Live streaming is the term used to describe the broadcast of a real-time video from a mobile device, tablet or games console. Many live streaming apps have the functionality for interactions from viewers, such as commenting, live chats and sending reactions during the broadcast. Live streaming opens up a world of excitement for children, where they can watch live concerts, their favourite celebrities and bloggers/vloggers, connect with their friends, watch live gaming and much more. While there are many positives with live streaming, it creates a worldwide platform for unsuitable content to be streamed and creates a host of dangers for children.

98% of child sex abuse live streaming victims are 13 or under

Not a definitive guide. Please always check with the app’s support information to see if your child’s privacy settings are set up effectively, anyone can be watching their live streams. One of the main characteristics of live streaming is its ability for videos to be instantly shared all over the world, but this creates the opportunity for more people to watch anybody, anything, at any time and any place, including violence, graphic imagery, nudity, illegal behavior, drug use, profanities etc. Most live streaming apps claim to monitor live streams and will take action to stop any that do not adhere to their guidelines. But, with millions of live streams each day, it makes it extremely difficult to monitor every one.

PROTECTING THEIR 'REP'
What your child does now may affect their future opportunities, and it is important that they have a good understanding of this. As the videos are live, it may lead to the misconception that whatever happens in the video will disappear once the live stream ends. This is incorrect. Talk to your child about how what they stream cannot be undone and has the potential to affect their online reputation.

RECORDINGS OF YOUR CHILD
Each streaming app and website that allows live streaming has different rules about where they store their live videos once completed. For example, a live stream on Periscope will be automatically deleted after 24 hours but apps such as Facebook and YouTube allow the video to be posted on the app afterwards and will only be deleted once the creator decides. It is important to know that deleting a video will not stop it from being shared. A live stream can be recorded (or screenshots can be taken) by other viewers using certain software and then shared on other platforms. According to research conducted by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), they found that the apparently removed illegal videos of live streams were redistributed on other sites.

WHO IS WATCHING YOUR CHILD?
If your child’s privacy settings are not set up effectively, anybody can be watching their live streams. One of the main characteristics of live streaming is its ability for videos to be instantly shared all over the world, but this creates the opportunity for more people to watch anybody.

LIVE CONTENT
As the streams are live, children can be exposed to something inappropriate instantly. Most live streaming apps will have filters, rules and guidelines in place to ensure that their services are monitored. They will also have report buttons where inappropriate content will be sent for review. Keep in mind that a report may not be dealt with instantly which means your child will be further exposed to inappropriate content during a live stream.

GROOMING
There have been instances of paedophiles coercing children as young as 3 on live streaming apps. Due to the anonymous nature and lack of identification, users need to sign up to some apps almost anyone has the opportunity to sign up and use the service. Users can use fake identities to sign up to the apps and watch/stream videos. Recent research by the IWF revealed that children may be asked to do things and perform ‘suggestive acts’ during their live stream by strangers.

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What parents need to know about LIVE STREAMING

PROTECT PERSONAL INFO
Your child may unknowingly give away personal information during a live stream, including their location. Advise them to remove any items in their live stream (school uniform, street name, posters etc.) that could give away their location or information about them.