



Online Safety for Schools

Summary of the Safety measures that these Platforms have put in Place

TikTok

Age requirements and account safeguards

- TikTok requires users to be at least **13 years old** to create an account. Younger users cannot legally sign up.
- Accounts for users under 18 start with **stronger privacy settings** by default (e.g., private accounts).
- Features like direct messaging are restricted — under-16s can't receive message requests and often can't use DMs at all.
- Parental "**Family Pairing**" **controls** let parents link their account to their child's and manage settings (e.g., screen time limits, who can message them, restricted content on the feed).
- Tools like **Restricted Mode** help limit exposure to unsuitable content.

Snapchat

Built-in protections for teens

- Snapchat requires users to be at least **13 years old** to have an account.
- Teen accounts (13–17) are **set to private** by default, limiting interactions to approved contacts.
- **Snap Map location sharing** is turned off for teens by default to protect privacy.
- The **Snapchat Family Centre** allows parents to view who their teen has added and messaged and to help manage privacy settings (with the teen's agreement).
- Some public features (e.g., Spotlight) are limited or unavailable for younger teens.

Instagram

Youth-tailored accounts and parental tools

- Users must be **13+ to create an Instagram account**.
- Instagram automatically creates "**Teen Accounts**" for under-18s with stricter default privacy — accounts are private by default.
- Direct messages between teens and adults they **don't follow** are restricted.
- The **Instagram Family Centre** lets parents link to their teen's account to help with privacy and screen-time management.
- Default sensitive content filters are stronger on teen accounts.



Fortnite (Epic Games)

Gaming account safety settings

- Epic Games accounts can be set up with **parental controls** that apply across Fortnite and other Epic titles.
- For players **under 13**, so-called “**cabined accounts**” restrict communication (voice/text chat) and other social features until a parent approves additional permissions.
- Parents can control **voice chat, text chat, who can friend their child, and in-game purchases** through the Epic account portal and in platform settings.

Minecraft

Parental accounts and Microsoft Family settings

- Minecraft itself doesn’t enforce a strict age limit **globally**, but account creation is tied to **Microsoft accounts**, which have **child account** status and parental controls when set up through a **family group**.
- Through **Microsoft Family Safety**, parents can:
 - Set age-appropriate restrictions
 - Manage **who your child can play with online**
 - Turn off in-game chat
 - Control screen time limits and content access across platforms (Xbox, mobile, PC).
- Game chat can be disabled, and online multiplayer interactions are controlled via these wider device and account controls.

Roblox

Enhanced age verification and communication limits

- Roblox historically allows accounts from any age, but it **blocks direct messages** for players under 13 and uses **chat filters** for younger users.
- Roblox is rolling out an **age verification system**, where users who verify their age (using video selfie or ID) are placed into **age groups** and limited to chat with people in similar age ranges, reducing adult-child interactions.
- New **verified Trusted Connections** features let teens share more features only with real-life known friends when verified.
- Parents can also access tools to **block friends, set screen-time limits, and manage content maturity levels** with appropriate consent.
- Roblox also moderates games and experiences based on **content labels** and restricts social hangout games for younger players unless approved.



Important Note on Age Verification

Across many of these platforms — especially social media — **age checks (like requiring a birthdate or using AI/behaviour signals to detect underage accounts)** are becoming more common due to legal pressure and safety concerns. For instance, TikTok is testing ways to detect accounts that may lie about age to protect under-13 users.

Key Themes in Platform Safety Policies

Across the board, platforms are now offering:

- ✓ **Minimum age requirements** for accounts (often 13+) — in many places this is backed by laws or codes like the UK Children's Code.
- ✓ **Default privacy settings for minors** (private accounts, limited contact).
- ✓ **Restrictions on messaging and interaction with adults** unless verified or approved.
- ✓ **Parental supervision tools** (Family Centre, linked accounts).
- ✓ **Content filters and usage limits (e.g., screen time)** built into youth accounts.

 Presented by: Jonathan Taylor MSc
www.onlinesafety4schools.co.uk
 onlinesafety4schools@ymail.com

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