

Protecting your child's identity

Safeguard your child's privacy on popular apps and games



While most popular platforms state account holders must be over 13 years of age, many kids below this age already regularly engage with social media and gaming. While this can keep young people connected to each other and the world around them, it often makes it easier for them to share their personal information with cybercriminals or be contacted in a way that is uncomfortable or dangerous.

If your child has a social media account or is on a gaming platform, help them to stay safe by setting profiles to private and limiting the information they share online. Kids often believe people when they say they know a mutual acquaintance at their school. Setting accounts to private controls who sees your child's content and who can contact them.



This guide will help you talk to your child about:

- ✓ Setting accounts to private
- ✓ Keeping their location private
- ✓ Blocking or removing unwanted followers
- ✓ How to report inappropriate contact
- ✓ Finding more help if you need it

Account privacy tips:

- ✓ Set profile and location to private
- ✓ Create passphrases or passwords that are long (at least 14 characters), unpredictable, unique and a combination of upper/lower case letters, numbers, symbols
- ✓ Keep passphrases and passwords somewhere safe
- ✓ Avoid using the same passphrase or password across all apps and games
- ✓ Make sure passphrases or passwords have nothing to do with personal information e.g., name, date of birth or address
- ✓ Change passphrases and passwords regularly
- ✓ Use multi-factor authentication (MFA) where possible



It's important for your child to practice their digital defence skills regularly and independently

They can find out more about passphrases, passwords and MFA by reading [this guide](#).



Help your child understand the risks of public social media and gaming profiles. Remind them that the easiest way to protect themselves from online hackers, scammers and unwanted contact is to set their accounts to private.

Conversation starter

If your social media profiles are public, anyone can look at your posts, photos or anything else you put on your profile. They can also interact with you freely. Can you think of some ways to make sure only people you know IRL can see your online information?

Exploring privacy settings on popular social media

Snapchat

Settings	⚙️
Who can...	↳
Contact me	>
View my story	My friends >
See my location	Ghost mode >
Block or remove followers	↳



In the **Who can...** section of your child's profile settings on Snapchat, you can control who can see their content and who can contact them directly. Choosing **My friends** for all of these options does not give strangers the opportunity to interact with your child.

If you enable **Ghost mode**, your child's location will be kept private and their Bitmoji will not appear on Snap Map.

Block or remove people by going to their profile.

Instagram

Settings and privacy	⚙️
Who can see your content	↳
Account privacy	Private account >
How others can interact with you	↳
Message and story replies	Show activity status >
	Message controls >
Tags and mentions	Who can tag you >
	Who can @ mention you >
Who can see your content	↳
Blocked	>










Setting your child's account to private means that only their approved followers have access to your child's information, posts, comments and other followers.

There are more ways to safeguard your child's experience on Instagram by selecting **How others can interact with you**. This stops even their followers being able to see their activity status, tag them in public profiles or share their posts in a way they can't control.

To block or restrict people contacting your child, go to the Instagram user's profile. Your child can review who they have blocked by selecting **Who can see your content**.

TikTok

Settings and privacy 	
Privacy 	
Discoverability	Private account 
	Suggest your account to others 
Interactions	Comments 
	Comments & comment filters 
	Mentions and tags 



On TikTok, there are different default privacy settings for different age groups.

For 13- to 15-year-old users, their profile is automatically set to private, their **Suggest your account to others** is switched off and their videos cannot be created into Duet (which cannot be changed). It's worth checking these settings regularly to ensure the right privacy settings are in place.

If your child creates an account and they are 16+, their account is automatically made public. Talk to your teenager about which privacy settings are best for them, including restricting who can comment, mention and tag their videos.



Restricting Duets



Duet is a content creation feature on TikTok that allows two user's videos to play side-by-side. It could mean that predators can directly interact with your child, and post content featuring them without their consent. You can restrict Duet to only people on your child's Follower list, or disable the feature entirely.

Conversation starter

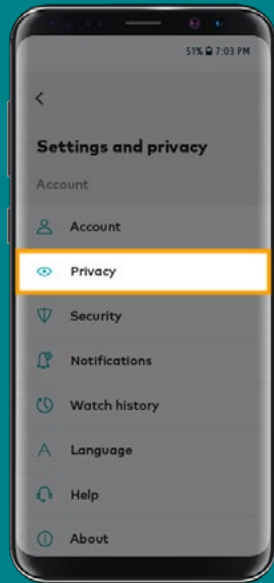
Duets can be fun to do with friends or people you are close with, but if they land in the hands of people you don't know, it can get dangerous. They can share it to even more people you don't know or misuse your TikTok. Can you tell me about a time that you or your friend didn't like a Duet that was created with a stranger?

To enable restrictions on who can create Duet videos:

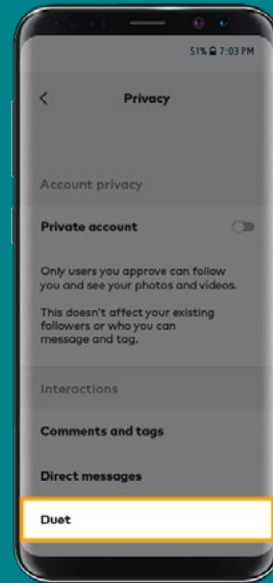
1 Open Settings and Privacy on the profile page



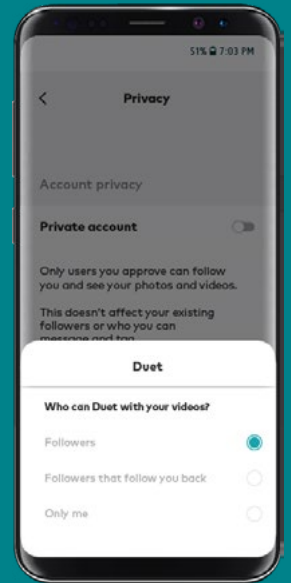
2 Tap Privacy



3 Tap Duet



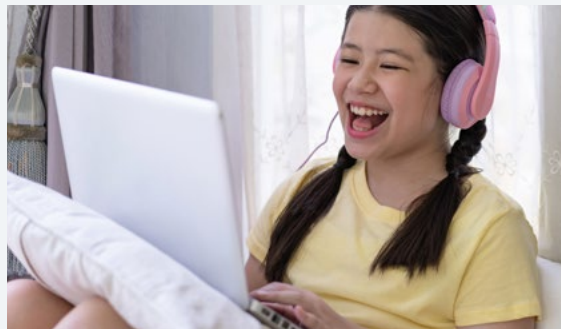
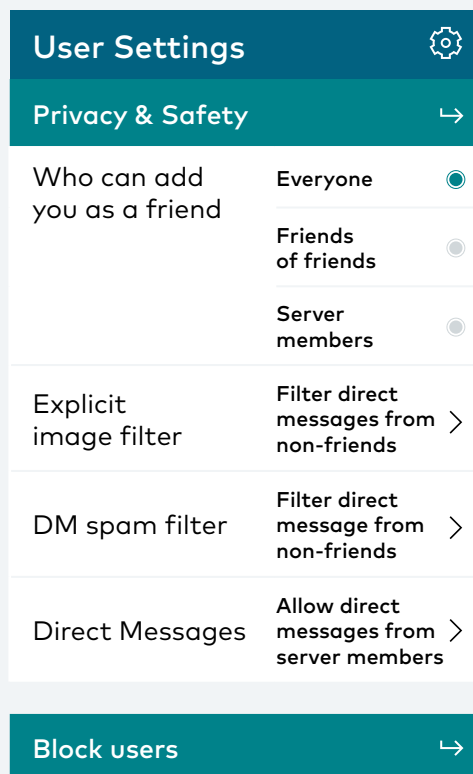
4 Choose the setting you prefer



If your account is private, no one can Duet with you by default.

Exploring privacy settings on popular gaming platforms

Discord



Discord users join or create servers based on their interests, so members on a server could be someone totally random.

Toggling these buttons can protect your child from random people in the same server from reaching out to or communicating with them.

Automatically block explicit images and spam to protect your child from unwanted contact.

You can block people by going to their profile.



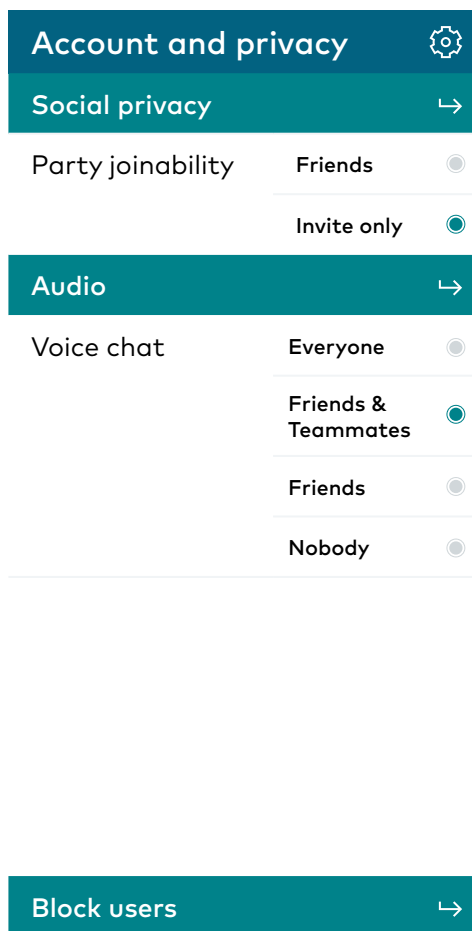
Adjusting Discord privacy settings can also be made on a per-server basis, by clicking the down arrow next to the server's name.

Ask your child to reflect on the Discord servers they are a part of and who can contact them. Help them understand the difference between publicly accessed and invitation-only servers.

Conversation starter

Group chats are a great way to communicate during gaming, but there might be people you don't want to be able to connect with you after the game. In which servers would you disable people from sending direct messages to you? Which ones are safe to allow direct messages?

Fortnite



There have been reports of hackers using Fortnite accounts to steal players' information and people pretending to be young using the game as a way to connect with underage players.

You can change the privacy settings on the device your child is playing on, such as on an Xbox or a PlayStation.

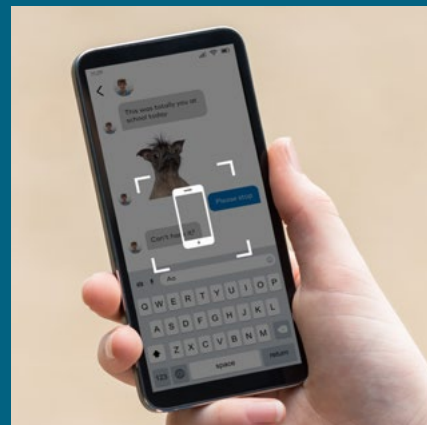
To make sure your child only games with people they know, set the **Party joinability** to friends or invite only. This means that strangers cannot join your child's games if they don't already have them as a friend or have invited them in.

You can also limit who can speak with your child by disabling or limiting voice chat feature. This can protect your child from being asked intrusive questions or for their personal information.

You can block users by clicking on their name and selecting **Block** or **Unfriend**.

If your child receives inappropriate contact, it's important to report the profile/user to authorities.

- ✓ Grab evidence such as screenshots or screen records of hurtful messages or images, usernames or profiles, making sure to include the time and date of harmful behaviour. Be sure to do this before your child exits group or private chats, as evidence can be lost.
- ✓ If someone is threatening to share, or has shared, nudes, intimate or private images of your child, they are committing a crime – even if they are both under 18 years.
- ✓ You can take screenshots or recordings of when and where it was shared, but do not take screenshots of the intimate image or video, itself, as this can be a crime. There's more information from the Office of the eSafety Commissioner [here](#).



Report them to the platform

Screenshot or screen record the evidence of their actions and report them to the social media or gaming platform. Remember, if you are concerned about your family's safety, reports can be made confidentially.



Report them to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner

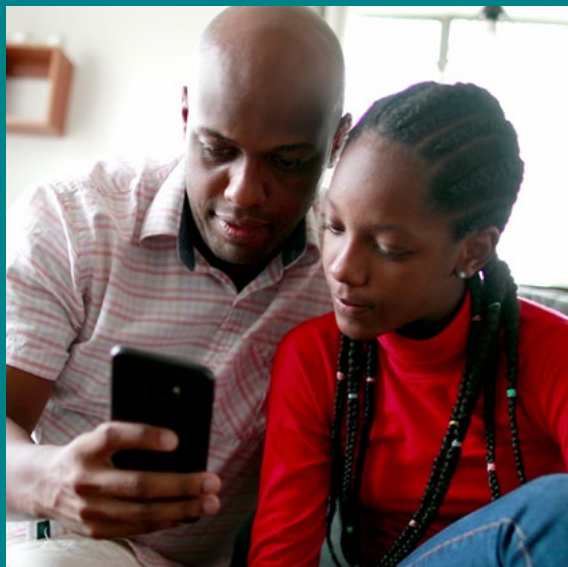
If the profile/user is still up and your child is still being bothered 48 hours after reporting to the app, make a report to the Office of the eSafety Commissioner. Your child might be experiencing online abuse, and eSafety can help you get the user removed from the platform.



Report them to the police

You may also need to report inappropriate contact to the police. Contacting the police via the [Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation](#) (ACCCE) website can further assist authorities, as this agency has international reach.

What to do if your child needs more help



For help and support dealing with privacy breaches, check out:

- [eSafety Commissioner](#)
to report cyberbullying, image-based abuse, and illegal and restricted content
- [Australian Cyber Security Centre](#)
to report cybercrime, including online threats and abuse, scams and hacks, data breaches, identity theft and fraud
- [Scamwatch](#)
to report scams
- [Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation](#)
to report online grooming and inappropriate contact
- [IDCARE](#)
to get identity theft, data breach, scam and cyber security support



If your child needs to talk to someone about their feelings or worries, they can contact:

- [Kids Helpline](#)
on 1800 55 1800 for free, private and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling services
- [13YARN](#)
on 13 92 76 (24/7) for a free, private and confidential talk with an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter

About Optus Digital Thumbprint

Optus Digital Thumbprint supports digital safety and wellbeing for young people and families. Find out more at www.digitalthumbprint.com.au

