

## Is Your Child Using These Apps?

Using social networking sites of one kind or another is second-nature to most children.

New sites are springing up every day and there are far too many to mention on this page. Do you know what sites your kids are using? Do you know how they work, what your children and the people they 'meet' on them can say or do on them?

More to the point, are you aware of the potential dangers of kids using these various sites? Whether it's:

- Chatting with people they think are new 'friends', but who could actually intend to do them harm.
- Sharing or viewing inappropriate or adult images or other content. - Being bullied or subject to other kinds of abuse. -Being dared into carrying out dangerous or irresponsible acts on camera - 'neknominating' being one of the most widely publicised.
- Revealing personal or private information about themselves, friends or family. Or arranging to meet in person someone they've met online, when that person isn't who they said they were.

Many of these sites use live video as a means to communicate or involve sending photos. This leaves the way open for people to send images which may be inappropriate.

Many have 'rules' such as minimum membership age, or the kind of content, images or content members are allowed to share. Invariably, the sign-up process relies on trust and in reality, it is easy for kids to pretend they're older. And the rules on type of content shared can easily be abused.

For an example number of websites and apps, such as Sarahah and Tellonym, let users ask questions, leave comments and have conversations anonymously. Here's what you need to know.

### **Know the risks with anonymous messaging apps:**

- Many of these apps do not require users to register to submit comments.
- Most of these platforms require users to be 18 or over, but some allow users as young as 13 to sign up, while others have no age verification process, meaning younger people could register and use the platform.
- Users may behave differently when they are anonymous, which could result in bullying and an exposure to inappropriate comments.
- Anonymous chat apps may only reveal information about who sent an anonymous message if required to do so by law enforcement.

Top tips:

- Children should be aware of these risks before using these platforms, and, if they are posting anonymously, they should consider the impact of sending and receiving unkind messages.
- Users sending abusive or inappropriate comments can be blocked even if they are anonymous, although children should be aware that this may be bypassed by using another device.
- If a child is receiving bullying or inappropriate messages on one of these platforms, they should block the user and report it to an adult.

<https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>



Minecraft

Minecraft is a game that lets you build and create a virtual world using building blocks.



Fortnite: Battle Royale

Fortnite is multiplayer action game where players fight each other to be the last one standing.



Roblox

Roblox lets you create your own games or play games that other users have made.



MovieStarPlanet

MovieStarPlanet is an online game and app where you create and play as a famous movie star.



Instagram

Instagram is a popular picture and video sharing app.



Friv

Friv is a free gaming site that offers a wide variety of games to play.



Monkey

Monkey is a social chatting app that uses live-streaming to randomly connect you with other users.



Kik

Kik is a messaging app that lets you send text, photo and video messages to individuals or groups.



Line

Line is a messaging app that lets you chat by text, audio and video message.

