



A PARENTS GUIDE TO INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a social networking app with over 1 billion users worldwide. It is mainly used by children and adults up to age 34. The photo sharing app allows users to upload images and videos to their 'feed', create interactive 'stories' and exchange private messages. Users can also search for and follow accounts with the same interests.



DIRECT MESSAGES

Direct Messages (DM's) on Instagram allows users to share posts, images, videos, voice messages between users privately or in a private group. A direct message can be sent to anyone even if their account is set to private. If the sender is not on the users friend list, the user has to accept a request to see the message. If a message you receive is upsetting or inappropriate, you can report the message and account to Instagram by holding down the message and clicking 'report'.



ACCOUNT PRIVACY

A profile can be set to either PUBLIC or PRIVATE. If an account is private, users can approve the people who follow them, and can remove followers at any time. Private account content can't be seen by anyone the user hasn't approved. If an account is public, anyone can see the content they post on Stories, Feed or Live, and can follow them without needing approval. A public account can be switched to private at any time and vice versa. Users can also remove followers, choose who can comment and can also turn off "Show activity status" so that friends can't see when they're online.

AGE RESTRICTION



Instagram requires everyone to be at least 13 years old before they can create an account. Accounts that represent someone under the age of 13 must clearly state in the account's bio that the account is managed by a parent or manager.

PRO'S

- **VISUAL** - Instagram is a fantastic visual medium.
- **CONNECT** - It is an easy way to connect with others who have the same interests.
- **POSITIVE** - It can be a really positive place if you follow the correct accounts (for example positive affirmation accounts)
- **EASY** - It is relatively easy to use.
- **PRIVACY** - Instagram's privacy policy is far better than other social media platforms, there is nothing that cannot be controlled with the privacy settings of instagram.
- **LEARNING** - Instagram has many pages which can be useful to a child/teens development, such as pages dedicated to crafts, music and helping with studies... anything which the young person shows interest in.
- **PARENTAL APPS** - It can be easily accessed through parental 'spying' apps, so parents can monitor the accounts activity

CON'S

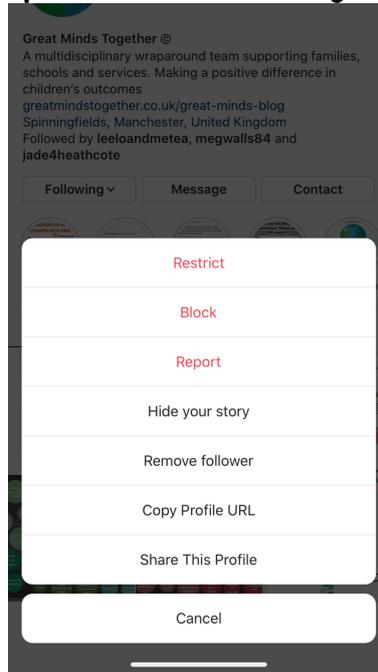
- **ADULT CONTENT**- Although Instagram does not allow users to post explicit photos, public pages may still display content which is only suitable for adults.
- **ADDICTION** - Users may develop an unhealthy addiction to the platform. Addiction also slowly gives birth to anxiety, sleeping disorders and change in eating habits.
- **LOCATION TAGS** - Users can tag their location, making their whereabouts known to their followers (or anyone on a public page)
- **NEGATIVE SELF IMAGE** - Instagram is full of influencers who share images which are often edited to make them seem 'perfect'. This can cause young people to have a negative self image or low self esteem as they compare themselves. These feelings could turn into jealousy or frustration.
- **BULLYING**- Trolling or bullying is very common on social media.



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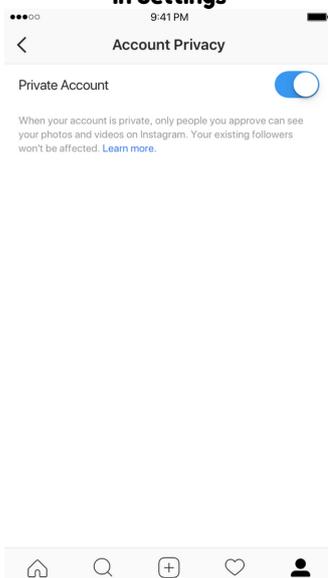
BLOCK USERS

Block accounts you dont want to interact with by clicking "..." on their profile and then selecting "Block"



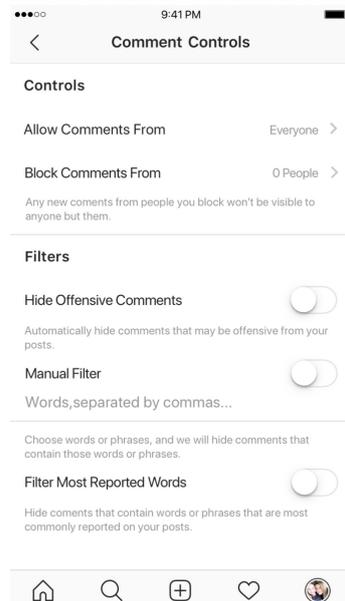
ACCOUNT PRIVACY

Switch an account from public to private under "Account Privacy" in Settings



MANAGE COMMENTS

Control who can comment on your posts and videos in the "comment controls" section in Settings





A PARENTS GUIDE TO FACEBOOK

Facebook is a multi-platform social media platform with over 2 billion users worldwide. It is mainly used by adults aged 25 - 44. Users can create a profile and add photos and videos along with updating their status and interacting with other profiles and pages.



FACEBOOK MESSENGER

Facebook Messenger is a separate app which is directly linked to a users profile and gives the ability to share messages privately. Messages received from 'Friends' go directly into the users inbox, whereas messages from non-friends go into a separate 'message request' inbox.



ACCOUNT PRIVACY

A Facebook profile can be set to either PUBLIC or PRIVATE. If an account is private, users must approve 'Friend Requests' before anyone can see the information they choose to share on their profile. If a profile is public, any user can see the accounts posts without being their 'friend.' With Facebook, you can also choose to make certain posts public or private.

AGE RESTRICTION



Despite requiring users to be over 13, Facebook has no age verification measures meaning that children can easily create an account.



LIVE STREAMING

Facebook Live enables users to stream videos live to their friends and followers or watch other peoples live streams. During these streams, other users can comment and 'react' in realtime. As this is streamed live, there is a risk of inappropriate material being shared or users being influenced to do something online they shouldn't be doing.

PRO'S

- **CONTACT** - Facebook enables users to keep in touch with people you otherwise would not see. Users can also find out about real-life events and gatherings they would otherwise miss.
- **JOURNAL** - Users can use their profile to keep a virtual journal of their life to look back on in the future. Your Facebook timeline is ordered chronologically so you can look back on years gone by to relive the experience.
- **FREE** - It is free to use and has multiple options of communication.
- **LEARNING** - There are many pages which can be useful to a child/teens development, such as pages dedicated to crafts, music and helping with studies... anything which the young person shows interest in.
- **NEWS** - For many people, facebook is their main way of keeping up with current affairs. However, users should always double check the news they are receiving is factual.

CON'S

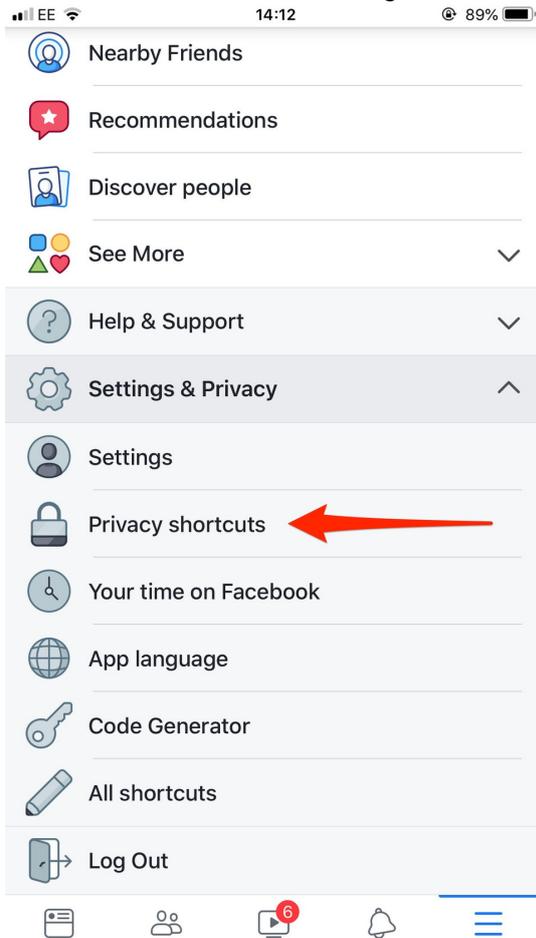
- **OVERSHARING** - Facebook encourages users to share "what's on your mind?" this could encourage children to over share information.
- **ADDICTION** - Users can become highly addicted as communication is so instant that they develop a fear of missing out if they do not constantly check their feed.
- **STRANGERS** - Some profiles on Facebook use stolen information to pretend they are someone the users know when in fact they are a complete stranger.
- **FUTURE IMPACT** - Anything which is posted on Facebook leaves a digital footprint. This means that anything you share could affect your reputation in the future.
- **BULLYING** - Facebook has multiple forms of communication, meaning users could be more exposed to hurtful comments and abuse.



A PARENTS GUIDE TO FACEBOOK

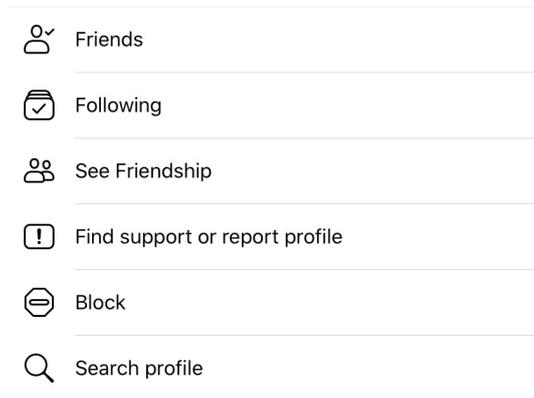
ACCOUNT PRIVACY

Switch an account from public to private under "Privacy Shortcuts" in Settings



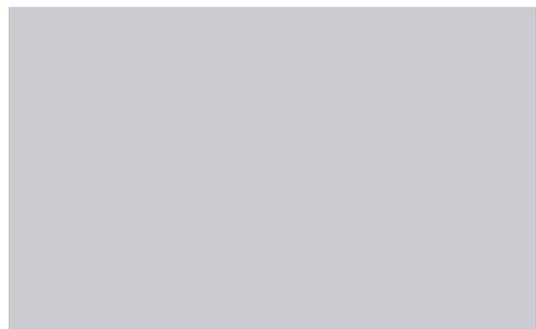
BLOCK A USER

Click on the "..." button on the users profile and then select "Block"



<https://www.facebook.com/>

Copy Link





A PARENTS GUIDE TO SNAPCHAT

Snapchat is a photo sharing app most commonly used on mobile phones. It is mainly used by young people aged 25 and below. Users can share images, videos or text messages with specific friends or to their complete friends list through their 'story' which is available for 24 hours.



SNAP MAP

The 'snap map' allows users to share their location in real-time through a map on the application. The users location updates each time they open the app. When 'ghost mode' is turned on, the users location will no longer be shared with anyone.



ACCOUNT PRIVACY

Snapchat users can be contacted by anyone who has their username unless they select the privacy option which only allows their 'friends' to contact them. Snapchat also has a public 'story' which all users can send a picture to. If a user shares a photo or video to the 'our story' option on Snapchat, it means that anyone will be able to see that piece of media.

AGE RESTRICTION



Despite requiring users to be over 13, Snapchat has no age verification measures meaning that children can easily create an account.



'YOLO' ADD ON

YOLO is an anonymous Q&A tool that lets users add an "ask me anything" sticker to their Snapchat Stories. While the post can be attached to a Story, it can also be sent to a specific set of contacts, facilitating conversation among groups of friends. Those who see the request can then swipe up to open YOLO, and answer through another sticker - if the original poster responds, their reply is posted back to their Snapchat Story. Whilst the add on is safe in respect to the fact only a users 'friend' can send an anonymous question, it could be easily misused to send abusive or upsetting messages.



SEXTING

Messages and text sent via Snapchat disappear eventually and can not be re-watched. However other users could still use the 'screen shot' capability on their phone to record anything which has been sent to them. Users sometimes forget this and send compromising pictures of themselves to other users which are then screen shot and sent to others without their consent.

PRO'S

- **NEWS** - For many young people, Snapchat is a fantastic news outlet. Many magazines and newspapers post daily stories full of current affairs.
- **FUN** - Snapchat has many fun and interesting filters that you can add to your photos and videos. Due to this, young people tend to take themselves less seriously as with a silly filter there is no pressure to look 'perfect'.
- **CREATIVE** - Users can create fun and interesting stories which follow a narrative.
- **LESS PRESSURE** - Because 'Snaps' disappear, there is less pressure to be perfect on each image as there is less time to scrutinise the images.
- **MAINTAINING FRIENDSHIPS** - Snapchat enables young people to remain in contact with friends they do not see often, meaning that friendships are able to continue when in the past they would have dissolved.

CON'S

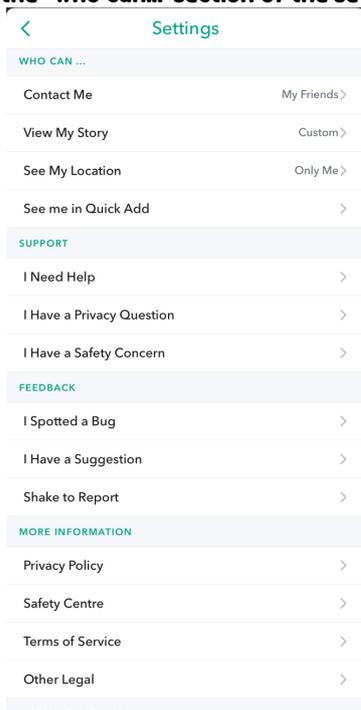
- **OVERSHARING** - Due to the fact that 'snaps' disappear, young people may feel a false sense of security and send images, videos or messages that are inappropriate.
- **ADDICTION** - Friends who are users can maintain a 'streak'. This is a tally of the number consecutive days they have messaged each other. This can get competitive as it can be seen as a strength of friendship and lead to children being addicted to the platform in order to have the longest 'streak'.
- **STRANGERS** - It is easy to search and add any random user on Snapchat, it is important that users only add people they know.
- **LOCATION** - Unless the user has set their account to ghost mode, their exact location is updated in real-time and can be found on a map.
- **CONTENT** - Snapchat has a page where you can view stories from many media outlets. Some of this content is not suitable for children and young people.



A PARENTS GUIDE TO SNAPCHAT

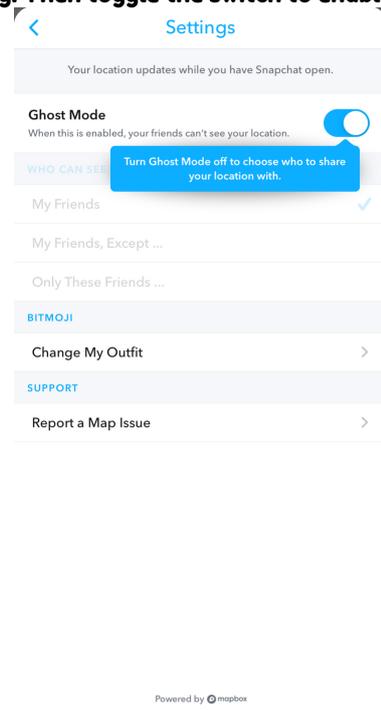
PRIVACY

Manage who can add you as a friend and send you messages through the "who can..." section of the settings tab



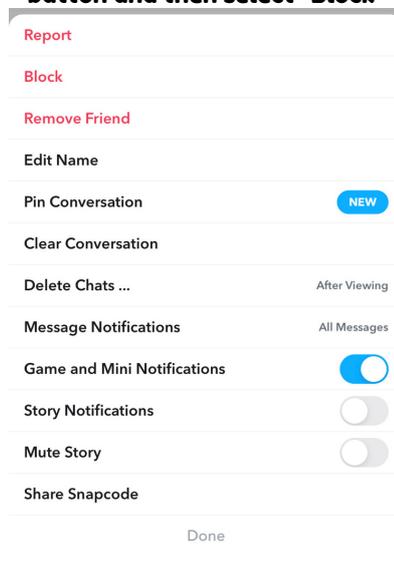
GHOST MODE

To enable 'ghost mode' click on the snap map and then the 'settings' cog. Then toggle the switch to enable ghost mode.



BLOCK A USER

Hold down the users name in your contacts then click, the "more" button and then select "Block"





A PARENTS GUIDE TO YOUTUBE

Youtube is a video sharing platform which is owned by Google. Anyone can upload and watch video content as well as commenting, liking and disliking content. Youtube is mainly used by people aged 25 and under, and is quickly becoming the chosen viewing platform for children and young people aged 3-15.



MESSAGES

When a user is signed into YouTube via their Gmail account they are able to send and receive messages. Users can define who can and cannot send them messages in the account settings.



ACCOUNT PRIVACY

Users can decide who can view their videos in the account settings. The options include 'open to public', 'private' and 'Unlisted'. Parents can also create a 'family' google account which allows them to monitor a child or young person's account.

AGE RESTRICTION



Users should be over 13 to have a YouTube account, however there are no age verification measures meaning that children can easily create an account.



SELF VERIFICATION

Any child or young person with a Gmail account can login to YouTube and access the full array of videos on offer. Whilst most of these videos are age appropriate, some videos are flagged as 'age-restricted', meaning that users need to confirm their age in order to watch the content. As this flag relies on self-verification, users can easily input a fake date of birth to be able to access the content.

PRO'S

- **RESTRICTED MODE** - Restricted mode hides any unpleasant or inappropriate videos from children. It has to be enabled on each device you use.
- **YouTube KIDS** - There is a child friendly app for YouTube called YouTube Kids
- **EDUCATIONAL** - YouTube is full of educational resources. From assistance to maths homework to full ballet classes, there is something for everyone who wants to learn something new or develop existing skills.
- **EASY TO USE** - YouTube has a fairly simple interface and is simple and straightforward to use. It is so simple to use that most toddlers get the hang of it quickly!
- **KNOWS YOU** - YouTube tracks your viewing habits and gets to know what kind of videos you like and dislike, it will then suggest further videos it thinks you would be interested in and either suggests them on your home page or via 'auto play'.

CON'S

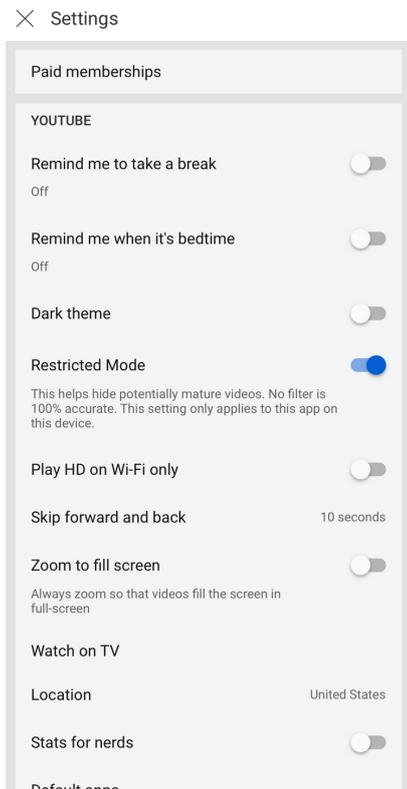
- **CHALLENGE VIDEOS** - 'Challenge' videos have become very popular in recent years. However some challenges are extremely dangerous and can cause serious injury.
- **AUTO PLAY** - YouTube has an 'auto play' feature where it will play a related video immediately after the video the user has chosen to watch. The video should be related, however, this is not always the case and children can be exposed to inappropriate content.
- **CONTACT** - Unless the correct settings are put in place, users can be contacted by anyone.
- **FUTURE IMPACT** - While videos can be deleted, they leave a digital footprint and may impact the users future reputation.
- **BULLYING** - Once a user has posted a video on the public platform, anyone is able to view and comment on the post, meaning they are open to hurtful comments.



A PARENTS GUIDE TO YOUTUBE

RESTRICTED MODE

Click your profile picture and then "Settings". Scroll down to "restricted mode" and then turn on.



BLOCK A USER

Click on the "..." button on the users profile and then select "Block"





A PARENTS GUIDE TO TIKTOK

TikTok is a video sharing social media mobile app which allows users to create, share, watch and comment on short videos. TikTok has been designed for young users - with most users being under 24.



FOR YOU PAGE VS FOLLOWING PAGE

There are 2 ways to view content on TikTok this is through either the "For You Page" or the "Following Page", The following page only shows videos from accounts and users you have chosen to follow due to having an interest in the content they distribute. The for you page is a mixture of videos from anyone with a public profile. The list of videos on the "for you page" is based on your interests, likes and people you already followed. This is however a flawed system and inappropriate videos are regular occurrence on this page. It is best for a child or young person to only use the "following page" to watch content on TikTok as this is guaranteed to have content from only the people you follow.



ACCOUNT PRIVACY

TikTok accounts can be set to either public or private. If the account is set to private all follow requests have to be approved and only those followers can see the users content. If an account is set to public, anyone can view their material and profile. There are also additional privacy measures available which include completely turning off the ability for others to comment on the users videos and limiting who can send the user messages.

AGE RESTRICTION



Users should be over 12 to have a Tiktok account. If the user is under 18, supervision from a parent or guardian is required.



RESTRICTED MODE

Restricted mode is parent controlled through a PIN secured setting on the app. When restricted mode is enabled, videos are filtered and videos which are not age appropriate are removed. This is however not 100% accurate and there is still a chance a young person can come across inappropriate content.

PRO'S

- **ENCOURAGES MOVEMENT** - a lot of TikTok trends involve learning fast paced dances, meaning that users are encouraged to get up and learn the dances.
- **FUN** - TikTok encourages users to not take themselves too seriously and be silly and have fun creating videos.
- **MOTIVATIONAL** - If you follow the correct accounts, TikTok can be very inspirational, there are tonnes of accounts dedicated to helping young people with their mental health.
- **EASY TO USE** - There is one main page where you scroll down through all of the videos.
- **KNOWS YOU** - TikTok tracks your viewing habits and gets to know what kind of videos you like and dislike, it will then suggest further videos it thinks you would be interested in on your for you page.
- **CONFIDENCE BUILDING** - Creating the short videos and learning not to take yourself too seriously can be great for building self confidence.
- **COMMENTS** - Users can turn off commenting on their videos, so no other user can comment on them at all.

CON'S

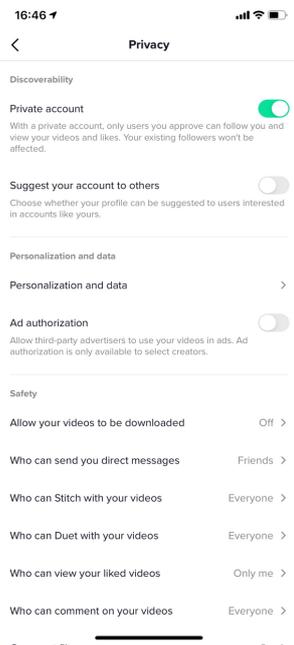
- **INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT** - TikTok is riddled with inappropriate content for children and young people. These videos often begin masquerading as an innocent video and switch to something disturbing.
- **LANGUAGE** - A lot of TikTok trends involve lipsyncing to popular songs and movie quotes. Some of the language in these is not age appropriate for those under 18.
- **DANCES** - Dance trends are fun, however some of the trends involve moves which are sexualised and inappropriate for children and young people
- **FUTURE IMPACT** - While videos can be deleted, they leave a digital footprint and may impact the users future reputation
- **BULLYING** - Once a user has posted a video on the public platform, anyone is able to view and comment on the post, meaning they are open to hurtful comments.



A PARENTS GUIDE TO TIKTOK

PRIVACY

In account settings click "privacy" and then turn private account on



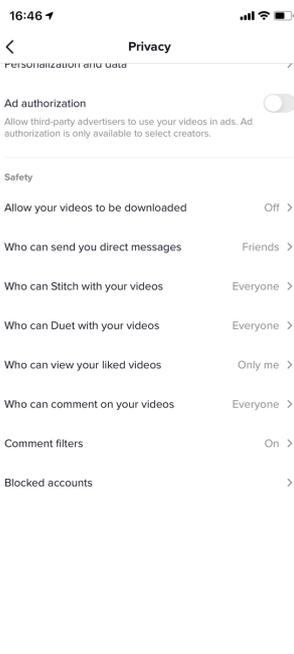
RESTRICTED MODE

On the settings menu, click "digital wellbeing" and then turn on restricted mode



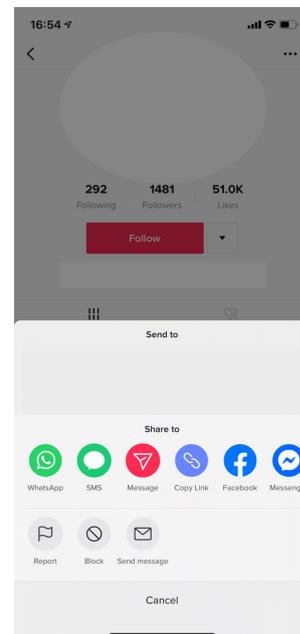
SAFETY

In the settings menu scroll down to "safety" and toggle the settings to suit your account.



BLOCKING

On a users account click "..." and then "Block User"





A PARENTS GUIDE TO WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is a messaging app. Through this platform you can send messages, photos, files and videos to both individuals and groups. WhatsApp is used by people of all ages due to its versatility and end-to-end encryption.



GROUP MESSAGING & CYBERBULLYING

The group chat and group call options on WhatsApp are fantastic resources for friendship groups to be able to connect, however they can also pose great problems with cyber bullying. A person within the group can be targeted and media shared to the group which could be hurtful. Within groups the "Admins" can control who can send a message in the group therefore meaning a group admin could send a nasty message and then stop anyone from responding which would ultimately result in upset.



ACCOUNT PRIVACY

Within WhatsApp users can decide who gets to see their profile picture and status, add them to group chats and their live location. Users can also block contacts who they do not want to be associated with.

AGE RESTRICTION



WhatsApp's age restriction for anyone living in the EU is 16+, everywhere else in the world it is 13+



LOCATION SHARING

WhatsApp has a "Live Location" feature which enables users to share their current location with their contacts in real time. This feature could be really beneficial for parents who like to keep track of their child's whereabouts however, this could also pose a safety risk to the child or young person if they share their location with a contact who they do not know.

PRO'S

- **DELETE ACCIDENTAL MESSAGES**- WhatsApp users have the ability to delete a message that has been sent in error. The app allows 7 minutes for a message to be deleted before the action can not be undone. Remember though, people could screen shot the message in that time.
- **SOCIAL** - WhatsApp allows users to stay in contact with their friends and group chat no matter what smart device you have. Some messaging apps only allow you to message people with the same phone as you.
- **FREE** - WhatsApp is free to use. This is beneficial when sending media as it can be costly to send picture and video messages over SMS. WhatsApp is all done online too so if you run out of calls and texts, you can still use the app over WIFI or using mobile data.
- **ENCRYPTED**- WhatsApp messages have end-to-end encryption, meaning that messages can only be read by the sender and recipients within the chats. Even WhatsApp cannot read the messages you send.

CON'S

- **GROUP CHATS** - Group chats can be a great form of communication but they can also be a breeding ground for cyberbullying.
- **SCAM MESSAGES**- Often scam messages with inappropriate content are forwarded from one whatsapp group to another. These messages can include hurtful content and explicit images.
- **FALSE NEWS** - Often false news is shared through messaging platforms such as whatsapp. The best way to see if it is true is to have a quick search of the story.
- **STRANGERS** - To start a chat with someone in WhatsApp you need to have their mobile number. However if your number has fallen into the wrong hands or has been randomly generated, users may be contacted by someone they do not know. It is important to ignore these messages and block the user to avoid further communication from them.
- **LOCATION SHARING** - Location can be shared with the wrong people.



A PARENTS GUIDE TO WHATSAPP

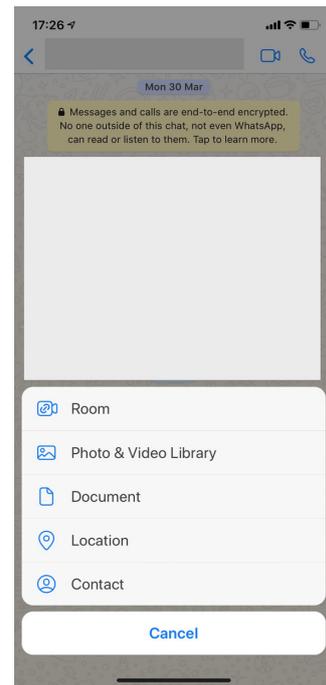
PRIVACY

In the settings tab select "privacy" and then change the settings to suit you.



SHARE LOCATION

In a chat select the "+" button and then Location to share your location with contacts.



BLOCKING

Select a contact and then press "info" then scroll to the bottom and click "Block Contact"





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Sources

- www.nationalonlinesafety.com
- www.facebook.com
- www.instagram.com
- www.twitter.com
- www.youtube.com
- www.tiktok.com
- www.snapchat.com
- www.whatsapp.com