

Kik Messenger

Parent Guide

Everything you need to know about the social media app

Age rating

13+

What is it?

Kik Messenger is a **free instant messaging platform**.

The app **connects users through their username**.

You can find other users by searching their username or scanning their Kik-code (a unique barcode).

Kik is rated 13+ on all sites except Apple's App Store, which rates it as **17+**.

Kik has additional features like **group chats and bots**. Group chats are public, based on interest and allow for up to 49 users.

Bots are **mini-apps**. They include everything from games and fact-checking services to promotional character bots designed by brands.

What are the risks?

Although rated 13+, there is no strict age verification in place.

Public **group chats are simple to join and not age restricted**, meaning that your child could be chatting in a group with users of all ages.

There have been instances of users receiving **unsolicited sexual messages**. Kik has made efforts to avoid this from happening. Images and video are now blurred out if this is the first time a user has messaged your child, although text remains visible.

It's also worth keeping in mind that many of the app's bots and groups are based on dating or other adult themes.

What safety settings are there?

You can **report group chats** for abusive or offensive behaviour by clicking on 'report a group'. You can report individuals in the group by going to their profile picture and selecting 'report'.

You can also **block individual users** by selecting 'display name' and then selecting 'block' at the top of the chat. You can also go to 'settings' and add users to your 'block list'.

If your child is messaged by someone they don't already know, their messages will go into **'new chats'**, which they can choose to ignore.

The Kik [safety centre](#) advises that parents should have **access to their child's account**.

What should I do?

Young people are likely to enjoy using the different 'bots' and finding new friends. But Kik doesn't have as many features in place to keep younger users safe as parents might want.

Make sure your child **understands how to block and report users**. Remind them **not to share their username** on external or public sites.

Discuss the risks involved in Kik, and explain the importance of coming to you if they have any issues.