Mode' to help hide videos that may have inappropriate content

You can turn this setting on directly from your child's account, or through the Family Link app. Find specific instructions on how to turn on Restricted Mode on YouTube Help below:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/174084>

2. Keep autoplay turned off and manage video recommendations

Autoplay is turned off by default for users aged 13 to 17, but can be turned on again. Make sure auto-play is disabled to prevent your child from seeing upsetting content accidentally.

You can also prevent YouTube from using past searches to recommend videos by pausing or deleting your child's watch history. Please note that disabling your child's watch history will stop you from being able to see what your child has watched. You should decide if you'd prefer to see what your child is watching, or prevent YouTube recommending videos.

Instructions for disabling autoplay and deleting or pausing watch history can be found on the page below:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/95725>

3. Tell your child not to share any personal information in videos or comments

This is anything that could identify them or give away their location, like the name of the street they live on, their school name or their school uniform.

4. Check comments on videos your child watches or creates

YouTube automatically disables comments on videos 'for children', but no system is perfect. Regularly check the comments made on videos your child has created, or watches often. Depending on their account type, you may be able to view their watch history through the Family Link app, or through Family Center on your account.

➤ For pre-teen supervised accounts

Review your child's watch history using the instructions here:

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/answer/13877231>

This feature won't work if you've disabled your child's watch history (see step 2).

You should decide if you'd prefer to see what your child has watched, or prevent YouTube recommending videos.

➤ For teen supervised accounts

You can review your teen's activity using the instructions here:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/15190245>

You won't be able to see your teen's watch history, but you can monitor comments on videos they have uploaded and see channels they've subscribed to.

5. Flag inappropriate videos and comments to YouTube

You can report channels, videos or comments that are spreading harmful ideas or opinions, directing children away from YouTube, are hurtful or inappropriate, or ask for personal information.

You and your child can report or flag content to prompt YouTube staff to check it and decide whether to block or restrict it in line with its community guidelines. You can find instructions for reporting content on YouTube Help: <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802027>

Sources

➤ YouTube Help

<https://support.google.com/youtube#topic=9257498>

➤ Reporting and enforcement, YouTube

<https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/2803138>

➤ New safety and digital wellbeing options for younger people on YouTube and YouTube Kids

<https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/new-safety-and-digital-wellbeing-options-younger-people-youtube-and-youtube-kids/>

➤ Expanding our support for teen wellbeing on YouTube across Europe

<https://blog.youtube/inside-youtube/expanding-support-for-teen-wellbeing-europe/>

➤ Exclusive: Adults using YouTube to groom children into making inappropriate videos

<https://www.channel4.com/news/exclusive-adults-using-youtube-to-groom-children-into-making-inappropriate-videos>

This factsheet was produced by [The Key Safeguarding](https://thekeysupport.com/safeguarding): thekeysupport.com/safeguarding