

A PARENT'S/CARER'S GUIDE TO DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Disclaimer: Parents should note that while age restrictions for each app vary, most are easy for children to get past by registering as older than they are.

A Parent's/Carer's Guide to Twitch

What is Twitch?



Twitch is a video platform that allows gamers or streamers to share their gameplay and commentate on what they're doing. Essentially, the users are watching someone play a game!

Users can also set up a stream themselves if they have the correct equipment like a webcam and microphone.

- A video platform that lets users stream their gameplay and watch other gamers.
- Available via its website and the app store.
- Chat function available within each stream with moderation depending on the streamer.
- Private messaging available but can be switched off in privacy settings.
- Free but with in-app purchases.
- Age requirement; 13+ with the permission of a parent. Otherwise 18+ years of age.

GDPR regulations require an Age of Digital Consent - the minimum age a user must be before a social media or internet company can collect, process and store their data.

In Ireland, the Age of Digital Consent is sixteen. Most of these apps will require parental permission before a child can use them.

A Parent's/Carer's Guide to Instagram

What is Instagram?



Instagram is the app that turned everybody into an amateur photographer! It is a social media app that allows you to take pictures and videos and share them with friends, family and the internet at large.

- A social media platform that lets users share videos and photos and follow friends, family and public figures to see their posts.
- Feed posts are permanent whereas Instagram Story posts disappear after 24 hours.
- Available via the app store.
- Ability to make profiles public or private.
- Private messaging available between users.
- Free but with in-app purchases.
- Age requirement; 13+ years of age.



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A Parent's/Carer's Guide to Snapchat

What is Snapchat?



Similar to Instagram, Snapchat is a mobile messaging application used to share photos, videos, text, and drawings. The appeal of Snapchat is the messages disappear after 10 seconds and can only be viewed once.

- A social media platform that lets users send videos and photos to friends.
- Private posts between friends disappear after 10 seconds while Snapchat Stories disappear after 24 hours and are public.
- Available via the app store.
- Users add each other via username or phone number.
- Free but with in-app purchases.
- Private messaging available between users.
- Age requirement; 13+ years of age.

A Parent's/Carer's Guide to TikTok

What is TikTok?



TikTok has a reputation for being the most creative social media platform around. Users can create, watch and share short-form videos on almost any topic imaginable. It has a range of filters and effects that enhance the creativity of videos as well as access to a huge range of songs and noise effects.

- A social media platform that lets users create short-form videos and post them publicly.
- Feed is divided into two; one feed for people you've chosen to follow and one feed where TikTok's algorithm shows you posts it thinks you'll like.
- Available via the app store.
- Private messaging available between users.
- Free but with in-app purchases.
- Age requirement; 13+ years of age.

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A Parent's/Carer's Guide to YouTube

What is YouTube?



YouTube is a video sharing service where users can watch, comment and like videos. Users can also create videos and upload them to the platform.

- A video sharing platform that lets users watch videos and upload their own.
- Users can subscribe to their favourite YouTubers and watch videos on almost any topic.
- Available via the app store and website.
- Public comment sections available but no private messaging.
- Free but with in-app purchases.
- Age requirement; 13+ years to post content but account not required to watch videos.

A Parent's/Carer's Guide to YouTube Kids

What is Youtube Kids?



YouTube Kids is designed for children to make it easier for them to find videos that they're interested in but that are also age-appropriate for them. It's aimed at children between the ages of 3 and 12 and allows parents to have greater control over the content that their children are watching.

- Similar to YouTube but with more parental controls.
- Parents create profiles for each child and set what channels and videos they can watch depending on age.
- Available via the app store and website.
- Free to use.
- No comment section or messaging function.

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A Parent's/Carer's Guide to WhatsApp

What is WhatsApp?



WhatsApp is a mobile messaging app which is popular among teenagers. It allows them to exchange messages without having to pay text message fees. WhatsApp Messenger is available on most mobile devices and can also be accessed on desktop or tablet using WhatsApp Web.

- A social media platform that allows users to share unlimited texts, images, video and audio messages.
- Free to use.
- Age requirement; 16+
- Private and group messaging available between users.
- Available via the app store and can also be used on WhatsApp Web website.
- Privacy settings allow users to edit who can see their profile photo, status and when they were last online.

A Parent's/Carer's Guide to Fortnite

What is Fortnite?

FORTNITE

Fortnite is an online game with four distinct game modes that allow gamers to either compete to be the last person standing or just hang out with friends. As of May 2020, it has an estimated 350 million registered accounts. It is one of the most-watched games on the video-streaming platform Twitch.

- An online survival game where players compete to be the last person standing.
- Other game modes available including one where friends can hang out together.
- Available via its website, the app store and various gaming consoles.
- Live unmoderated chat function on PC and gaming consoles. Can be switched off in privacy settings.
- Free but with in-app purchases.
- Age recommendation is 13+.