

Age Ratings Parent Guide

A quick guide to what parents need to know

What are age ratings?

Age ratings tell us which online platforms, such as apps and websites, are **suitable for different age ranges**. These protect children from inappropriate content and data collection.

Most platforms have an official age rating – but these can **differ from place to place**. For example, Instagram is officially rated 13+, but is rated 12+ in app stores. **PEGI's ratings** for games can also differ. It can be confusing, but **most age ratings will guide you** in deciding which platforms are appropriate.

Why are some platforms rated under-13?

These have **content suitable for children**. Additionally, laws regulate the collection of personal information for under-13s.

Many under-13 platforms still need parental consent – for instance YouTube Kids (4+), PopJam (7+) and Minecraft (9+).

Why are some platforms rated 13+?

These may feature stuff that's **not suitable for younger children**, such as graphic violence or sexualised content. Most popular social media platforms – including **Instagram, YouTube and TikTok** – are rated 13+.

But it's not hard for younger children to join 13+ platforms. Many ask a new user for their date of birth, but do not require proof.

Why are some platforms rated 18+?

These contain **age-restricted content** – like gaming, alcohol or porn. **But many 18+ platforms are accessible to children** and young people. Usually this is because they do not verify a user's age, or have a process that can be bypassed.

What should I do?

Familiarise yourself with age ratings and the platforms your child uses. They may be desperate to sign-up to TikTok – but **explore the app together first** to decide if it's suitable.

If your child does use a 13+ platform, **take a look at the privacy settings** with them and make sure they **know how to block or report a problem**.

And never just assume your child isn't visiting 13+ or 18+ platforms. Children are naturally curious, and may be tempted to explore – especially if a platform doesn't verify their age.

More Info

[Listen to Parent Zone's Tech Shock podcast – discussing age-gating online](#)

[Read Parent Zone's guides to popular apps and services](#)