

Parent's Guide to Social Media Apps & Video Games

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The info linked within this guide is a sampling of materials compiled from the National Online Safety Council by the PPS Title IX Office. More available at <https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides>. Additional resources including supplemental videos can also be found there. This is a phenomenal resource for parents, students and educators alike!



Title IX Office
Safe. Protected. Respected.
www.pps.net/titleix
www.pps.net/LGBTQ

To access the full parent guide for each game or app, click on the image(s) below.

VIDEO GAMES

Call of Duty - Modern Warfare II



The Call of Duty (CoD) series is a worldwide gaming phenomenon with millions of copies sold every year. While 2021's release, Vanguard, wasn't quite as well received, this latest entry - Modern Warfare II - has so far proved a massive commercial success.

Minecraft



Minecraft is a beloved classic of modern gaming. First released in 2011, this open-ended 'sandbox' game of building and exploration still has over 140 million players who happily return to play it at least once every month. Minecraft has also been utilized for much more than just entertainment: it's sometimes used in schools to teach children coding, and it's also employed as a tool for computer-aided design, which is another and problem solving, Minecroit has plenty to offer gamers of all ages, and it's available on almost all video game

To access the full parent guide for each game or app, click on the image(s) below.

League of Legends



League of Legends, commonly referred to as "LoL", is one of the most popular video games in the world, with millions of monthly players. It is available on Android, macOS and Windows, and Apple recently announced during its iPhone 12 launch event that it will soon be coming to iOS too. LoL is an esports game in which two teams of five face-off in order to destroy the other's base. In the UK and Europe, PEGI rates League of Legends as PEGI 12. However, in order to play the game, the user has to accept the Terms of Use, which state that the proper age to play is 13+.

Pokemon GO



Pokemon GO has been among the world's most popular mobile games since its spectacular release in 2016. It's recently enjoyed a resurgence in popularity thanks partly to people combining entertainment and exercise during lockdown.

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Roblox



Roblox is one of the most popular video games on the market, By 2020, the gamemakers were claiming that more than half of children in the USA play it. As a sand box title, Roblox offers a huge amount of creative freedom: it lets players create their own (gaming experiences with the Roblox Studio to build custom levels and games, which can then be shared with other players online. Roblox fosters creative thinking and enjoys a robust online community of fans.

Fortnite



First released in 2017. Fortnite has become one of the most popular games in the world. It currently has around 350 million registered players, Epic Games, If began life exclusively as a *battle royale* contest, where up to 100 online player characters would fight - with weaponry including rifles, handguns and rocket launchers - to be the last one standing, Today, it features multiple modes which each offer something different although some modes, such as Save the World are only available on certain platforms).

Twitch



Twitch is a live streaming service which tends to focus on gaming, Users can publicly broadcast their gameplay and commentary online for other users to watch. It's a community-driven platform where viewers can support their favorite streamers' channels through PayPal donations, Bits" and more. Each streamer or group creates their own community for fans to interact with each other. Twitch has more than 15 million daily active users and includes non-gaming topics such as music, cooking and art. Anyone can create a channel to livestream or watch videos,

SOCIAL MEDIA APPS

Discord



Discord is a free app which allows users to communicate in real time via text, video or voice chat. Available on desktop and mobile devices, it was originally designed to help gamers cooperate but has evolved into a more general networking platform for a range of online communities, discussing topics like TV series, music, Webs and more. Discord is organized around closed groups, referred to as servers" To join a server, users must be invited or provided with a unique link. It's a space for users to interact with friends, meet others with shared interests and collaborate privately online - but it's also a place where young people can be exposed to risks if the right precautions aren't taken.

Yubo

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about YUBO

AGE LIMIT 13+
Under-17s must have parental permission to create an account

Yubo is a social networking platform where users can chat and livestream with up to 10 friends at once. People can connect with others based on location, with a Tinder-style 'swiping' mechanism to accept or reject someone based on profile pictures. The app has more than 20 million users worldwide – but despite its popularity, Yubo has not been free from controversy. While the app claims to monitor inappropriate content, a newspaper investigation in early 2022 found young users being exposed to sexual harassment, racism, bullying and conversations with adult themes.

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Instagram

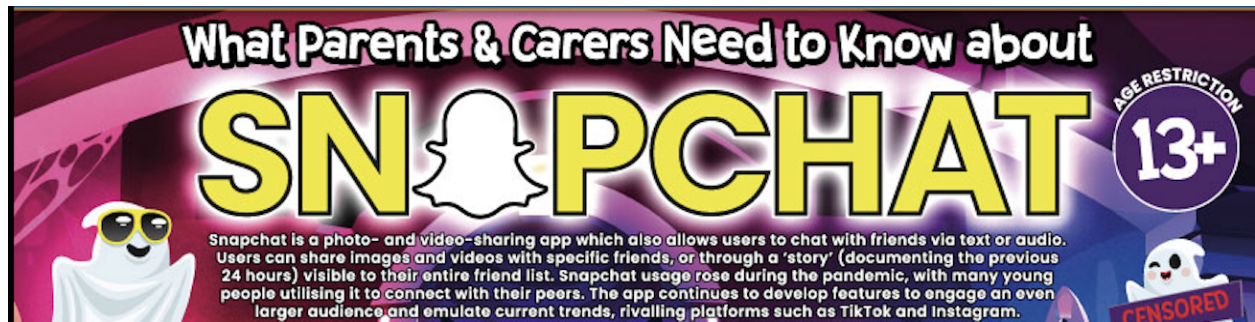
What Parents & Carers Need to Know about INSTAGRAM

AGE RATING 13+
Under-17s must have parental permission to create an account

Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms in the world, with over 1 billion users worldwide. The platform allows users to upload images and videos to their feed, create interactive 'stories', share live videos, exchange private messages or search, explore and follow other accounts they like – whilst at the same time continuously updating and adding new features to meet the needs of its users.

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Snapchat



Snapchat is a photo- and video-sharing app which also allows users to chat with friends via text or audio. Users can share images and videos with specific friends, or through a 'story' (documenting the previous 24 hours) visible to their entire friend list. Snapchat usage rose during the pandemic, with many young people utilizing it to connect with their peers. The app continues to develop features to engage an even larger audience and emulate current trends, rival platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.

Triller



Triller is a social media video sharing app. Unlike TikTok and many other video sharing apps, Triller focuses more on making creative music videos. Users can film multiple takes of themselves and the app will then automatically compile the best clips and turn it into a music video. It is free to download and has amassed over 250 million downloads worldwide, including celebrity users such as Justin Bieber, Eminem and Alicia Keys.

WhatsApp



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
WHATSAPP

WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service, with around two billion users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls. Its end-to-end encryption means messages can only be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp can read them. Updates to its privacy policy in 2021 (involving sharing data with parent company Facebook) caused millions to leave the app, but the new policy was widely misinterpreted – it only related to WhatsApp's business features, not to personal messages.

UK AND EUROPE
16+
13+ REST OF THE WORLD

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Chatroulette



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about
CHATROULETTE

In the words of its creator, Chatroulette "pairs random users for webcam-based conversations". Reporting more than two million monthly users, it claims to be the largest random video chat website worldwide. Users are matched arbitrarily (hence 'roulette') and can end a video chat whenever they like – at which point, they are connected (again, at random) to someone new. Once considered outdated, Chatroulette unexpectedly flourished in the early months of lockdown, with the number of daily users doubling to above 100,000.

Age Rating
18

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Clubhouse



What Parents & Carers Need to Know About

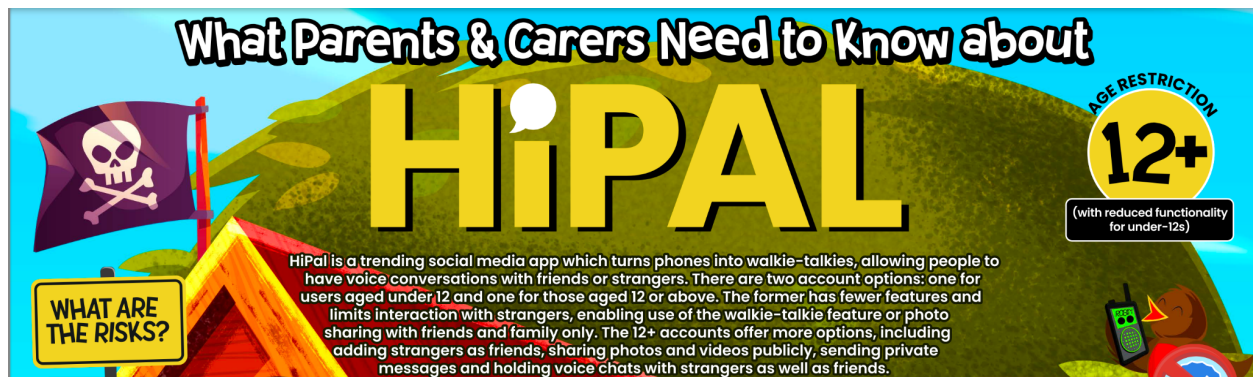
CLUBHOUSE **17+**
App Store Rating

Clubhouse Drop-in Aud

Clubhouse is an audio-only social media networking app that is currently available only to Apple users. The app encourages conversation between users, in various rooms discussing topics from the serious (health, sports, cryptocurrency, etc) to the more frivolous (favourite cereals, corniest jokes and so on). Clubhouse is like an interactive podcast that allows real-time two-way communication. The app is still in beta-testing stage and is invite only – you can only join if someone sends you an invite.

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HiPal



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

HiPAL **12+**
AGE RESTRICTION
(with reduced functionality for under-12s)

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

HiPal is a trending social media app which turns phones into walkie-talkies, allowing people to have voice conversations with friends or strangers. There are two account options: one for users aged under 12 and one for those aged 12 or above. The former has fewer features and limits interaction with strangers, enabling use of the walkie-talkie feature or photo sharing with friends and family only. The 12+ accounts offer more options, including adding strangers as friends, sharing photos and videos publicly, sending private messages and holding voice chats with strangers as well as friends.

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Rec Room



What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

REC ROOM

Age Rating 9+

Rec Room is a social hangout game, where users meet up with friends to explore and create rooms, each containing a different experience. One room might be a game of laser tag or dodgeball, while another could be a parkour course or virtual boxing. Available on iOS devices, PlayStation, Xbox, Oculus and PC/Mac, Rec Room is kidSAFE COPPA Certified and carries an age rating of 9+. Nonetheless, parents and carers should remain mindful that gaming online with strangers always carries a potential risk.

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Signal



What Parents & Carers Need to Know About

SIGNAL

App Store Rating 12+

Signal is a multimedia messaging service (previously known as TextSecure) which provides secure chats between users. It is encrypted, so any intercepted communication cannot be read by attackers. Users can send one-to-one messages or set up group chats. The service is free, has no adverts and doesn't track users' location like many other messaging platforms. The app experienced a popularity boom in early 2021 as large numbers of users left WhatsApp over perceived privacy issues.

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TikTok



TikTok is a free social media platform that lets users create, share and watch short videos ranging anywhere from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The app gained notoriety for its viral dances, trends and celebrity cameos and can be a creative, fun platform for teens to enjoy. Now available in 75 languages, it has more than a billion active users worldwide (as of spring 2022) and is most popular with the under-16 age bracket. In fact, a 2022 Ofcom report found TikTok to be the most-used social media platform for posting content, particularly among young people aged 12 to 17.

Reddit



Reddit describes itself as a social news website where users connect and share stories, opinions and support; debate issues; ask questions; and chat to people with similar interests. Discussion topics are organized into communities (known as subreddits) that are created, run and populated by users, who remain anonymous throughout. Free speech is encouraged, and users - or 'redditors?' - can vote posts "Up" or "down" so they get more (or less) attention. Reddit is free to join, although signing up to Reddit Premium unlocks an advert-free version of the platform.

Compiled by the PPS Title IX Department from the National Online Safety Council, December 2022.