

YOUTUBE 101

Social Media 101

What is YouTube?

YouTube is an online video-sharing platform where anyone can watch and share videos. It's the second-most popular website in the world and young people in particular can spend hours on it. While it's known for its videos, it's a full social media platform, offering chat, music and more.

Young people often use YouTube as a source of news and information, to find out about what's going on in the world and to shape their views and ideas. Creators live-stream unfiltered and unmoderated content from all over the world.

You don't have to have an account to view YouTube videos, but those who do can create their own channels and upload videos and like, comment and subscribe to YouTube creators.

Note: this resource is about YouTube, not YouTube Kids.

How can I see what's on YouTube?

Visit youtube.com, download the app to your phone, tablet (link) or smart TV, video game console, even your e-reader if it's compatible.

What is the age limit for YouTube and what does this mean for how young people use it?

YouTube is for users aged 13+. While age-restricted content is automatically blocked for users who are not signed-in, this isn't fool-proof and they may still see harmful material. Young people under 18 need parental consent to create their own YouTube channels.

For users aged 13-17, YouTube automatically turns on wellbeing features including reminders to take breaks, bedtime alerts at 10pm and disabling the automatic play feature.

Users over 13 can:

- Manage their own account.
- Have their own account supervised by an adult as part of a family group (more about this on the next page).

What parental controls does YouTube have?

With your young person's consent, you can [set up a Family Group](#) on YouTube to 'set digital ground rules'. If your young person is over 13, they can leave the group at anytime. You can add up to five people to the group and [add supervision](#) to the accounts of users under 18. However, if they're over 13, they can stop supervision at any time, so make sure they agree to be in the group and understand your rules and boundaries. (See our [Tuakiritanga & Social Media resource](#))

Because supervision is attached to your Google account, it goes beyond just YouTube, and means you can:

- Remotely check your young person's screen.
- Find your young person's past searches.
- Check your young person's Chrome browsing history.
- Check or reset your young person's account password.
- Read your young person's emails or messages.
- Listen to your young person's calls.
- Delete your young person's account.
- Choose a new screen lock password on your young person's device.
- Erase the data on your young person's device.
- Block your young person from stopping supervision (if they are under 13).
- Link your young person's account to Google Home.

As young people grow into their teens, some of these features may feel intrusive. Think about whether you really need them or if there are alternative ways to ensure your young people use YouTube safely.



What other things do I need to be aware of to keep my young person safe on YouTube?

Get to know YouTube's privacy and account settings, and make sure you're both comfortable with the settings on your young person's account.

Depending on their age and level of responsibility on social media, this might mean having a completely private account, reviewing who they follow and/or their followers and who can comment on their videos (or whether comments are off completely). Make sure your young person knows how to block people and report harmful content and behaviour.

Explore YouTube together, ask them to show you videos or creators they like, make sure you understand enough about the platform to judge whether they're safe on it and take action if they're not, and have fun together on it. Be there and stay involved with their online life, and make sure they know they can come to you if they're ever feeling uncomfortable or unsafe.

(See our [How Can I Help & Restoring Safe Spaces resources](#))

The YouTube algorithm is sending my young person videos that are harmful or inappropriate. What can they do? They can:

- Reset their algorithm by:
 - a. **Removing specific videos from watch history:** go to Library, select View All above Watch History. When they find videos they want YouTube to forget, select the three buttons and 'remove from Watch History'
 - b. Turn off watch history. This stops YouTube from remembering what they've watched in the past and what they watch in the future and should end these recommendations.
 - c. **Get YouTube (and other Google services) to forget their activity after a set amount of time.** They can choose the time period (e.g. three months, two years) and set it up so their watch history and other data is automatically deleted after this time. Do this under Manage all activity.
- Turn off autoplay. Switch this feature off by going to the Watch screen (at the top of the screen on mobile, at the bottom on computer), tapping 'autoplay' and switching it off.
- Report inappropriate content, channels or comments directly to YouTube.
- Tell YouTube they're 'not interested' in suggested videos if they're inappropriate. Click the three dots in the video's title, choose 'not interested'.
- Turn on Restricted Mode. This automatically filters out 'mature' content. Some people find this mode is too restrictive, but it can be turned on for safer browsing. It needs to be turned on for each device.
- Turn off targeted ads in ad settings.