

As a Parent, are YOU Switched On?



ICON	Name	Category/Age
	Instagram	<p>13+ Instagram is a picture and video sharing app. Teens signing up with a birth date indicating that they're under 16 will have private accounts by default, and those with public accounts will get a notification about the benefits of having a private account and how to switch. Photos shared in Instagram are public and may have location information unless privacy settings are adjusted. Also, it's possible to save other users' photos. In the app's Direct section, users can send private messages directly to other users, and a green status dot shows your friends you're active in the app (which could show people that you're active but not answering their messages) unless you turn it off in settings. Vanish Mode lets friends send messages that disappear after users leave the chat. The Reels feature lets user create TikTok-style short videos with visual effects and clips from popular music that they can share in their Instagram Stories or in their main feed. Users can use Remix to build on another user's Reels, like with TikTok Duets.</p> <p>Worth knowing In settings - check out supervision accounts. This is great as long as you have your child onboard with you supervising their account, otherwise they can turn supervision off. Also, worth looking at the take a break feature and quiet mode. Instagram may push a narrative of a 'perfect world' to young people and they may feel pressured to post perfect, polished images of themselves. Watch out for who and what they are following. Also worth removing any payment methods.</p>
	Facebook & Messenger	<p>13+ Facebook is a popular free social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and video, send messages and keep in touch with everyone.</p> <p>Worth knowing You need a Facebook account to use Messenger. You can then deactivate your Facebook account and log into Messenger just by using the Facebook account info. Anyone can search for you by name, email address or phone number in the Messenger app. Watch out for Facebook's Secret Messenger feature – this allows users to talk to one another in a completely private and closed-off chat.</p>
	Snapchat	<p>13+ Snapchat is a popular photo-messaging app that allows users to take photos, record videos, add drawings and send them to their friends. A message on Snapchat appears for only a few seconds, but once you click away or the time limit expires, it disappears permanently. Snapchat has a number of different features. These include 'stories', that disappear after 24 hours, 'memories', that act as a kind of personal archive, 'Snap Map', that shares your location whilst you're online, 'streaks', when you send messages back and forth for several consecutive days, and filters.</p> <p>Worth knowing By default, only 'Friends' can make direct contact or view a user's story. However, users can change their profile to 'public', which means that anyone can view your stories and Snapchat users you haven't added will be able to send you images and messages. Snap Map allows snapchat 'friends' to see where your child is. The locations are quite accurate, even revealing the street you're on. There is also a 'live streaming' option, in which you create a story with other users based on your location. This is only available when your geo-location is enabled. Also check out 'Family Centre', an in-app tool that allows parents to see who their children have been speaking to or frequently communicate with).</p>
	Tumblr	<p>13+ Tumblr is a social networking site that lets you share text, photos, quotes, links, audio clips, slide shows and videos. You can customise your page and share other people's posts. You can also send private messages. Tumblr allows live streaming.</p> <p>Worth knowing Due to the vague nature of the profile function – it's easy to remain quite anonymous. You can post almost anything on here so watch out for adult content. Be aware of over sharing as this is a public platform and can be viewed by anyone with an account.</p>
	Spotify	<p>13+ Not all content on Spotify may be suitable for teens - for example, some music may contain objectionable language, and podcasts can discuss adult subjects. Content which may not be appropriate for teens is marked with an 'Explicit Content' or 'E' label.</p> <p>Worth knowing Consider using Spotify Kids, this is a standalone kids' app and all the playlists are created by an adult. Or consider setting up a family account which allows you to limit what they can listen to on the app. Please be aware that this platform is also being used whereby fake accounts and playlists are being created by groomers and then communicating with children to encourage them to send photographs, explicit photographs, of themselves.</p>

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	YouTube	<p>18+ (younger with guardian's permission). YouTube is a video sharing and social media platform. Videos can be commented on, liked and shared.</p> <p>Worth knowing Cyberbullying can occur through comments and age-inappropriate content may slip through moderators. There is a version of the site specifically curated for kids aged 3 to 13, YouTube Kids, which you can read a guide to at https://parentzone.org.uk/article/youtube-kids. But if your child is using the 'adult' version of the site, there are ways you can make their experience safer.</p>
	Twitch	<p>13+ Twitch is a live streaming video platform which allows creators to broadcast and users to watch content, usually about games, including eSports.</p> <p>Worth knowing Twitch offers a personalised chat filter to filter out any content you may deem inappropriate. Twitch streamers can also enable content warnings on their streams.</p>
	Minecraft	<p>7+ to 13+ Minecraft is a sandbox game which can be played on all games consoles and mobile devices. Despite the age restriction, Minecraft is very popular with primary school children. There's nothing about the game itself that's inappropriate for kids.</p> <p>Worth knowing Different versions of Minecraft have different age restrictions, as some mods may contain more violence than others. It's also worth keeping in mind that Minecraft has an in-game chat feature. Remind children of the risks involved with talking online to people they don't know.</p>
	Omegle	<p>18+ or 13+ with parent's permission. You log on with a webcam and microphone and are matched with another random user who you can either chat with or reject and move on.</p> <p>Worth knowing It's easy for kids to gain access to Omegle as the site doesn't require them to register as a user, or identify their age, meaning anyone is able to access the site. There's a high risk that your child will come across explicit sexual content and bad language.</p>
	Roblox	<p>12+ Roblox is the ultimate virtual universe that lets you play, create, and be anything you can imagine. All Roblox accounts display the age bracket in the menu and in-game. Age is never shown to other players.</p> <p>Worth knowing For many children, Roblox will be one of the first places where they interact online with other people, whether via the platform's in-game chat options or by adding 'friends' and sending them messages. There is a risk that children could be encouraged to chat with players outside of this moderated chat. Remind them that doing so could put them in danger, as other platforms may not have the same level of moderation. In-game purchases are available, but these are optional.</p>
	Reddit	<p>13+ Reddit is a community-based forum where people write posts covering different topics, which others can then comment on. The more popular something, the higher up it appears on the website. Beware: experts regard this as a high risk forum for young people.</p> <p>Worth knowing There are no age verification systems, so can be easily bypassed to view inappropriate content. Communities from one subreddit can infiltrate and harass other. Red flags for racist language and disinformation. Some individuals might use Reddit as a platform to post links to other forums which are more extreme in their nature, and equally less moderated.</p>
	Discord	<p>13+ An instant messaging social platform in which people enter servers so they are part of a group – used a lot in gaming communities.</p> <p>Worth knowing No age verification & if you are under 13 you must have consent of guardian. Inappropriate/adult content which is unsuitable for younger users. Discord does not offer any parental controls as such, but has advanced privacy settings which allow the account holder to adjust pretty much the entire user experience.</p>

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	Steam	13+ Steam is an entertainment platform which lets you play games and create your own in-game content. You can also chat to other members of the community through groups, clans or in-game chat features. Steam allows live streaming.
	TikTok	13+ A social media app where users can both create and watch short video snippets, often accompanied by music. Users don't need an account to watch videos on TikTok but if they want to like, comment, customise their feed or create their own 10 minutes video content, they'll be prompted to sign up for a free account. Worth knowing <i>Chat about who they follow and why they like them. Also watch out for the challenges, some can be dangerous or give the wrong messages out. TikTok offers its users a range of settings to customise their experience and make it safer for young people, which they refer to as 'Family Pairing'. These settings allow parents to control elements of their child's TikTok account if their child is under 16. TikTok introduced a feature that prevents under-16s from both sending and receiving private messages – but nothing stops young users from faking their age. Check out the 'Youth Portal' together and let them know they can come to you if they had a bad experience.</i>
	WhatsApp	16+ WhatsApp is a free app that allows users to send encrypted messages to other users. Users must verify their account with a standard mobile number to start using the app. WhatsApp offers users the ability to send images, voice notes and a wide range of emojis, in addition to voice and video calls. You can choose to share your live location for up to eight hours with one contact or a group. A number of settings can be changed (and are recommended) to enable improved privacy and safety over the default information. Worth knowing <i>Turn your live location off – everything can be found in your settings. The app has a default privacy setting which allows anyone else on WhatsApp to view the user's profile photo, status and when they last used the app. It's easy to change this setting to specify that the WhatsApp profile is seen only by 'My contacts' or 'Nobody' making the app feel a lot safer for younger users. You can also manage any blocked contacts. Beware of scams and malware.</i>
	Apex Legends	16+ Apex Legends is a battle-royale game similar to Fortnite. It is for a slightly older audience and has grittier effects. It's free to play but there are many opportunities for in-game spending. There's a lot more emphasis on gunplay (rather than Fortnite's building mechanic) and when a player is shot, a small cloud of blood surrounds them. The violence is quite superficial but be aware that it may not be suitable for all children. Worth knowing <i>The real-time voice chat is never moderated and children playing could be exposed to abusive language or behaviour. It's not uncommon in online games to be teamed up with someone who perhaps takes the game more seriously. This could result in negativity or bullying from other players if you don't perform quite as well as the rest of your team, which means if your tween or teen isn't playing it yet, they'll be asking for it soon.</i>
	Vault Apps (Decoys)	Vault Apps are apps which allow users to secretly hide photos, videos and files behind the premise of another app, for example a calculator which can be accessed only through a numeric PIN code. These can become dangerous 'stashes' of youth produced sexual and other unsuitable imagery.
	BBC Own It	4+ The BBC Own It app is an online safety and wellbeing app for young people. It helps them keep track of how they're feeling, build online skills and access support for problems they might face online. It also includes a keyboard that responds to what they write. It might prompt users to think before sending a message or direct them to help if it thinks they're upset. The app is private and none of the data is shared with anybody else.
	Talkee online	18+ Web based chat lines. This website enables phone conversations with anyone. Offers lots of different chat lines. Worth knowing <i>Its free to use and only need to register with a valid email address. Not moderated or any safeguarding policies in place.</i>



www.getsafeonline.org

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Apps, games and your child.



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