

A parent & carer's guide to Google safe search and YouTube safety mode

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Google is the [most used search engine](#) in the world and users can type in a word, expression, phrase or sentence in more than 100 languages and receive instant results in text, images or videos. YouTube is ranked as the world second largest search engine, with over 1 billion users that each day [watch a billion hours of videos](#).

With limited ways to control content, the Google and YouTube platforms can be challenge for parents and carers because there are hundreds of thousands of videos, images and other content that may not be considered appropriate for children or young people.

This article explains why it may be useful to filter search results on Google and YouTube and how parents and carers can engage safety settings on these two platforms.

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Is Google content appropriate for children and young people?

A Google query lasts less than half a second, however there are many more steps involved before a final result is provided. This [video from Google](#) illustrates exactly how a Google search works.

When Google realized that the results of an unfiltered Google search [contained content that is not always appropriate](#) for children, Google then developed SafeSearch so that children could safely find documents, images, and videos within the Google database.

Is YouTube content appropriate for children and young people?

Google purchased YouTube in 2006 with the idea that YouTube would provide a marketing hub as more viewers and advertisers chose the Internet over television. The content on YouTube ranges from videos, shows, and cartoons, to movie trailers, educational videos, documentaries and more.

However, an unfiltered YouTube search may contain content that is inappropriate for children and Google designed YouTube Safety Mode for the same reasons that they designed Google SafeSearch: to protect children from inappropriate content.

Information on Google SafeSearch

Google SafeSearch is a setting designed to filter search results so that you can exclude inappropriate content such as pornography or nudity. Visit the ['Google Safety Center'](#) and familiarise yourself with family safety basics. [This short tip sheet](#) from the North Wales Police provides step-by-step instructions on restricting inappropriate search results and inappropriate content. You should also be aware that Google SafeSearch [may not work on all machines or all browsers](#).

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Information on YouTube Safety Mode

YouTube Safety Mode is a setting designed to filter mature and/or inappropriate content, [including mature content or videos that have age-restrictions](#). You can watch this step-by-step video provided by the [Family Safety Online Institute to learn how to set Safety Mode and how to report problems](#). Parents or carers of younger children are advised to enable this feature and read more guidelines in the [YouTube Safety Centre](#).

How do I talk about Google SafeSearch and YouTube Safety Mode with my children?

Unfortunately neither SafeSearch nor Safety Mode is 100% reliable and children and young people can easily find out how to disable SafeSearch or Safety Mode. Parents must continue to protect their children by engaging in dialogues around online safety.

- You can consult the [Hwb Online Safety Zone](#) to understand the challenges of technology and discover recommended advice for parents and carers.
- Did you know that 13 is [the recommended age to use YouTube?](#) [YouTube Kids](#) was created for younger children, but parents and carers must still [be vigilant with parental controls](#).
- Does your young person have a YouTube Channel? If yes, have you watched it? Do you know what they are posting?
- [Parent resources from YouTube](#) with tips and advice from Google [Common Sense Media](#) can also help you begin a conversation with your children.

When used safely and responsibly, Google and YouTube can provide a wealth of opportunities for our children to learn, be entertained, be creative and play.



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