



# PARENT ADVICE

## ONLINE SAFETY







AGE 12+



AGE 4+

## YOUTUBE & YOUTUBE KIDS

| PROS  | CONS  |
|---|---|
| Creative     |  Sexual themes       |
| Educational  |  Violence            |
| Fun          |  Coarse language     |
|   |  Chat with strangers |

### WHAT IS IT?

**YouTube** and **YouTube Kids** are video sharing platforms, where anyone with a phone and an internet connection can upload a video at any time. There are, in fact, over 300 hours of video uploaded every minute on the Google owned platform. It is available for free, through the use of advertising. Moderators, algorithms and staff are employed to monitor the content and comments.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

YouTube has been in the news recently with some high-profile companies withdrawing advertising again, because within the comments section of certain posts contain content that sexualize children. YouTube quickly deleted, banned and reported to police channels and videos, and disabled comments on tens of millions of videos that include minors. However, this has shown some of the vulnerabilities of the platform - it has such a large upload amount per minute, that policing and controlling content and comments has proved to be a very large task.

The comments section is not the only risk to your child on the YouTube platform. The Restricted Mode on the YouTube app cannot guarantee that inappropriate videos or comments will be filtered out. Many age-inappropriate ads are also shown, such as M rated movie previews that you may not wish your child to see. The only way to disable advertising within YouTube is to purchase a YouTube Premium subscription (formerly YouTube Red).

Children and teens uploading their own videos to the platform poses another set of risks to you and your family (please see the "Parent Tips" section of this Advice) as it is easy and quick to upload videos to the platform, without any technical skills required. Uploading and sharing videos is now a popular occurrence, with children as young as 5 years old having their own YouTube channel and followers.

YouTube kids is an option for younger children, as the videos have to be approved for viewing by kids before it is uploaded to the app, otherwise they stay in the original YouTube platform. YouTube Kids also has settings such as a timer that turns it off after a specified time, and there is no 'comments' section. However, highly inappropriate videos have recently still found their way in, masquerading as family friendly. Some of these videos were not only very disturbing, they were purposefully and skillfully hidden within regular children's videos.

## Parent Tips

If your child would like to start their own YouTube channel, there are a few safety concerns you need to be aware of.

The first is ensuring your home address or sensitive personal information is not visible in any uploaded videos. This can come from mail or packages around the computer, bills or notices on your fridge, or anything your child is to mention in the video, such as the local shops, school or any identifiable landmarks in your neighbourhood or street.

The second is the identity of your child. This is something you will need to work through as a family, such as how visible your child will be (will his or her face be shown?), and what school they attend (remember that if they wear a uniform this will be easily identifiable).

Lastly, the comments section needs to be closely monitored or switched off, as the owner of the channel may become responsible for its contents.

Be aware, that at any time the videos can go viral and your child can gain instant notoriety.

