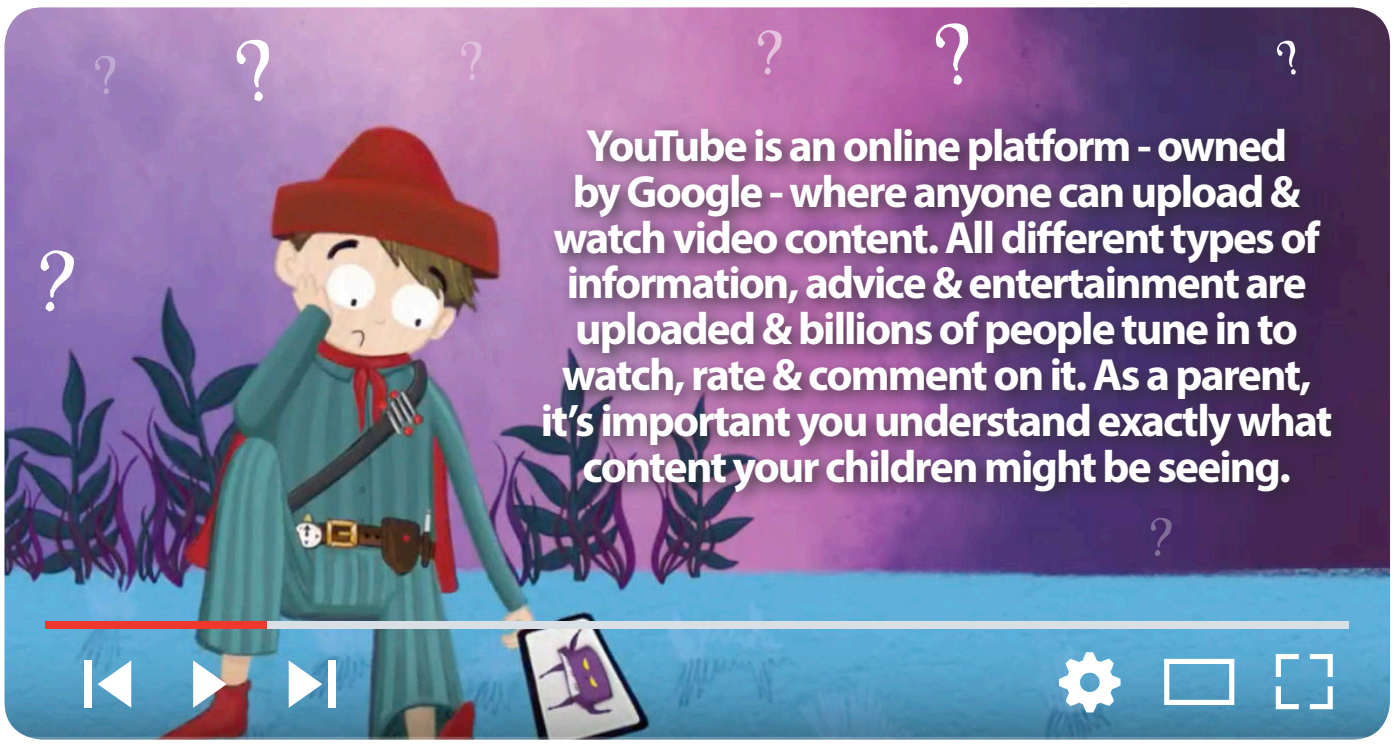
YouTube

AGE RESTRICTION 13+



What parents need to know about YOUTUBE

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT EASY TO ACCESS

Any child with a Gmail account can sign into YouTube & access videos. Some content is flagged 'age-restricted', but the platform relies on self-verification, meaning kids can get around the rules with a fake date of birth. This could enable access to vulgar, violent & dangerous videos.

USERS CAN PRIVATELY CONTACT YOUR CHILD

When your child is signed-in to YouTube with their Gmail account, there are various ways they can send & receive messages. This could be via the messages icon, or via the 'About' tab. There is scope here for users who your child does not know to make contact.

YOUTUBE SUGGESTS RELATED CONTENT

YouTube will often 'auto play' videos based on your child's viewing habits. The aim is to show related & appropriate content. But the problem is: it's possible your child will be exposed to inappropriate content that isn't accurately related.

'CHALLENGE VIDEOS' CAN GO TOO FAR

Challenge videos refer to a stunt you're encouraged to recreate & film. Many challenge videos can be harmless & for a good cause, like the Ice Bucket Challenge. But some are dangerous & even life threatening, such as the Bird Box Challenge.

SHARING VIDEOS RISKS YOUR CHILD'S PRIVACY

If your child has a Google account, they can upload their own videos. To do this, they must create a personal profile page known as a 'YouTube Channel'. The videos uploaded here can be viewed, commented on & shared by anyone. This could put your child's privacy at risk.

Tips To Protect Your Child

APPLY 'RESTRICTED MODE'

Restricted mode helps to hide any mature or unpleasant videos from your children. It uses YouTube's own automated system & looks at what other users flag as inappropriate content. It must be enabled in the settings menu on each individual device.

CHANGE WHO CAN SEE VIDEOS

You can change who can view your child's content in the settings. Options include Public (available to all), Private (only available to people you share it with & cannot be shared) or Unlisted (available to people you share it with & can be shared further).

BLOCK CONCERNING USERS

To help protect your child from cyber-bullies, harassment or persistent offensive comments, you can 'block' individual users. Doing so hides your child's videos from the user & stops the user being able contact your child in any way.

CUSTOMISE THEIR EXPERIENCE

Influence & control what your child watches using features such as Playlists (your videos play continuously rather than videos YouTube recommends) & Subscriptions (you choose channels your child can watch). It's also good to turn off auto play by toggling the blue button alongside the 'Up Next' title when viewing a video.

CREATE A 'FAMILY' GOOGLE ACCOUNT

Create a Google account to be used by the whole family. This will allow you to monitor exactly what your child is watching, uploading & sharing. Plus, your child's YouTube page will display their recently watched videos, searches, recommended videos & suggested channels.

GET YOUR OWN ACCOUNT

Create your own account so you can explore features yourself. Learn how to flag inappropriate videos, how to moderate comments & how to block users. This will help you feel more confident when providing advice & guidance to your children.

BE MINDFUL OF CYBERBULLYING

Once your child has posted a video, a worldwide audience can see it. Strangers may choose to comment on the video, both positively & negatively. So, be careful to check comments & any other interactions your child is making through the platform.

GET TO KNOW POPULAR CHANNELS

It's good to know which channels are most popular with your children. Some of the most popular channels right now are: PewDiePie, NigaHiga, Zoella, KSI, JennaMarbles, Markiplier, Smosh, ThatcherJoe & Casper Lee.

DON'T ASSUME YOUR CHILD IS TOO YOUNG

YouTube and YouTube Kids are quickly becoming the chosen viewing platforms for children between the ages of 3-15 & it's likely this trend will only increase. It's also possible children will become familiar with the platform at a younger & younger age. So it's important to understand the positives & negatives of the platform.

National Online Safety®

#WakeUpWednesday

Meet our expert

Pete Badh is a writer with over 10+ years in research and analysis. Working within a specialist area for West Yorkshire Police, Pete has contributed work which has been pivotal in successfully winning high profile cases in court as well as writing as a subject matter expert for industry handbooks.

SOURCES: https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/1350409, https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/6401182, https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2802272?hl=en-GB, https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/7354993?hl=en-GB, https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/yt/about/policies/#community-guidelines, https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/134907/Children-and-Parents-Media-Use-and-Attitudes-2018.pdf, https://www.raisingdigitalnatives.com/youtube-parenting/, https://www.net-aware.org.uk/networks/youtube/, https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/jan/16/youtube-bans-dangerous-pranks-after-bird-box-challenge

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