Thinkuknow Parents and Carers guide to YouTube

YouTube is a popular platform with both adults and young people. We have created a guide to explain YouTube's features as well as guidance on how to stay safe when using it.

What is it?

YouTube is a video sharing website and app that allows users to share, view and upload videos via mobile, tablet, laptop and desktop computer. In its early format, most videos were uploaded by individual users showing home-made footage, but in more recent years, film clips, television programmes and music videos have been uploaded by organisations as well as individual users.

How much does it cost?

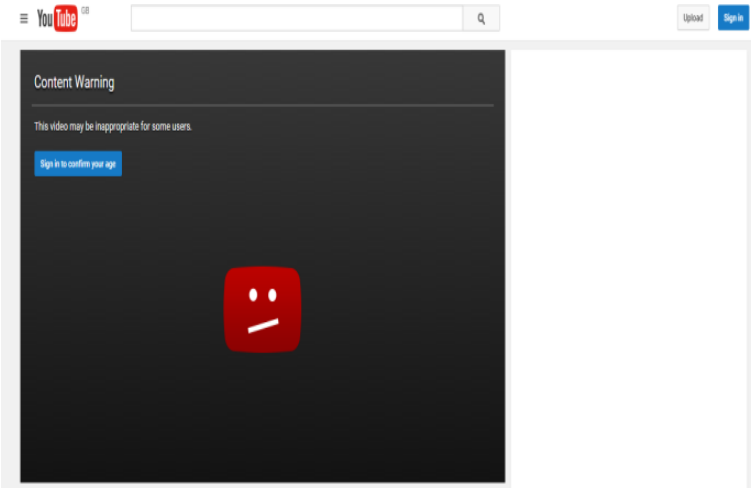
Most of YouTube's revenue comes from advertising and so, predominantly, it is free to use. There is no cost to register or to upload videos and the majority of the videos are free to view. In 2015, YouTube announced a paid subscription service called YouTube Red which allows users to watch videos without advertising and enables them to save videos on their devices to be viewed offline.

Does YouTube have any age restrictions?

You can register for a YouTube account from the age of 13 in the UK. Because YouTube is owned by Google, the site uses a Google accounts sign-in system to give you access to all their products such as YouTube, Gmail and Google+. When registering, if a date of birth is entered that indicates you are below the age of 13, account registration will be disabled.

Some videos on YouTube have an adult age restriction if YouTube deems them to contain potentially inappropriate content. These are only available to registered users who claim to be 18 years old or older.

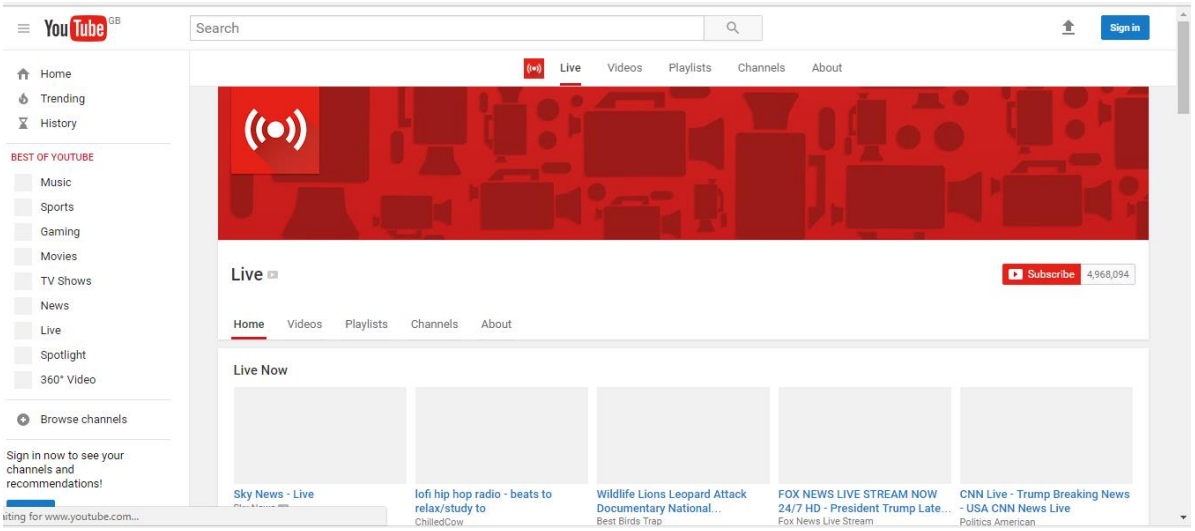
However, you do not have to register with YouTube to view most videos. If your child is using YouTube and is not registered, a warning sign will appear for any video flagged as age-restricted, and will ask the user to register to confirm their age. As with most other social media platforms, YouTube does not verify the age entered.



Warning messages also appear to users registered as 18 or over, indicating that they may find the content inappropriate or offensive. YouTube relies on its users to flag content which should be age-restricted to YouTube moderators, and so the warning message will only appear for content flagged by a user and approved for age restriction by YouTube.

YouTube Live

YouTube has a specific area of the site that allows viewers to watch, create and upload live videos. Live videos are created in real time and can be instantaneously streamed on YouTube without editing. Viewers can choose to watch live video's by clicking on the 'Live tab'. Various media outlets such as Sky and BBC have Live channels on YouTube. Individual users with YouTube channels can also create live videos and share their own content. Content in Live videos is moderated in the same way as other YouTube videos. Users can flag inappropriate content using the 'flag' icon . When a video is flagged, YouTube staff review the content and decide whether the content violates YouTube Community Guidelines . YouTube may then decide to apply age-restrictions to the video or remove the video from YouTube. Advice on how to flag a video is discussed in greater detail below.

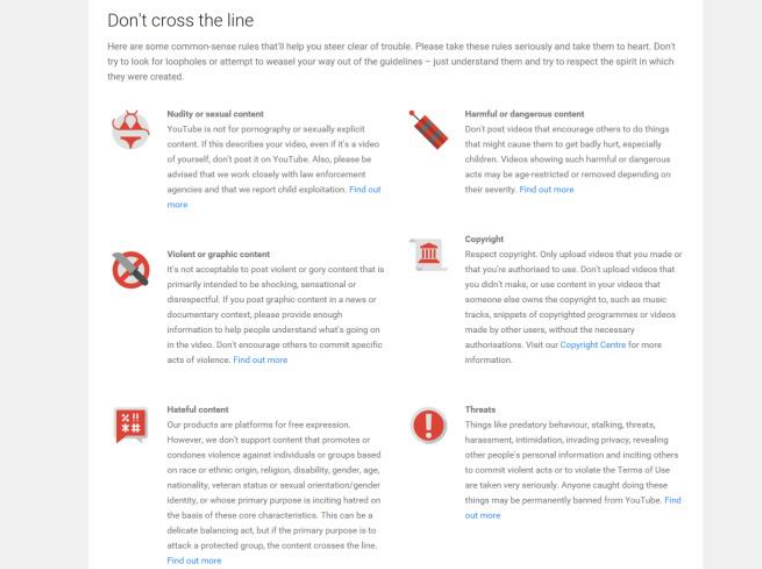


Should I be concerned about YouTube as a parent/carer?

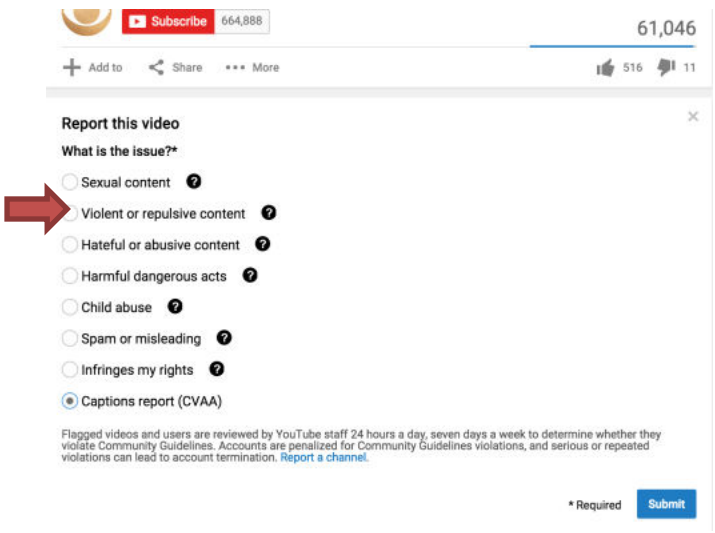
Several features of Youtube could present as potential risks to children and young people:

- Viewing content
- Sharing of information and images
- Connecting to other users they do not know
- Cyber bullying

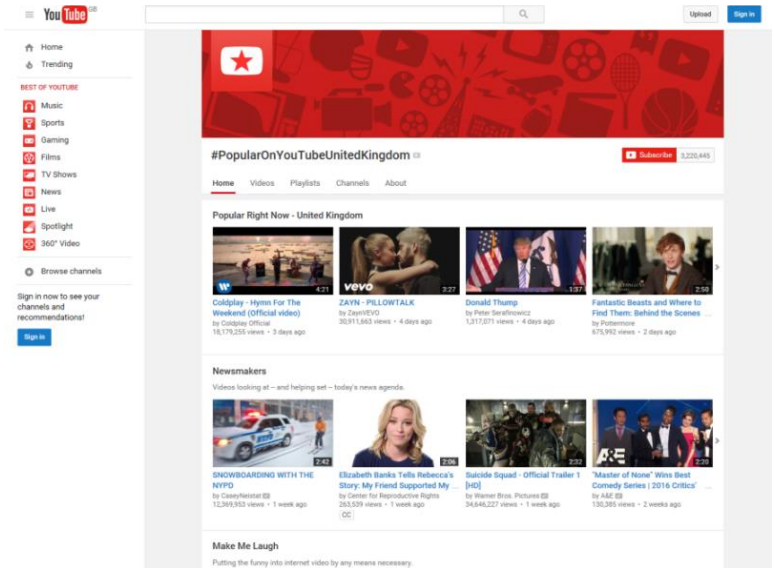
YouTube hosts content you may deem inappropriate for your children, including videos that containing violence, scenes of a sexual nature or bad language. YouTube has 'community guidelines' about what content should and shouldn't be uploaded and states that any video content that breaks these guidelines will be removed or become age-restricted. **These can be found at:** https://www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/en-GB/communityguidelines.html



YouTube provides a flagging system where a user may choose to flag a video they have seen that they think is inappropriate and/or in breach of the community guidelines. A video which has been flagged will be reviewed by YouTube staff who will decide whether it violates the guidelines. If so, YouTube will either remove the video or age-restrict it.



YouTube shows a thumbnail image of the content of each video to allow viewers to see a brief image of what the video contains to help them decide if they want to watch it. Even if a video is blocked to a user because they are under-18, they are still able to see a thumbnail image of the video, which may contain an image unsuitable for children.

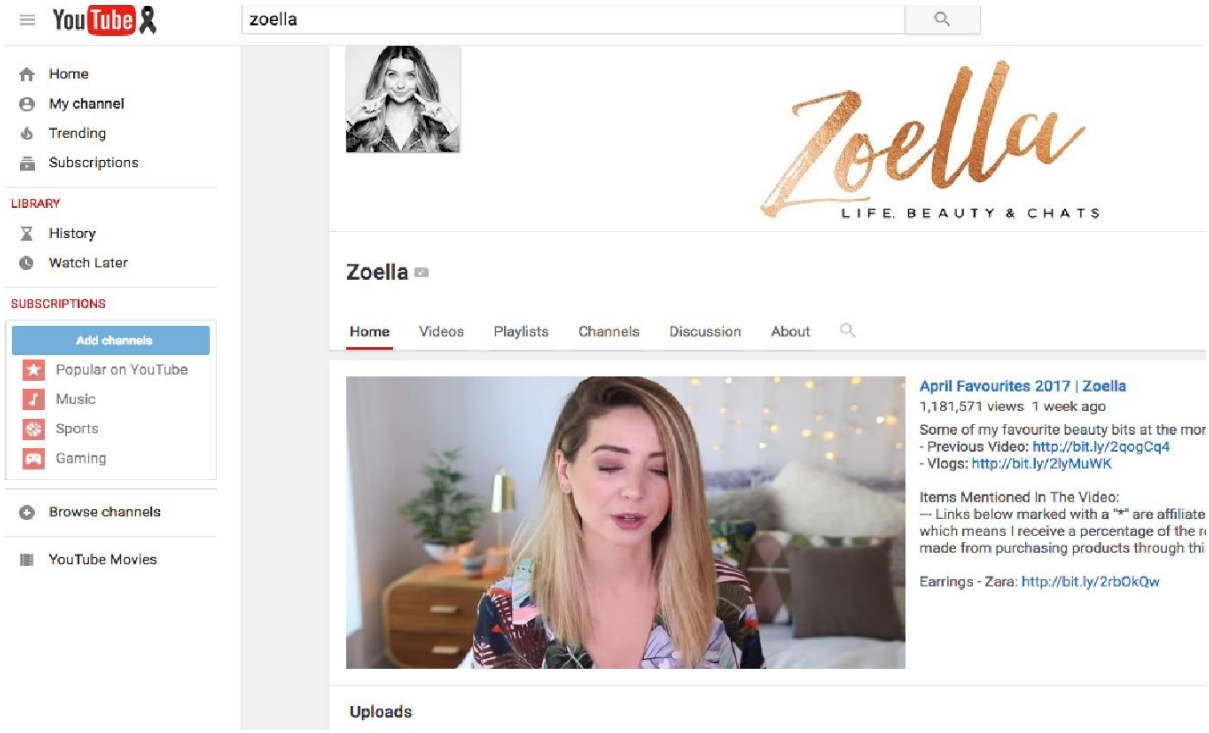


YouTube will also recommend videos based on a user's search history, and even educational videos regarding sex can lead to inappropriate still images appearing from other videos in the 'recommended' list. YouTube also has a feature known as 'autoplay', where suggested videos will appear on the right hand side of the screen (listed as 'up next') and will automatically play at the end of a video. Autoplay is the automatic default setting but can be turned off by 'deselecting' the autoplay icon.

Sharing Content (YouTube channels)

A user needs to have a 'YouTube channel' in order to upload videos. A channel is a user's public presence on YouTube (similar to having a 'profile' on a site such as Facebook) which will display their username and any other user information entered, their videos, activity streams, comments and

subscribers. The screenshot below is the channel of a popular vlogger called Zoella (there is more information on vlogging below).



If your child has their own YouTube channel, it is important to be aware of what they post and who can view it. We would recommend you have a conversation with them to understand what might or might not be suitable for them to share. Are you and your child comfortable with the idea that a video could be seen by anyone all over the world? Does the video contain identifying features – school uniform, your house, or local area – which might enable a viewer to trace them? If the videos contain other people your child should ask their permission before uploading them.

It can be difficult to keep ownership or control of a video once it has been posted on the internet. The video may be copied or reposted without your knowledge and it can then become difficult to remove every copy online. We recommend starting a supportive, ongoing discussion with your child around their digital footprint and what kind of content they are sharing.

Similarly to other social media platforms, YouTube has a private messaging function where users can send each other messages and videos. For more information relating to the risks children and young people face online, visit www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.

Vlogging on YouTube

A popular phenomenon on YouTube is vlogging, which is the activity of creating and sharing video blogs (vlogs) with the YouTube community. Popular topics for vlogs include gaming, beauty, shopping and physical/mental health. Some bloggers simply share their daily experiences.

The most popular vloggers attract a devoted audience of millions of viewers and have achieved celebrity status. High-profile vloggers are often paid to use their influence to promote certain

products. Although vloggers should declare whenever they are promoting a product, you should still make your child aware of why a vlogger might be recommending certain items.

The popularity and celebrity status of vloggers means that many followers look up to them as influential figures or role models. In the past, some vloggers have been accused of using their success to form inappropriate relationships with specific followers.

Vloggers sometimes share personal information with their followers. It is important that children understand that they should not follow this example.

Comments on YouTube

Once a video has been uploaded, other YouTube users can comment on it. It is important to remind your child that these comments can constitute 'chatting' online, and speak to them about the safest ways to do this, including not agreeing to move into a private chat service or app with another YouTube user ('YouTuber') who they do not otherwise know.

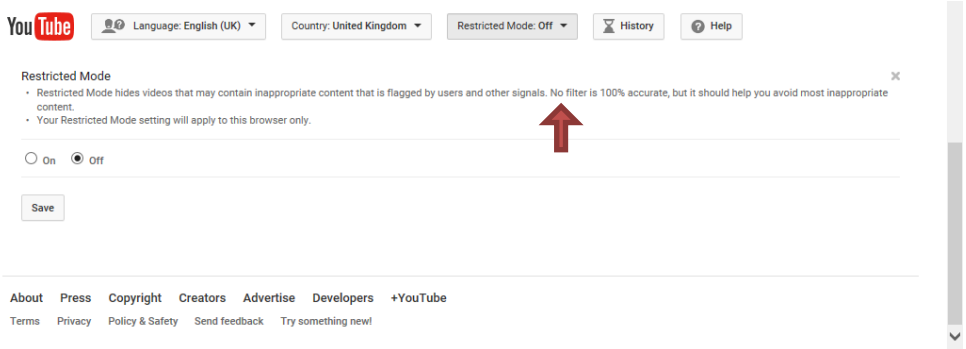
Comments left on videos may contain distressing and inappropriate content or offensive language. If your child uploads videos to YouTube, we recommend that you regularly monitor comments made by other users.

A user can moderate comments left on *their own* YouTube channel including removing, hiding or reporting comments. It is also possible to block a user which will stop them from making comments on your videos or channel, and will also prevent them from private messaging you.

A user can also flag comments left on *other* videos and channels if they break community guidelines, for YouTube staff to review. YouTube have a comprehensive guide on all their safety features at: https://www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/en/GB/safety.html.

YouTube and primary age children

YouTube contains extensive material aimed at younger viewers and is very popular with them. If you have young children who use YouTube you can use **restricted view mode**, a privacy setting which helps to filter out inappropriate or offensive content that you would not want your child to see. The filtering uses the flagging system and age restrictions, though YouTube acknowledges that this cannot be 100% accurate. Restricted mode is enabled on an individual browser basis (e.g. Internet Explorer, Safari, Fire Fox), so if your child uses multiple browsers on their device you will need to enable this mode on each browser. Once enabled, restricted mode will remain on regardless of whether you are logged in or out, or if another person is logged into a different YouTube account.



In 2015 YouTube launched the 'YouTube Kids App' in the UK, aimed at children aged 3-8. This is a separate app which can be downloaded free and is designed for child-friendly video viewing. Children do not subscribe to a channel but rather view individual videos.

Within the app, parents have greater control over what content their child can access. There are no social features such as comments and likes, and certain search terms are blocked. Parents can set a time limit for their child's use of the app, after which time it shuts down. Parents can 'flag' certain features they feel are inappropriate for children, as YouTube acknowledge no filter is watertight. The search function can also be disabled, therefore limiting children to a very select amount of content.

How do privacy settings work on YouTube?

When a video is uploaded to YouTube, the automatic default is set to public so anyone on the YouTube site, even if they aren't registered, could potentially view the video. This can easily be changed by adjusting the privacy settings on the account. The three different privacy settings are as follows:

- **Public**- A default setting that allows any user on YouTube to view the video
- **Private**- Allows you to restrict your video to be viewed by only yourself and other users that you select
- **Unlisted**- Only people who have the link to the video can view it. The video will not show up on your channel page or come up in any YouTube search filter

To adjust these privacy settings:

For a computer**:** sign in to the account and go to **creator studio > video manager > video > edit >** select **privacy setting > save**

For android/iPhone: sign in to the account and go to **my videos >** next to the video you want to change tap the **menu icon > edit >** select **privacy setting**

If another YouTube user posts a video of you or your child, or shares your personal information, without your consent, you can request this content to be removed. Detailed instructions on how to do this are available on the YouTube Safety Centre at https://www.youtube.com/yt/policyandsafety/en/GB/safety.html

To delete a YouTube channel

Deleting a YouTube channel will permanently delete the content, including videos, comments, messages, playlists and history. To do this:

1. Sign in to the YouTube channel you want to delete
2. In the top right-hand corner, click **Your Account > YouTube settings > Overview**
3. Under the channel's name, select **Advanced**.
4. At the bottom, select **Delete channel**.
5. When prompted, enter your sign-in details and confirm that you want to permanently delete your channel and all of its contents.

Having regular conversations with your child about their online lives is an important part of keeping them safe online. For information about how to best start these conversations and guidance on

other popular apps, visit our Thinkuknow parents and carers website www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents.

Reporting to CEOP

If you have any concerns about grooming, sexual abuse or exploitation on YouTube or on any online app or site, report to CEOP (the National Crime Agency's child protection command) at www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre.

We endeavour to keep our parents guides as up-to-date as possible, however due to the changing nature of social media, the information and advice in this guide may date over time. The information within this guide is correct as of May 2017.