



January 2023

Online Safety



BeReal



BeReal is a new social media app which notifies the user once a day to upload an image of what they are doing. Once a notification is received, the user has two minutes to capture and share what they are doing at that moment. Friends post at the exact same time. Once posted the user can then see what their friends have posted. If you don't post your BeReal, then you can't see your friend's BeReals from that day or access the discovery tab.

What age should user be?

Users must be 13+ to use BeReal, it is rated as 12+ by the App store and rated for Teens on Google Play. Users add their date of birth to register (no age verification takes place) although users do need to add a mobile number.

Things to be aware of?

BeReal is private by default and only visible to friends. However, it is possible to share with all users by selecting the public option. If selected, the BeReal will appear in the Discovery tab for all users to see and interact with. There is also an option to share your location. If you don't enable your location, then you can't see other user's locations. Chat to your child about location sharing as it is important that your child understands the risk of location sharing and when it may be appropriate to share.

Discovery tab – this is the area where you can view all other BeReals that have been made public (if you have posted that day). There is an element of risk that your child may see an inappropriate image depending on what others have uploaded.

How to report—You can report a BeReal or a user by clicking on the three dots (next to the BeReal or user) to report. You can then choose whether you think the BeReal is undesirable or if it is inappropriate. You can block users on Android but not on iOS (BeReal have said this functionality will be available soon). People you have accepted as 'friends' can be deleted at any time. If your child is using BeReal then talk to them about what they are sharing on BeReal and check that they know how to use the reporting tools available. Further information can be found by clicking [here](#).

EARLY YEARS

Does your child go online? If so, it is essential that the devices that they are using are set with age appropriate parental controls and that access is restricted to appropriate content and apps.

We would advise that children only access devices when you are with them as occasionally, children may accidentally view inappropriate content so it is important that an adult is with them if they do.

TIKTOK

National Online Safety have recently issued some further guidance on the use of TikTok.

Their useful guide can be found [here](#).

SOCIAL MEDIA—IS YOUR CHILD READY FOR IT?

Childnet have produced an informative article which aims to answer parents questions around social media, such as “When should I allow my child to join social media?”

The article, which can be found [here](#) , also provides information on some alternative sites that have been created for younger children.

WHATSAPP UPDATE

WhatsApp will be releasing the following new Privacy features soon:

- Leave Groups Silently: you will be able to exit a group privately so instead of the whole group being notified, only the admins will be.
- Choose Who Can See When You're Online: WhatsApp are introducing the ability to select who can and can't see when you are online.
- Screenshot Blocking for View Once Messages. You can read more about these new features [here](#);

<https://blog.whatsapp.com/>

DISCORD

Discord is a social networking app used by gamers to chat to each other. It has a premium subscription service through which in app purchases can be made. The minimum age to access Discord is 13, although the Apple App store rates it as 17+.

Discord is made up of servers which are spaces online for groups to chat, upload files and share images etc. Anyone can set up a server and they can either be public or private. Users can video call and send direct messages to other individuals or groups. Children who play online games such as Fortnite may use Discord to chat about the game (rather than the game's own chat facility).

How can you make it safer?

Discord have created this [article](#) which outlines four steps to creating a safer account, including how to block users.

CYBER BULLYING

According to Ofcom's 2022 report, 76% of parents of children aged between 8 and 11, expressed concerns about online bullying. Those children in that age group were most likely to be bullied face-to-face, but online bullying continues via text/messaging apps and in online games. However, this age group is also most likely to tell someone like a trusted adult that they have been bullied. This likelihood decreases with age.

Some research suggests that children might stop reporting bullying because they feel like it's not dealt with appropriately. It is therefore essential to teach children the best routes for reporting online bullying while also sharing resources for them to use. Abusive behaviour should never go unchallenged.

The following links will provide additional advice and guidance in this area;

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/question/how-to-encourage-children-to-report-cyberbullying-among-friends/>

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/stop-speak-support/>



What should you be aware of?

As always, we encourage you to chat to your child to see why they use different apps/websites and ensure that they know how to block users and what to do if they see any inappropriate content. **Please be aware that Discord does include video/voice calling which cannot be filtered.**

Discord is used by an array of users and therefore adult content can be found on Discord as well as inappropriate language. Childnet have produced this article, which you might find useful:

- <https://discord.com/safety/360044149591-answering-parents-andeducators-top-questions>

For further information please refer to the childnet website or by clicking [here](#) .