

# Online Safety 4 Schools

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## Twitch

Parents - everything you need to know about the live streaming video platform

### **What is Twitch?**

Twitch is a live streaming video platform owned by Amazon where users watch people live stream themselves as they play video games (and live chat with viewers). Twitch is the leading live streaming video service for video games in the UK and contains lots of chances for your child to chat live with friends (and strangers) on the platform.

- Twitch is a live streaming video platform owned by Amazon
- The platform is predominantly used to live stream users playing video games
- Some popular video formats are eSports tournaments, personal streams of individual players, and gaming-related talk shows
- Streamers will live stream a video with commentary and users can chat along with the video live, or users can choose to be invisible while watching videos
- Videos can be watched live, or users can watch a replay if they missed the live stream
- Video games with an “adult only” rating are not allowed on Twitch
- Twitch is available on desktop, Amazon Fire TV, Roku Chromecast, Xbox, PlayStation, iOS, and Android devices
- Users must be 13 years or older to sign up for Twitch, but it is recommended that parents supervise their children if they use the platform

### **Does Twitch cost money to play?**

- Streamers (those who broadcast live video) can earn commissions on games they advertise during their videos. – This makes it worthwhile for influencers to get your child to follow them on this platform
- Users can follow their favourite streamers for free or subscribe to their channel for a fee – **Real money your child may spend to follow influencers**
- Additionally, users can purchase games through the Twitch platform
- Twitch has a library of emoticons available for users called “emotes.” Some emotes are free for all users, but users can buy subscriptions to access more
- The “cheering” feature allows users to cheer for their favourite live streamers for a small fee
- In order to use the “cheering” feature, a user must pay with “bits.” Bits are a form of currency on Twitch which is bought using real money on Amazon
- Streamers can earn badges on their channels depending on how many “cheers” they have received

## ***Is there any non-gaming content on Twitch?***

- Non-gaming related content can also be live streamed on Twitch. Some other categories of content include music, creative, and IRL (in real life)
- Music content can be radio shows, music production activities, or live shows
- Creative content showcases the process of completing an artistic or creative piece of work
- IRL (in real life) content is for any video that does not fit into the other main categories)

## ***Why should parents care?***

- Twitch is fast becoming the leading live streaming video service for video games in the UK. Meaning it is extremely popular with children
- Live chat rooms are a main feature of the platform which can be dangerous for all users especially young users
- Users can receive private messages called “whispers”
- Users can view inappropriate content via graphic video games, mature language, or advertisements
- Users are constantly being encouraged to make purchases on Twitch, so costs can add up if parents are not monitoring or setting guidelines
- No matter how much you configure your child's Twitch security settings, there is no way to know if the content is safe for your student unless you become familiar with the platform and review their favourite videos or streamers

## ***What can parents do?***

- **Talk to your child** and ask them if they have a Twitch account or if their friends use the platform
- If your child has an account, it is recommended that they delete it and focus on apps that can have a positive impact on their digital tattoo
- If you decide Twitch is safe for your child, be on the platform with them to **monitor their activity**
- **Configure their account settings** to limit who they can talk to and block private messages from strangers
- Remind your children to **never share personal information** with anyone on Twitch or online
- **Know what games and users your children like on Twitch**, watch their videos to determine if they are safe for your family
- **Set screen time** guidelines and explain them to your student so they can be a part of the solution. Consider using visual timers when they spend time on Twitch so that they can develop skills to self-regulate their time spent online
- **Create a supportive environment** by telling your children that they can always come to you (or a trusted adult) if they come across content that makes them uncomfortable on Twitch
- Advise your child to always to act appropriately to prevent damage to their digital tattoo

## ***Conclusion***

No matter how much you configure your student's Twitch security settings, there is no way to know if the content is safe for your student unless you become familiar with the platform and review their favourite videos or streamers. However, I recommend users focus on apps that can have a positive impact on their digital footprint.

## ***If a Parent/Carer decides to allow their Un 13 Child to use Twitch (NOT ADVISABLE)***

- If you and your Un 13 child decide to use Twitch, then make sure you know and always know your child's profile name, password etc. This allows you to have control and allows for periodic checking of your child's use of Twitch, their contacts, and closed groups.
- Create the profile together and keep the log in details secret. Social Media, Gaming and App usage is not a right it is a privilege, so children (especially those under 13) should earn the right to spend time with their parents using Twitch, stay in control and share the experience.