At National Online Safety we believe in empowering parents, carers & trusted adults with the information they need to hold an informed conversation about online safety with their children, should they feel it is needed. This guide focuses on one platform of many which we believe trusted adults should be aware of. Please visit www.nationalonlinesafety.com for further guides, hints & tips for adults.

**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 false date of birth. This could enable access to vulgar, violent & dangerous videos.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**‘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.

**GET TO KNOW POPULAR CHANNELS**

It’s good to know which channels are most popular with your child. Some of the most popular channels right now are: 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.

**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.

**CUSTOMISE THEIR EXPERIENCE**

Influence & control what your child watches using features such as Playlist (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.

**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. Being so hides your child’s video from the user & stops the user being able contact your child in any way.

**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 child. Some of the most popular channels right now are: PewDiePie, Nepahgiga, Zoella, KSJ, JennaMarbles, Markiplier, Smosh, ThatchterJoe & Casper Lee.

**THESE TIPS ARE BASED ON INFORMATION WE HAVE COLLECTED FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.**

**SOURCES:**
- Meeting our expert

- Pete Bash is a writer with over 10+ years in research & 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.

- Meet our expert

- National Online Safety

- #WakeUpWednesday

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0vC0QGibQ_A

- www.nationalonlinesafety.com Twitter - @nationlonesafety Facebook - NationalOnlineSafety

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