

Is my child old enough?



Get the answers to the questions you're asking about Tumblr

Tumblr is a site where people create their own blog which is a set of pages which can include text, photos, quotes, links, music, and videos. Users choose a look (theme) and customise their page to reflect their chosen image. Users follow, share and comment on other Blogs. It can be accessed through any device that has internet access.

Tumblr states that users must be at least 13 years old. If your child is over 13 you should still consider the following before agreeing to Tumblr.

What are the risks?

As with all social media that encourages interaction between users, the risks come from contact with people your children don't know, and from your child potentially accessing inappropriate content.

There are many blogs specifically hosting adult content, and some that promote risky behaviour such as eating disorders and self harm. However, your child can choose the topics they do and don't follow.

Does your child understand what is safe to put online?

If they might put their name, address, school, sports club or information that allows people to identify and locate them (even after you have talked through the dangers) they may need your help with using Tumblr. Talk about the risks of posting sexy pictures, meeting online friends in person, making offensive comments, and what is and isn't acceptable.

My child wants people to know who they are and have more 'followers'. What should I do?

It is normal for teens to want to achieve status and fame. They will probably want as many people following their blogs and reblogging their information as possible.

The key to doing this safely is convincing your teen that it is better for them to use a fake name that can be their 'brand'. Check the brand name they come up with to make sure it isn't overtly sexual – that will attract the wrong audience.

Does your child know how to report abuse and offensive or pornographic content?

Tumblr does not provide a safety or reporting centre, but users are able to email support@tumblr.com with concerns. All primary blogs are public and cannot be made private, but users can set up a secondary blog which can be password protected to restrict who can see it. Users can "Ignore" others by visiting www.tumblr.com/ignore

How do I talk to my child about my concerns?

Be honest with them. Express your love and concern about what might happen online. Ask if they have experienced bullying or sexual advances. Banning seldom works and children will find other ways to get online and may stop talking to you about issues to avoid getting in trouble. Keep the communication open. If they won't talk to you about things, recruit a trusted family friend or family member to keep the communication going.

When should I be worried about my child?

If your child's behaviour changes at home and/or school you should talk to them. Examples of changed behaviour could include disinterest in things they used to like, seeming very unhappy and/or their sleep and eating is being impacted. Seek professional advice if necessary from a school counsellor, your GP or a psychologist. If your child has particular vulnerabilities, be vigilant about their contacts offline and online. Help them join groups out of school where they can find friends and support. Talk to the school and make sure they are supported.

Kids Helpline provides free online and phone counselling for children and young people. Visit www.kidshelpline.com.au or call 1800 55 1800.