



Fact sheet

Twitter (For parents)

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What is Twitter?

Twitter is a free social media application that allows its users to communicate through the exchange of short, quick and frequent messages. Users can send content known as a 'Tweet' which may contain photos, videos, links and up to 140 characters of text. These messages are posted to a profile, sent to followers, and are searchable via Twitter search.



Tweet

Users have a personal profile, called a twitter handle, which is like an email address and records all your Tweets.

What are the privacy settings on Twitter?

Accounts on Twitter can either be public or protected with access given only to those you approve as followers. Be aware that using hashtags, tags and replies on Twitter will not compromise your privacy settings if your account is set to private. These Tweets will only appear to approved followers and not the general public.

What is the age restriction for Twitter?

Twitter is restricted to users aged 13 and above, however there is no age verification process so it is possible that some users may be underage. If Twitter becomes aware that a person under 13 has provided personal information to the site, Twitter will review the information and take steps to remove the information or account.



What is a hashtag?

A hashtag or '#' is a symbol used before a keyword or phrase that is included in a Tweet to categorise it and link it to other content of a similar nature. This is used to easily search online content and identify trending topics. If a keyword or phrase is searched on Twitter, all public Tweets with that hashtag will appear in the search results.

#nowiknow

What is tagging?

If a user is tagged, it means they are referenced in a Tweet by using '@' followed by their username, for example @ThinkUKnow_Aus. This reference (Twitter handle) will link their profile to the tweet and the user will receive a notification that they have been tagged. Tagging is generally used to have conversations or ensure someone is aware of what is being discussed. If your Tweets are protected, users who do not follow you will not see your mentions.



What are replies?

A user will often reply to a Tweet if they are tagged in it. A reply will begin with '@username' to direct the message at a particular person.

What does 'following' someone on Twitter mean?



Follow

Following someone means you have chosen to subscribe to a see a user's Twitter content. This means when the person you follow posts something new, it will appear on your homepage which is an area that shows all the content posted by those you follow.



What is direct messaging?

Direct messages are private messages between Twitter users that can only be viewed by those involved in the conversation. Direct messaging can be started with anyone who follows you.

How are young people using Twitter?

Young people use Twitter to have conversations, share images, links and videos with other users. Twitter gives users the option to contact anyone who has an account by tagging them in the content, so young people may be able to interact with organisations, celebrities and strangers, as well as friends.



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What are the potential problems with Twitter?

Any application when used incorrectly has the potential to cause harm. It is important that you openly communicate with your child about how they may be using an application and the legal and ethical ramifications of inappropriate use. They also need to be aware of the challenges of communicating with people they don't know online. Conversations through direct messages cannot be moderated by others, so your child should be discouraged from direct messaging anyone they do not know.



Twitter is a public forum and young people should remember that whatever they post on a public account can be seen by anyone so they need to think before they post. A Tweet cannot be edited once it is sent but it can be deleted.

However, someone may have already saved a copy of the Tweet and shared it with others.

If location settings are not disabled, a user's location can automatically appear on their Tweets. If location settings are activated on a Twitter mobile application, the user's location will be shared for every Tweet that is sent.

How do you turn off location settings?

Below the Tweet composer box, select the location or location mark to open a dropdown list and select 'Remove' or 'Turn off location'. This setting will be saved so the location will no longer automatically appear.



How do you delete a Twitter account?

To delete a Twitter account, log into the account you wish to deactivate. Access the settings by clicking on the cog wheel on the top right-hand side of the account. From the bottom of the 'Settings' menu select 'Deactivate my account'. On the next page that appears, select the 'Deactivate' button.

How do you block someone on Twitter?

You can block people by selecting their profile and clicking the gear icon on the right-hand side and select 'Block'.

How do you report on Twitter?

Users can report Tweets which are considered to be abusive or harassing, threatening violence, involve self-harm or reveal your private information such as your address or phone number. If you want to report a Tweet click on the '...' icon on the bottom right-hand corner of the Tweet, select 'Report' and complete the form. Keep as much evidence as you can about the complaint, such as screenshots.

The Office of the e-Safety Commissioner has a range of powers to assist in the removal of material involving people under the age of 18 if they are unsatisfied with how a social media service has dealt with their complaint. For more information, visit www.esafety.gov.au.



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