**What parents need to know about REDDIT**

**SUB-REDDITS**

Each community (known as a sub-reddit) has its own set of moderators and its own set of rules, opening up the opportunity for your child to see inappropriate content or something they may find upsetting. Almost every subreddits is user-run, with practically no involvement from Reddit employees. Anyone can submit content to a sub-reddit and it's not filtered.

**ADULT AND NSFW CONTENT**

While there are moderators in place for sub-reddits, they are not necessarily going to ensure that the sort of content you wouldn’t want your child to see is banned. Reddit is concerned with free speech and light-touch moderation, so even the most open-minded of people may find deeply offensive content. Reddit generally provides a lot of leeway in the type of content which is acceptable. Some members choose vulgar usernames, while some communities have controversial or rude titles. Some content or communities are marked with 'NSFW (Not Safe For Work) which means they may contain nudity, pornography, or profanity; it is easy for users to claim to be aged 18 and over to view this content.

**REDDIT GOLD AND GIFTS**

Reddit Gold is a premium membership scheme that gives 'extra features to improve the reddit experience,' such as no adverts, custom themes and avatars, and the ability to create Reddit 'secret societies.' Payment costs $3.99 a month (around £3), or $29.99 a year (£23). Users can reward each other for content they post by giving Reddit Gold, a process dubbed 'gilding.' Reddit Gifts is a giant online gift exchange for sending a gift to a randomly assigned user. Reddit recommends that you spend around £20 on a gift, so there is a concern that your child could rack up expenses if unmonitored.

**CONTENT BIAS AND FAKE NEWS**

Subreddits are particularly prone to bias - to the extent that some of them could be seen as propaganda. Reddit has been mentioned as one of the platforms used to promote Russian propaganda, for example. Other news stories can be completely false and not based on any evidence at all – stories can be written and posted online deliberately to create an impact. Both are nearly impossible to avoid.

**TROLLS AND STRANGERS**

Globally, millions of people of all ages use the Reddit platform to discuss any topic imaginable from just about every possible viewpoint. Although people can find users who have similar interests, some will choose to abuse the platform. Talking with strangers can lead to trolling and abusive, or your child encountering unsavoury subjects. Reddit users can also send each other private messages, so there is a danger of your child receiving inappropriate or unwanted communication.

**REPORTING CONTENT**

To a certain extent it can be useful to learn to just walk away from conversations that take a turn for the worse, but this is not always possible. Learn how to use the blocking feature and teach your child how to use if someone becomes a problem. Beneath all content and comments that have been submitted by other users, there is an option to report it. Advise your child to report any form of abuse or harassment that they encounter on the platform. It is a good way to alert moderators to the user and hopefully, action will be taken against them.

**SPOT FAKE NEWS**

Encourage your child to read around topics and not to take something at face value. Just because something is said by someone on Reddit, in no way does this mean that it is true. Remember that the links people post and the comments they leave will cover the full range of political views, intelligence levels and opinions.

**TURN SAFE BROWSING MODE ON AND ADULT CONTENT OFF**

Some sub-reddits are marked as ‘adult-only’ and in order to access them users must be (or at least say they are) 18 or over. Within your child’s user profile, it is possible to indicate that they are not 18 and this will block access to some sub-reddits, but certainly not everything you might consider to be unsuitable. Firstly, to protect them from unsuitable content, check that they have used their correct age when signing up. Secondly, turn off ‘adult content’ which will disable adult and NSFW (not safe for work) content from showing in the feed and search results. If you are happy to leave ‘adult content’ turned on, we highly recommend turning on ‘safe browsing mode,’ this blurs thumbnails and media preview for anything labelled NSFW (not safe for work).

**LEARN THE LINGO**

It is impossible to provide a guide to all the vocabulary and language used on Reddit - it is something that is constantly evolving. There are some words and abbreviations that have become common Internet parlance (such as NSFW). If you want to check anything which your child has accessed (which can be seen in the ‘Recently viewed links’ panel on the front page of the site), be prepared to do a little searching if you encounter things you are unable to make sense of. There’s probably a sub-reddit all about acronyms!

**BLOCKING STRANGERS**

Short of blocking access to Reddit completely, or blocking individual sub-reddits, it’s difficult to police your child’s use of the site without physically monitoring what they are doing. It is important to let your child know that there are unpleasant people out there and they need to take care of sharing personal information. Should someone start to be a harassment, you can control who can send you private messages and add users to a blocked list by simply clicking on the ‘Block User’ button.

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**SOURCES:**
- https://www.reddit.com/announcements/comments/827zqc/in_response_to_recent_reports_about_the_integrity/
- https://www.reddit.com
- https://www.reddit.com/gold/about

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This leaflet provides general advice, please always check with the app’s support information to see if your security and privacy concerns are addressed.