

Social Media App Guide

in collaboration with

Redbridge Youth Council

In 2018 the LSCB completed a Multi-Agency Audit on Peer on Peer Sexual Harassment and Abuse.

During the course of the audit there was a concern that some of the social media apps which young people use exacerbate the issue of peer on peer sexual harassment and abuse. Many adults do not have enough knowledge about these apps to support young people to use them safely.

One of the recommendations from the audit was for Redbridge LSCB and Redbridge Youth Council to create a Social Media App Catalogue.



It is important to recognise that the Internet is a fantastic tool when used safely. However there are individuals purposefully using the Internet and social media to cause harm to others with children and young people being specifically targeted.

The apps which young people use are changing and evolving constantly and as adults we all have a duty of care to safeguard children. This includes having sufficient knowledge of the methods in which harm can be caused to children through social media and online forums and gaming. Young people can't afford for adults to not know how to keep them safe.

Ignorance can no longer be an excuse.

We recommend talking to young people about what apps they are using, download them yourself, and think about how they could be used to cause harm.

Be Curious!

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Allows you to buy, download and play games.
What do you use it for?	To play games, like football manager.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Via computer/phone You can talk to strangers, if you 'friend' them, or on community groups.
How often do you use it?	Daily.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	There could be scammers. Possibly of talking to strangers through community groups and adding strangers as friends. It can be used for fraud.

Our Advice:

13 years old is minimum age.

Steam is an entertainment platform which lets you play games and create your own in-game content. You can also chat to other members of the community, through groups, clans, or in-game chat features. Steam allows live streaming.

Netaware says:

Is content on Steam suitable for children and young people?

Medium Risk of

- Sexual content
- Violence & hatred
- Bullying
- Drink, drugs & crime

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Video chat site, allows you to 'talk to strangers' around the world via video
What do you use it for?	To watch funny videos. Banter, procrastination & "sexual education".
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	It's available on all devices. Everyone you talk to is a stranger.
How often do you use it?	Every day, twice a day.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Random people adding you and asking weird questions. Adults masturbating. Men with their genitalia out/actual unashamed predators. Every time you use it you will see a penis.

Our Advice:

Omegle has no security measures in place so we recommend avoiding this app.

Netaware says:

There is High Risk of Sexual Content.



Medium Risk of Violence and Hatred, Bullying, Suicide & Self-harm, Drink, Drugs and Crime.

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Allows people to send pictures and text to each other quickly.
What do you use it for?	To talk to friends. Updating people on what's going on in my life.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Not really because to add someone you need their exact name to add them.
How often do you use it?	Check it more than twice a day.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Random people adding you and asking weird questions. You can see everyone's location. People can capture your photos. You still get strangers who could add you from finding you on quick add or seeing your add from a shortcut from someone



Our Advice:

Snapchat lets you send a photo, short video or message to your contacts. The 'snap' appears on screen for up to 10 seconds before 'disappearing'. 'Snapchat Story's' let you share snaps in a sequence for up to 24 hours.

People can screenshot images and share your information without your permission.

*iPhones have a record screen function which will not alert you snaps being saved.

Beware: Snapchat shares your location if you don't use 'ghost mode'.

Netaware says:

There is High Risk of Sexual Content & Bullying.

Medium Risk of Violence and Hatred,

Suicide & Self-harm,

Drink, Drugs & Crime.

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Connects you with friends, strangers, businesses. Allows instant messaging.
What do you use it for?	For the 'memes' (cultural info). Interacting with strangers you meet in groups etc. Keep updated on news about my favourite group.
How often do you use it?	Every day, multiple times a day.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Oversharing personal details Catfishes People sending you inappropriate messages incl. nudes



Our Advice:

Facebook is very familiar to most adults, so is often used as an example when discussing e-safety. It's important to understand young people use a wide variety of apps.

Facebook is a great tool to connect with friends and family around the world and to keep up to date about events that interest you.

Facebook is often by young people to join groups related to their interests and hobbies.

Netaware says:

The main issues young people have with Facebook are:

- Receiving friend requests or messages from people they don't.
- Seeing inappropriate or upsetting posts or pages that are shared.
- The amount of adverts and spam posts that you can't really control.

[What is a Catfish? Click here for more info!](#)

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Videos and content which help people to talk to lots of people at once/or present their ideas in a creative way.
What do you use it for?	To watch videos
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Phone, iPad, TV. You can talk to people you don't know in the comment sections.
How often do you use it?	Every day.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Rude/offensive comments. Rude inappropriate content accidentally view by young kids. Cyber bullying.



Our Advice:

YouTube allows you to watch, create and comment on videos. You can create your own YouTube account. YouTube also allows live streaming.

There have been several news stories about inappropriate content is embedded within children's videos.

We recommend you do some research about risks and safety features.

Netaware says:

There is High Risk of Sexual Content & Bullying, Violence and Hatred, Suicide & Self-harm, Drink, Drugs & Crime

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Young People said:



DISCORD

What does the app do?	Chat/voice call, join servers with strangers
What do you use it for?	To talk/communicate
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Access it through the app. Yes you can talk to strangers.
How often do you use it?	Every day.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Strangers can be dangerous.

Our Advice:

Discord is a free voice, video and text chat app for teens and adults ages 13 and up. Users can join a chat they've been invited to or they can create private servers and invite their friends to play and discuss games by voice, text or video. They can also message each other individually or in group chats with up to ten other friends.

Netaware says:

- Some servers will allow inappropriate content or behaviour.
- You can have contact and communication from people you don't know, especially on public or large servers
- Some people can be rude, mean or sexual.
- There are lots of ways to communicate – groups, servers, direct messages, voice channels and calls.

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Allows worldwide communication. Share videos and pictures and stories. It's good for fundraising and spreading awareness.
What do you use it for?	Checking news. Finding out latest trends through influencers. For entertainment.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	On my phone (the app) Yes, you are able to talk to strangers.
How often do you use it?	Daily
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Stranger Danger Bullying – Cyber bullying Misinformation Catfish You can talk to anyone.



Our Advice:

Twitter lets you post public messages up to 280 characters long. You can send private messages and post pictures/videos.

Many brands, companies and celebrities have Twitter accounts.

Netaware says:

It can be used for bullying people and hard to know what's true #FakeNews.

Top Tip!

Twitter allows you to mute words to help filter inappropriate content from your timeline and notifications.

Tap settings, then muted words and simply add the words you would like to block to the list.

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Online reading community. Can critic and analyse stories.
What do you use it for?	Toilet reading.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	App and computer. Yes, all strangers everywhere.
How often do you use it?	Every day.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Filtering id in use. Censorship – freedom of speech. There is some risk of inappropriate content.



Our Advice:

Wattpad is a storytelling app for readers and writers to create, read and learn how to write stories. You can join communities, share the stories you've written, and comment on others' stories.

Netaware says:

98% of the children and young people who reviewed Wattpad thought it was safe.

You can mute individual users on this app by clicking on their profile, then clicking on '...' and selecting 'mute user'.

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	To play online games, there are minigames within the game.
What do you use it for?	To play games.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	On a computer or on a smart device through the app. You can talk to stranger.
How often do you use it?	Twice a week.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Others will embezzle gaming currency through this app. It is easy to go in to an adult room by mistake



Roblox

Our Advice:

Roblox is a gaming platform where you can create your own games or play games that other users have made. You can chat to strangers on this app, we recommend changing your privacy settings.

Netaware says:

There is High Risk of Bullying

10% of the children and young people who reviewed Roblox through Netaware thought it was unsafe. The main things they told us they don't like about Roblox were:

- Receiving or seeing bullying messages in the chat
- Being contacted by people you don't know
- There are in-app purchases

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Lets people anonymously comment on other people.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Sarahah is no longer available in app stores but can still be access via a website. More details. You can connect with strangers' profiles.
How often do you use it?	I have now deleted it.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Cyber bullying.



Sarahah

Our Advice:

Sarahah is a website where you can send completely anonymous comments and feedback to other users. It never reveals the identity of those who send feedback or comments to users - meaning those who have received feedback are unable to respond to messages. There are reports children are being told to kill themselves through anonymous messages.

Netaware says:

There is High Risk of Bullying and Violence and Hatred.

25% of the children and young people who reviewed Sarahah thought it was unsafe. You can receive hateful or bullying comments and not know who it's from,

People use it to bully others.

Net-aware and the NSPCC released a Stay safe on Sarahah article available [here](#).

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Photo sharing app.
What do you use it for?	Artistic inspiration
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Through a computer or through the app on a smartphone. Yes you can talk to strangers.
How often do you use it?	Everyday.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	There are no privacy settings.



Our Advice:

We Heart It is an image-based social network for inspiring images. A place to "Organize and share the things you love." Users can collect (or "heart") their favourite images to share with friends and organize into collections. We would recommend exercising caution when talking to strangers.

Netaware says:

At time of publishing, there was no information about this app on Netaware. It was Google Play's Best Apps of 2013 and 2015.

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Lets you message, send images and videos to individuals and groups using wifi/data.
What do you use it for?	Send messages to a group of people with friends and family. Can update your status for your contacts to see.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Download app on a smartphone, can only get whatsapp contact if you know their phone number.
How often do you use it?	Daily.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Group chats can be used to send explicit content and bullying can occur.



Our Advice:

WhatsApp is an instant messaging app which lets you send messages, images and videos in one to one and group chats with your contacts. You can choose to share your live location for up to eight hours with one contact or a group. Group chats can be an environment for cyber-bullying to take place. You are able to block contacts you do not want to receive messages from.

Netaware says:

You can hide personal information on WhatsApp. Features like last seen, profile photo, about, status & live location can be hidden via Settings, Account and Privacy.

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Young People said:

What does the app do?	Photo and video sharing app.
What do you use it for?	Entertainment, lifestyle sharing, follow celebs, connecting with others, search hashtags, add filters, live streaming.
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	Through a computer or through the app on a smartphone. Yes you can talk to strangers.
How often do you use it?	Everyday.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Strangers can view and comment on posts, send messages or follow users if they are not private. Sometimes see upsetting or inappropriate posts. People could write mean or bullying comments on your posts.



Our Advice:

Instagram is a photo and video sharing app. Users must be 13+ to use the app however there is limited controls on verifying age when signing up. Strangers can get in touch through commenting on photos or direct messaging (DM'ing) users. Many celeb and lifestyle accounts show an exaggerated or distorted version of reality through filters and photoshopping. It is important to ensure children know that many of the images they see are not real life and to not compare themselves to them as this can have a negative effect on their confidence and mental health.

Netaware says: There is high risk of bullying and sexual/upsetting content being seen.

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What does the app do?	A massive collection of forums, where people can share news and content or comment on other people's posts
What do you use it for?	Entertainment, learning, sharing content, finding likeminded people, news
How do you access it and can you talk to strangers?	On the internet. Yes most people on there are anonymous so don't know who you are talking to.
How often do you use it?	Few times a week.
Can you identify any risks of using it?	Can be trolled, exposed to inappropriate content and opinions.



Our Advice:

Reddit has a minimum age of 13 to use, but you don't have to prove your age when you sign up. The site is based around the idea of 'free speech' although content that goes against their rules is removed. Explicit content can be viewed and is often under the acronym NSFW (Not Safe For Work) or NSFL (Not Safe For Life). This site poses a high risk for children and young people for accessing age inappropriate content and being exposed to extreme views.

[Netaware](#) reports that Reddit is made of forums about different topics. Members of these forums arrange meet-ups and as this is an anonymous site, this comes with significant risks – particularly sexual, violence and drink, drugs and crime. You can set up parental controls.

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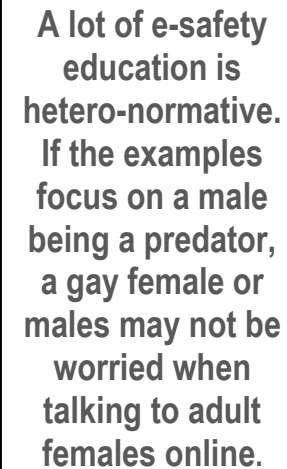
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It is important to recognise that young people will be accessing LGBT+ focused apps.

For information about Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Legal Equality, Education for All or any LGBT+ questions, we recommend checking out the [Stonewall Youth](#) website.



We also really like this resource: [Young Stonewall Staying Safe Online Guide](#).

A grey smartphone graphic with a white screen containing text.

A lot of e-safety education is hetero-normative. If the examples focus on a male being a predator, a gay female or males may not be worried when talking to adult females online.



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Grindr is a popular dating and social app for gay and bisexual men that launched in 2009. It incorporates geolocation functionality to allow users to view others who are closest to them.

While it can be used innocently for fun or to make friends, the majority of Grindr users do use it to search for a romantic or sexual partner. The language, images and videos which can be sent between users privately can be highly inappropriate for those who are underage.



Scruff is similar to Grindr, but has a more masculine user base.

Grindr and Scruff are officially rated 17+ in the Google Play app store and 18+ in iTunes, although not recommended for younger users, it is easy to access with a false date of birth.



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Online dating app Jack'd, similar to Tinder and Grindr, shows users eligible guys on an interface that is geolocated by those closest to where you are.

Unlike Tinder and Grindr it's tailored specifically for people of colour. Jack'd is more geared toward NSA meetups [No Strings Attached].



HER is a queer female dating app, for those who identify as Lesbian, Bisexual or Queer.

There has recently been an increase in Her users describing their gender as non-binary or their sexuality as pansexual — a shift reflective of language and identity evolution in the queer community at large.

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Social Media & Teen Dating

CommonSenseMedia.org have released this article to explain the risks of young people using adult dating apps: [Tinder and 5 adult dating apps teens are using.](#)



Officially Tinder do not allow users below 18 years of age, like most social networks and apps, the app uses your information from

Facebook including date of birth to verify age. If this date of birth is falsified Tinder can be accessed by young people.

Like all apps, there is a risk of online predators. Tinder is a dating app known to be a 'hook up' app, with this in



mind young people may be at more risk from other users expecting sexual content.

Young people are also likely to come across inappropriate content within private messages.

We asked the Youth Council about dating apps, here is what they said:

I for one am aware of a number of Student Room romances.

The Student Room

The Student Room is the UK's largest student website, young people can search the site for advice on everything from student finance, GCSE's, A-Levels and university to relationships, health and politics and football. There is a [Moderation Policy](#) available, which includes guidance around suicide, selfharm, illegal

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substances, sexual content and gender, sexuality, race and religion.

The Student Room is unlikely to be on a parent/carers radar as somewhere where young people are talking to strangers.

There's supposedly one called Yellow or Monkey

JUST TO CLARIFY I DO NOT USE DATING APPS - I JUST KNOW OF PEOPLE THAT DO.

yubo
Make new friends



Monkey

Yubo, formerly Yellow, dubbed **'Tinder for Teenagers'** is a social media app encouraging teens to find new friends by allowing them to swipe left or right to connect and live stream.

Monkey randomly connects teens with other Snapchat users for a 10-second video chat. They can add more time or add the person on Snapchat to continue the connection. Before connecting, teens will see the age and gender of the potential friend, and they can accept the video chat or not.

You are able to lie on your profile about your age.



My friend used an app called yellow and she's been dating a guy from it for a few months but they started talking like two years ago.

Kik is an app-based alternative to standard texting as well as a social networking app, with features like video, sketch, bot search, and friend or group code scanning, the app can be used by as 13 years old, but should really only be used by older teens and adults since it's so easy to connect with strangers.

kik.

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What else should you be worried about?



Breck Bednar, 14, from Caterham in Surrey, was murdered by Lewis Daynes, 19, at a flat in Grays, Essex, in 2014. Daynes met his victim through a gaming website.



Be cautious of gaming device which can connect online and communicate with people outside the home.



There are some games like multiplayer action survival game, Fortnite: Battle Royale.

Players can currently play Fortnite: Battle Royale on a PC, Mac, Xbox, and PlayStation or download it from the App Store. The game involves 100 players fighting each other in real time to be the final survivor.



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There is cartoon violence in the game. You can use a variety of weapons to kill other players, such as guns and axes.

www.internetmatters.org/advice/online-gaming/

Talk to your child regularly about what they are doing online and how to stay safe.

Having open, regular conversations with your child will enable you to really understand & explore the online world together, helping you to keep them safe online.

Let them know they can come to you or another trusted adult if they're feeling worried or upset by anything they have seen.

Young people told us, rather than being told not to talk to strangers, they would like to be educated on how to talk to strangers and people that they interact with on-line, safely.

We need to acknowledge that it is not just strangers that cause harm to young people, people they know and trust can also cause harm.

Explore your child's online activities with your child. Understand why they like using them and make sure they know what they can do to keep themselves safe.

Agree your own rules as a family when using sites, apps and games.



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Manage your technology and use the settings available to keep your child safe.

For more information: <http://www.redbridgelscb.org.uk>

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