

What is YouTube?

YouTube is a video sharing app bought by Google in 2006, ranked in 2018 as the second most popular online destination. Over 400 hours of footage is uploaded to YouTube every minute with a huge range of interests represented. Video's are uploaded to the app by users onto their Channel, YouTube's version of a Profile, allowing other users to view, comment and vote on whether they like or dislike the content (Upvotes and Downvotes).

As the app has a huge number of both adult and child users, there have been instances where inappropriate content has been accessed—an example being that some videos of children's TV characters have been dubbed using more adult language and themes.

A lot of children and young people are drawn to YouTube to watch their favourite "YouTubers" - an individual who regularly posts content to their Channels. Gaming is a very popular interest so there are a huge number of YouTubers posting videos on Fortnite, Minecraft and the FIFA games. Some offer their views on fashion, make up, sports and many other interests. A number of YouTubers are paid to advertise products by popular brands and as a result it can be difficult to tell what is an opinion and what is a paid product endorsement. Not all are age appropriate as some YouTubers have been criticised for popularising pranks and not considering their impressionable audience when performing outlandish stunts in public. One popular YouTuber amongst children and teens was recently campaigned against for posting an insensitive video mocking suicide.



Do age restrictions apply?

Yes, even for just watching videos according to the terms and conditions—which might be quite disappointing for our children to hear! YouTube state in their terms and conditions that anyone accessing the app should be over the age of 13 due to the personal information the app will collect such as location, viewing habits and searches. Not all content on YouTube is appropriate for all ages.



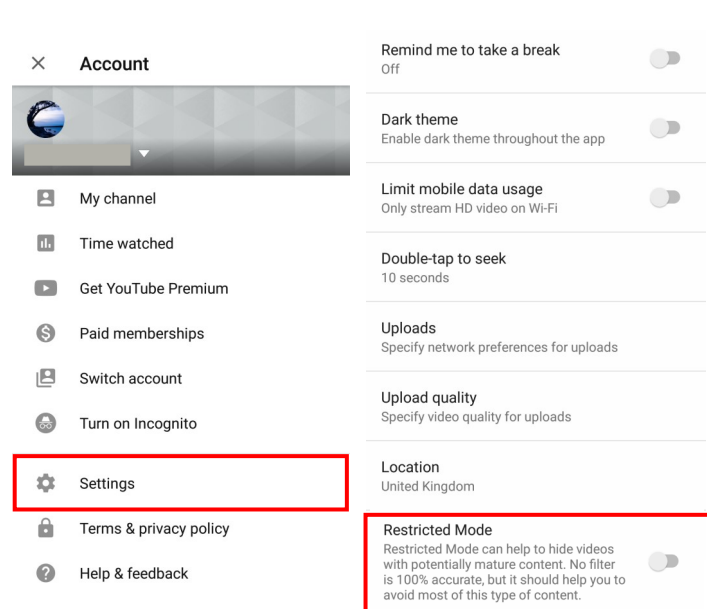
YouTube do offer an app specifically for under 13's to use called YouTube Kids. This may or may not allow your child to watch their favourite YouTubers, depending on how age appropriate they are. As always, discuss this with your child before allowing them access to either version of the app. The app also comes with a timer so you can set a maximum amount of time for them to watch videos and you have the ability to turn off the search feature so they can only watch from approved channels chosen by YouTube.

It's free on the appstore for both Apple and Android devices.

Are there any privacy settings/controls?

Anyone wishing to post a video has a number of options available to them. Videos can be posted publically meaning anyone using YouTube can watch it (a potential audience of over 2.5 Billion people). You also have the option to post an unlisted video which allows you to share a link with family and friends rather than allowing other users to find it in a search. The last option is private which means only you will be able to see and access the video. You also have a few options available on how other users can interact with your content. You can turn off comments and up/down votes (very similar to likes on Facebook/Instagram).

YouTube also comes with a Restricted Mode feature. This restricts access to adult material and can give children access to a greater selection of appropriate videos than using the Kids app. It is not a perfect system so there may be occasions that inappropriate or adult themed content may be accessible but these can be reported to YouTube who will either reclassify them or remove them completely.

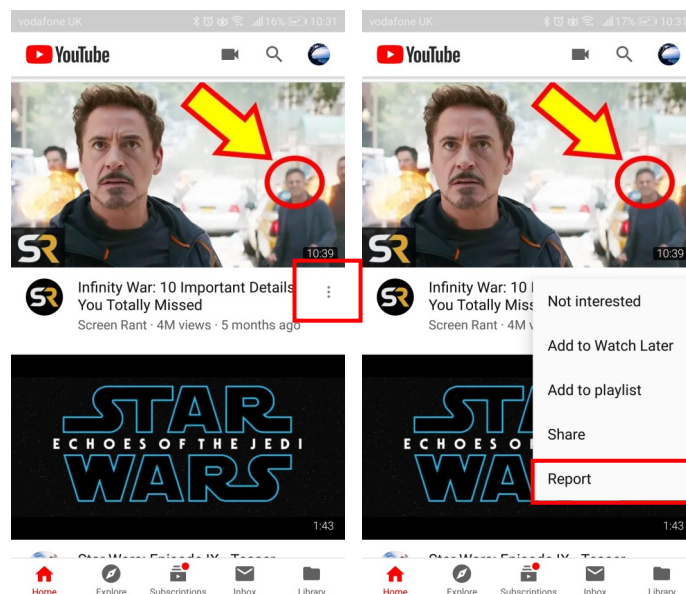


Things to think about

Age appropriate content

YouTube is designed to be used by everyone so sometimes some of the videos our children may come across might be adult in nature or just generally inappropriate. YouTube, however, will suggest videos based on the viewing habits of the account which means that videos watched by others may influence what can be seen on the home page of the app. This can also cause a problem when YouTube chooses another video for you to watch—it guesses what you might like based on what you have watched or searched before. Even the most innocent viewing and searching can sometimes lead to something inappropriate being played next. The Autoplay feature can be turned off through the app by accessing the settings page and clicking on Autoplay.

You can report any video on either the standard or Kids app which breach YouTube community guidelines for content, and you also have the option of excluding videos when using the app by highlighting the 'Not interested' option.

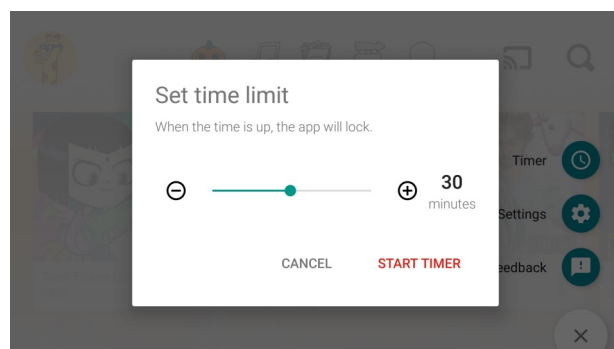


Manage their screen time

There is always something to watch on YouTube which can make it a never ending viewing experience. This means that without any boundaries, our children could very well end up spending their whole day watching the app. To enable parents to properly manage screen time, the YouTube for Kids app comes with a timer that you can lock with a passcode. When their time is up, they'll need your passcode to continue.

It's a little more difficult to manage time but still easy to monitor through the standard YouTube app. You can set the app to remind them to take a break and the app also offers a log of how long has been spent using the app. This can show you how much they've watched today, yesterday and in the last 7 days.

It's also worth remembering that YouTube can also be a distraction during homework and at bedtimes so consider some rules around when and where they can access their mobile device - keeping them away from the closed doors of bedrooms can help keep you more in control of the time they spend on it.



Want to learn more?

YouTube help:

<https://support.google.com/youtube/>

Help for YouTube Kids including how to set parental controls:

<https://support.google.com/youtubekids/>

More information for parents and carers:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a child, you can call Lincolnshire Police on 101 or, in an emergency, dial 999