Kik is a free messaging app used by over 300 million people worldwide that lets users exchange messages, photos, videos, GIFs and webpages via a Wi-Fi connection or data plan. Kik is unusual in that your child can sign up without a phone number and then find and message other people via just their username. Kik is aimed at anyone aged 13 years and older – the app says teens between 13 and 18 years old will need parental permission but it does not verify ages.

**CHOOSING A USERNAME**

- When creating a Kik account, your child can choose a username that is easy to guess, using a combination of letters and numbers.

**SHARING USERNAMES**

- Explain to your child that sharing usernames on social media channels, such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, will make it easy for people to remember and reach out to them.

**DEACTIVATING ACCOUNTS**

- If your child is under 13, you can submit a deactivation request to Kik by emailing support@kik.com. Use the subject line ‘Parental Inquiry’ and include your child’s Kik username and age (you will be asked for your child’s date of birth to verify the account). If your child is over 13, you will need access to the email address registered to your account before you visit the Kik.com deactivate page.

**FIND GENUINE FRIENDS**

- The Kik app includes an optional feature that your child can turn on to help filter out bots. If your child turns on this feature, and they receive a request from someone who isn’t a friend, Kik will notify both your child and their friend with a Kik message.

**DONT TALK TO STRANGERS**

- If your child knows not to talk to anyone they don’t know in real life, the risks of using Kik are greatly lowered. Alternatively, if any stranger happens to send your child a message, teach them to be polite but not to reply.

**COMMUNICATION IS KEY**

- If your child comes across something that they believe is deviant or otherwise troubling, they may be left confused and in need of somebody to explain it to them. As such, tell your child that if they are always there to help them if they need it, and if they start acting differently to normal, calmly ask them why.

**AVOIDING UNEXPECTED IMAGES**

- Kik forwards images from strangers to full level content being shared by users. The app will show all photos and messages when users who have never interacted before contact each other for the first time. Users can only share unblurred images after they have both approved each other.

**USING A VALID EMAIL**

- According to Kik, it is really important for users to provide a valid and verifiable email address when registering their account. This will help to make sure your child is able to receive important emails from the service, such as a link to reset their password, when they need them.

**MUTING OR LEAVING A CHAT**

- If someone has said something inappropriate to your child through Video Chat, they can make the user or leave the Video Chat. Tap on the person's Video Chat bubble and a mute icon will appear. When a video mute occurs, the microphone will be disabled and nobody else in the chat will be able to hear them.

**SOURCES**

- https://www.nos.org.uk/child-safety-q&a-parents-need-to-know-about-kik
- https://www.kik.com/privacy
- https://www.kik.com/help/45-6628