

A guide to reporting on social media apps

Social media is a great way to connect with friends and bond with new people over common interests – and it’s no secret that young people love spending time on their favourite platforms.

Although social media has a lot to offer young people, it’s important to not lose sight of the associated risks. Whether they’re aspiring to be the next big Insta influencer or just enjoy a leisurely scroll through TikTok every now and then, it’s crucial that your child understands how to spot risks on social media – and also knows how to respond to them.

We’ve put together this guide on how to use the reporting tools on different social media platforms, so you can help your child have safer, more enjoyable experiences.

What are the risks?

- Unfortunately, cyberbullying is a fairly common occurrence on social media and your child might stumble across **abusive content**.
 - Your child might **connect to people they don’t know** on social media – including people who might not have their best interests at heart.
 - Although most social media platforms are moderated to some extent, they can also be a hotbed for **misinformation and scams**.
-

Which are the most popular platforms?

TikTok: 13+

Having gone from obscure Musical.ly reboot to one of the most downloaded apps ever, seemingly overnight, TikTok has captured the hearts of Gen-Z by standing out from the social media crowd with its short-form video focus.

The app enables users to watch and create short video snippets, often accompanied by music. Much like the other social media platforms, you sign up for an account and can then follow other users, comment on their content and private message them – and vice versa. Although it’s worth noting that as of 30 April, under-16s won’t be able to send or receive direct messages.

TikTok has a set of [community guidelines](#) users must adhere to, but if you or your child spots inappropriate content you wish to report, here’s what to do:

- **Report a post:** If you spot an inappropriate video you wish to report, open it and click the arrow-shaped 'Share' icon. Then, click the 'Report' option from the menu and follow the steps.
- **Report a user:** If you'd like to report a user's behaviour or content, go to their profile and click the three-dot 'Settings' icon in the top-right corner. Then, click the 'Report' option from the menu and follow the steps.
- **Block a user:** To keep a user from following your child, messaging them or interacting with their content, you can block them by going to their profile. From there, you click the three-dot 'Settings' icon in the top-right corner, select the 'Block' option from the menu and follow the steps.



Instagram: 13+

Home to thousands of established and aspiring influencers, Instagram has been a hit with audiences both young and old for a decade. The Facebook-owned platform allows users to post photos and videos, livestream to their followers and connect via direct messages.

Here's how to report content or behaviour in breach of Instagram's [community guidelines](#):

- **Report a post:** At the top-right corner of the post you want to report, there should be a three-dot icon (horizontal on iOS and vertical on Android). Tap it, select 'Report' from the drop-down menu and follow the instructions.
- **Report a comment:** If you want to report an abusive comment but not the post itself, click on the speech bubble icon at the bottom of the post. When you've found the comment you want to report, swipe left (iOS) or press and hold (Android) the comment until the exclamation mark appears. Tap the exclamation mark and select either 'Spam or Scam' or 'Abusive Content', depending on your issue. You will then be asked to provide an explanation for why you find the comment inappropriate.
- **Report a user:** Go to the profile of the user you want to report and tap the three-dot icon in the top-right corner of the screen. Select 'Report' from the drop-down menu and follow the instructions.



Snapchat: 13+

With its one-off photos and timed video stories, Snapchat quickly carved out its own niche in the social media landscape and inspired many competitors to take on similar features. By allowing the user to show, rather than tell, what they're up to, the app has stayed popular with young people even almost a decade after its launch.

Here are the reporting mechanisms available on Snapchat if you spot content which doesn't uphold the app's [community standards](#):

- **Report a post:** If your child stumbles across an inappropriate snap, they can report it by pressing and holding the screen until the flag-shaped 'Report Snap' button

appears at the bottom of the screen. This method applies to private snaps as well as public stories.

- **Report a user:** Find the user's name in your contact list and press and hold it until the menu appears. Click 'More' from the drop-down menu, hit 'Report' and describe how the user acted inappropriately.
- **Block a user:** Go through the same steps as above but instead of clicking 'Report' from the 'More' menu, hit 'Block' to prevent the user from contacting your child in the future.

Facebook: 13+

The grandpa of all social media platforms may not hold the sway it once did with young people, but many still use it to stay in touch with their social circle and nurture their interests.

While most of its competitors have a clear focus, Facebook has grown into a platform with a myriad of functions – from sharing updates and connecting with like-minded people, to planning events and shopping in the peer-to-peer marketplace.

Here's how to react if you happen upon inappropriate content in breach of Facebook's [community guidelines](#):

- **Report a user:** If you wish to report a Facebook user, go to their profile and click the three-dot menu underneath their name and profile picture. Then, select 'Find support or report profile' and describe how the user has behaved inappropriately.
- **Report a post:** Find the post you wish to report on your feed and hit the three-dot menu in the top-right corner of the post. Then select 'Find support or report post' and describe how the post breaches the guidelines. The app will also ask you if you want to block the user from this page.
- **Report a message:** In Facebook Messenger, open the chat with the message you wish to report and click the exclamation mark icon in the top-right corner of the chat. Scroll down and the option 'Something's wrong' should appear. When you click that, you'll be asked to provide some details (if the message was abusive, hurtful, spam etc) after which you can file your report.
- **Report a group:** Go to the page of the group you wish to report and hit the three-dot menu above the group's cover photo. Click the exclamation mark-shaped 'Report group' icon from the menu and describe how the group acted inappropriately.

Twitter: 13+

Known as the place where online conversations – and often arguments – start, Twitter has stood the test of time and remains a hub for public discourse even 14 years after it was first

released. Although they're not the target audience, young people often turn to Twitter for memes or entertaining commentary on current events.

As the online debates rage on, here's how to report content which you feel has [crossed a line](#):

- **Report a tweet:** If you wish to report a specific tweet, find it in the feed and click the downward arrow symbol in the top-right corner. When you select 'Report Tweet' from the drop-down menu, you'll see a list of reasons for why you want to report it. Select 'It's abusive or harmful' from the list and give a brief explanation.
- **Report a user:** Go to the profile page of the user you wish to report and click the vertical three-dot icon in the top-right corner. When the drop-down menu appears, select the 'Report' option at the bottom of the list. You'll be asked to specify why you want to report the user (spam, harmful content etc.) and give a brief explanation.
- **Report a direct message:** If your child has received an abusive direct message from somebody, find the message in the chat and press and hold until a menu appears. When it does, click 'Report', select either 'It's spam' or 'It's abusive and harmful' and give a brief explanation.

How can I best support my child?

Building children and young people's digital resilience is the most effective way of ensuring that they can recognise and manage the risks involved in social media – and continue to make the most of their experiences online.

Digital resilience is developed by **understanding** when you might be at risk; **knowing** how to respond to risks and seek help; **learning** from your experiences and **recovering** when things go wrong.

Help them understand when they might be at risk:

- Talk to them about the different social media platforms they use and make them aware of the potential risks they may encounter.
- Encourage them to think critically about what they see – anyone can publish anything on social media, so it's important not to take information at face value. Moderators will weed out most of the inappropriate content, such as misinformation and scams, but some always slips through the cracks.

Help them know how to respond to risks and seek help:

- Familiarise yourself with the different options, filters and parental controls on the social media platforms they use, where they're available.
- Ask them if they know how to report, block or mute users and posts if they see or hear something that makes them uncomfortable.

Help them learn from their experiences:

- Encourage your child to reflect on a bad online experience:
 - What went wrong on that particular occasion?
 - Could the situation have been avoided?
 - How would they tackle similar situations going forward?
- Ask your child to think about the platforms they use – what do and don't they like about them? If they mention lots of negative things or share bad experiences they've had, you might want to suggest other platforms that are better suited to their needs.

Help them recover when things go wrong:

- Check that they know who to talk to if they see or hear something that makes them uncomfortable, or receive messages that worry them.