

Safeguarding & Online Safety

Advice for parents and carers

Contacts over the summer

For concerns about a child or where you have ongoing concerns please contact:

Children's First Response Hub via telephone or email.

PHONE: 01202 123334

EMAIL: childrensfirstresponse@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

The First Response Hub is open:

Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 5:15pm

Friday, 8.30am to 4.45pm

Out of hours emergency

The out of hours service offer emergency support for any child who is in crisis, needs urgent help or is at serious risk of significant harm.

DUTY TEAM TEL: 01202 738256

EMAIL: ChildrensOOHS@bcpcouncil.gov.uk

Monday to Friday, from 5pm to 9am

All day Saturdays and Sundays

All bank holidays, including Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

If the child resides in the Dorset area, please contact Dorset Children's Social Care on 01202 228866.

Tips to promote positive body image

If your child is viewing content online, particularly on social media, then the images they are seeing may be edited or even fake. A child may not yet be able to distinguish between reality and what is not real/fake, which may impact their own body image.

Internet Matters provide advice on how to empower your child to develop a positive body image and what you can do to help. Find out more here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/promoting-positive-body-image-with-children>

Meet the team

Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Natasha England – Director of Safeguarding

Oliver Maund – Senior Vice Principal

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads:

Jacob McKay – Education Social Worker

Coralie Crisell – Assistant Principal

Main email address for the safeguarding team:

safeguarding@avonbourneacademy.org.uk

Designated Teacher for Looked After Children:

Natasha England

natasha.england@avonbourneacademy.org.uk

Kiki

Kik state you must be 16 years of age to use the app.

What is Kik?

Kik is classed as a social network where users can message each other, share photos/videos as well as video chat.

What do I need to be aware of?

- Groups – once a user joins a group then your child can receive messages from other members of that group. Some of the groups are centered around topics that are inappropriate for under 18s.
- Adverts
- Location sharing
- Explicit content – including images, videos and messages.
- Live streaming/videos - risk of seeing/hearing inappropriate content.
- Talking to strangers

What parental controls does Kik offer?

Kik does have reporting and blocking tools as outlined here:

<https://kikhelpcenter.zendesk.com/hc/en-us/articles/4402400774043-What-can-I-do-if-my-teen-hasreceived-an-unwanted-orinappropriate-message>

Further information

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/kik>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keep-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/chat-apps/>



kik

Kik (or Kik Messenger) is a free messaging app used by 300 million people worldwide that lets users exchange messages, photos, videos, GIFs and webpages via a Wi-Fi connection or data plan. Kik is unusual in that your child can sign up without a phone number and then find and message other people via just their username. Kik is aimed at anyone aged 13 years and older – the app says teens between 13 and 18 years old will need parental permission but it does not verify ages.



AGE RESTRICTION
13+

1 new message

What parents need to know about

Kik



CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & GROOMING

Police in the UK have warned that Kik has featured in 'more than 1,100 child sexual abuse cases in the last five years' and that 'children are at risk' on the app. Offences involving the app include child sexual exploitation, grooming, and image violations. Kik has also been identified by US police as being used by sex predators, and they say it is responsible for several recent incidents involving children, including the murder of a 13-year-old girl by a man she met via Kik.

FAKE OR ANONYMOUS PROFILES

What makes Kik unique to most other private messaging apps is the fact that it doesn't require a phone number as it works through Wi-Fi. Instead, by using a username, your child can avoid sharing personal information with others on Kik, but on the flipside, this makes it far easier for people to remain anonymous or to create a fake persona.

SEXUAL PREDATORS

Some people may use Kik with the intention of targeting children. Typically, this is a subtle and a potentially dangerous individual who will initially portray themselves as a friend who 'understands' a child. They may also lie about their age and it's possible that your child could be manipulated by a stranger into doing regrettable or illegal activities, and maybe even meeting them in real life.

JOINING PUBLIC GROUPS

As soon as Kik is downloaded, your child can join public groups to chat with up to 49 others about anything from music, to sports, to travel by searching for topics they are interested in. However, groups can include inappropriate names and content. There are also private groups on Kik that can be joined by scanning a group Kik code or if they're added by someone on their contact list.

SEXTING

Due to the general ease of sharing photos and videos, sexting has been reported on the app. These messages can be screen-captured or copied at the press of a button, which could lead to further dangers, such as blackmail and cyberbullying. It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18. This also includes any sexual images or videos that a child may have taken of themselves.

KIK 'BOTS'

Users can add 'bots' to their friends list and communicate with them on the app. 'Bots' are automated software programs built into the app that mimic conversation – developers, brands and Kik can create 'bots' to communicate with any Kik user who has opted to start a conversation with them. Kik has been associated with 'pornbots' and 'spambots', which try to lure users into clicking on links or porn websites by using suggestive and often personalised messages.

VIDEO CHAT

Your child can take part in a live video chat with their friends in a one-to-one chat, or with up to six friends at a time in a private group chat. There is the danger that conversations can be recorded and shared without their knowledge, and with live video conversations, your child is at risk of seeing or hearing content that is inappropriate, sexual or violent.

PERSONAL OR COMPROMISING USERNAMES

As Kik works with usernames and not phone numbers, some people may search for clues as to who someone is in real life, based on their name. For example, if your child uses their real name or something similar, strangers could potentially find out their identity and even start looking for them on other social media platforms.

Top Tips for Parents

CHOOSING A USERNAME

When setting up a Kik account, ensure that your child knows the importance of a secure username and why it shouldn't contain ANY clues as to who they are in real life – especially their first or last name. Get them to choose a username that is hard to guess, using a combination of letters and numbers.

SHARING USERNAMES

Explain to your child that sharing usernames on social media channels, such as Twitter, Instagram or Facebook, will make it visible to people they might not know – and they'll be able to message your child. If your child joins a group, anyone within that group will be able to see their username. Your teen will have a Kik Code that's unique to them and lets your child connect with anyone that scans the unique code; encourage your child not to share their Kik Code with anyone they don't trust.

DEACTIVATING ACCOUNTS

If your child is under 13, you can submit a deactivation request to Kik by emailing support@kik.com. Use the subject line 'Parent Inquiry' and include your child's Kik username and age in your message. If your child is over 13 and you want to close their account, you will need access to the email address registered to their account before you visit <https://ws.kik.com/deactivate>.

FIND GENUINE FRIENDS

The Kik app includes an optional feature that your child can turn on to help find real friends on Kik. The feature works by checking for accounts in Kik that match an email address or phone number stored in contacts (on a smartphone). If the app finds a match, it will notify both your child and their friend with a Kik message.

SHOW HOW TO BLOCK & REPORT

Teach your child how to block and report users on the app. Kik's 'block' feature lets users block all contact with another user, without revealing to the other user that they've been blocked. The blocked user's name will no longer appear in contacts in Kik. Your child can also report a group if they think it's offensive or being used for abuse. Some users of Kik have reported that they receive sexually explicit, automated messages over the app – this is when automated spam bots have been created to distribute explicit images and texts using the service. Your child can use the 'Report' feature to report spam. Once reported, there is the option to keep or remove the chat from the conversation list. If conversations are saved, Kik will automatically block the spam account but save the chat history.

DON'T TALK TO STRANGERS

If your child knows not to talk to anyone they don't know in real life, the risks of using Kik are drastically lowered. Alternatively, if any stranger happens to send your child a message, teach them to ignore it.

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

If your child sees something disturbing, pornographic, deviant or otherwise troubling, they may be left confused and in need of somebody to explain it to them. As such, tell your child that you are always there to help them if they need it, and if they start acting differently to normal, calmly ask them why.

AVOIDING UNEXPECTED IMAGES

Kik censors images from strangers to limit lewd content being shared by surprise. The app will blur all photos in messages when users who have never interacted before contact each other for the first time. Users can only share unblurred images after they have both approved each other.

USING A VALID EMAIL

According to Kik, it is really important for users to provide a valid and accessible email address when registering their account. This will help to make sure your child is able to receive important emails from the service, such as a link to reset their password, when they need them.

MUTING OR LEAVING A CHAT

If someone has said something inappropriate to your child through Video Chat, they can mute the user or leave the Video Chat. Tap on the person's Video Chat bubble and a mute icon will appear. When a child mutes themselves, their microphone will be disabled and nobody else in the chat will be able to hear them.

SOURCES:
<https://www.teensafe.com/blog/everything-a-parent-needs-to-know-about-kik/>
<https://help.kik.com/hc/en-us/articles/115006089388-keep-your-kik-account-private>
<https://www.bbc.com/uk/news/uk-45568276>



1 new message



National Online Safety

A whole school community approach to online safety
www.nationalonlinesafety.com

Email us at hello@nationalonlinesafety.com or call us on 0800 368 8061



Water and Beach Safety

The RNLI has information on keeping safe over the summer, especially as conditions can change quickly and people can easily get into difficulty.

<https://rnli.org/safety>

The RNLI website also has useful activities for young people on beach signs and what to do in different scenarios.

<https://rnli.org/youth-education/education-resources/activity-sheets-and-posters>

WATER IS UNPREDICTABLE!

4 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW:

STOP AND THINK –
what dangers can you see?

Don't be caught out on your own – **STAY TOGETHER**

If you fall in, stay calm and **FLOAT** *to live*

Someone in trouble? **CALL 999 OR 112** *and tell them that someone's in trouble in the water*

BE SAFE AND HAVE FUN

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea.
RNLI is a registered charity. RNLI is a registered company. RNLI is a registered charity. RNLI is a registered charity. RNLI is a registered charity.


Lifeboats

NCA issues urgent warning about sextortion

The National Crime Agency has issued an alert due to the rise in global cases.

The NCA state that “all age groups and genders are being targeted, but a large proportion of cases have involved male victims aged between 14-18.” [Source:

<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/news/nca-issues-urgent-warning-about-sex-tortion>]

Sextortion is a form of blackmail where somebody threatens to share a nude/sexual image of you. It is important to talk to your child about this issue due to the rise in cases, so your child is aware of the signs.

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) outline on their website what to do if you or your child are a victim of sextortion. You can find out more here:

<https://www.iwf.org.uk/resources/sex-tortion/>

<https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2023/07/10/what-is-sex-tortion>

Chatting online

A recent report by the BBC focused on how a child was asked for inappropriate images when chatting online. Ofcom also found the following:

- 3 in 5 secondary school children (11-18) have been contacted online in a way that ‘potentially made them feel uncomfortable’.
- Approximately 30% of children have received an unwanted friend or follow request.
- Around 1 in 6 secondary students (16%) have either been sent nude or semi-nude photos or been asked to share these themselves.

(source: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-gloucestershire-68616730>)

In addition to social media apps that include a chat facility, most online games also allow communication, for example FIFA and Fortnite. Depending on the game, this may be via the in-game text chat, direct messages or talking through headphones. Some games do offer the ability to switch communication off or restrict bad language so make sure settings appropriate to your child are set up for each of the games they play.

How can I mitigate the risks?

- Ensure your child is accessing age-appropriate apps/games and that appropriate parental controls are set up.
- Chat to your child about the risks above so they are aware of what can happen online.
- Depending on the age of your child, it may be more appropriate for devices to be used in family rooms so you can monitor what they are doing and if they are chatting to others.

Reporting other users

It can be difficult to moderate online chat so ensure your child knows how to block and report others who make them feel uncomfortable and that they know to talk to you or a trusted adult if they have any concerns.

Further information

<https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/Concerned-about-your-child/Online-contact-and-staying-safe/>