

# What to Consider when Setting up an Official YouTube Channel

**Please note this guidance is not exhaustive and is intended to support educational settings in making informed decisions.**

YouTube is a video sharing service where users can watch, like, share, comment and upload videos globally. Educational settings can use YouTube to upload videos which can then be shared, commented and viewed.

## Why would a school/setting want a YouTube channel?

- A YouTube channel can be a useful way of celebrating success or sharing ideas and learning with the wider community – such as helping parents/carers understand specific elements within the curriculum.
- YouTube channels can be quick and easy to set up and can have significant benefits for learning, communication, engagement and participation.
- Advertising - prospective parents may search for your school/setting within YouTube and you will want the top search result to be the 'official' account!
- It is important to note that information on a YouTube channel should also be available elsewhere online e.g. school/setting website, Facebook, Twitter, learning platform, newsletter etc.

## What can a YouTube channel offer your school/setting?

- Sharing
  - Celebrating success and learning
  - Communicating with and involving members of the community who may be unable to physically attend events e.g. the school play
  - Sharing information with parents e.g. teaching children about specific activities and techniques
- Creating an official web presence
  - The school/setting can take ownership of its online identity and maintain an official online presence which is easier to manage than unofficial pages or content.
  - Linking with existing social networks e.g. sharing video content onto a school Facebook page.

## What are some of the risks of having an official YouTube channel?

- By default YouTube channels are public therefore any content posted on YouTube can be viewed, shared and potentially copied by anyone.
  - All content posted must therefore always be appropriate for a worldwide audience and have appropriate parental consent etc.

- By default other users can like or dislike videos or post comments.
  - Other users could post inappropriate comments or pictures for example spam selling/promoting products or threats to members of the community.
- Children, parents or staff could be identified as members of the school/settings and could be placed at risk of harm or harassment.
- Underage children (12 or under) could subscribe to the account.
- The page could be hacked and manipulated.
- Admins could post videos which breach data protection, confidentiality or that could place children or other members of the community at risk.
- The setting could be subjected to comments which complain about the school/setting or harass members of the community.
- Schools/settings could post content such as music scores etc. or images which breach copyright legislation.
- Photos of school/setting activity can be a good way of sharing events and information with parents, students and staff.
- Schools/settings should also consider storing the photos in a more secure location e.g. the official website or learning platform, and then linking to them from the Twitter account

## What do you need to consider before setting up a YouTube channel?

- Be clear about your aims and objectives – know why you want to set up a YouTube channel and how it will benefit your school/setting.
  - How will you know if this has been achieved? For example it will be classed as successful if 25% of parents like your content?
- Start with consulting with your own community.
  - Consider if there is demand for a YouTube channel. For example if parents do not watch content on YouTube then there is little point in setting it up!
  - Consider what other options are available and how it can complement existing communication channels.
- Complete a risk assessment to identify possible hazards and what action can be undertaken to reduce possible concerns.
- Ensure that leaders and managers are engaged with the YouTube channel and that all members of staff are following appropriate policies e.g. the Acceptable Use, e-Safety and data protection policy
- Consider trialling the YouTube channel with a class or a year group before whole-school/setting rollout e.g. 'XXXX School Year 6 Parents YouTube channel'. This will help bring out any issues around content, privacy or settings.
- Admins must ensure that they adhere to the policy on publishing images e.g. written parental consent; no names of children published and ensure children are appropriately clothed.
- Schools and settings must ensure that image consent forms are up-to-date and cover the use of social media.

## Who should be the Administrators of an official YouTube channel?

- The school/setting will need to set up an official and specific YouTube channel

- Consider if one YouTube channel is sufficient – this is likely to be fine for an early years setting or primary school but a college or secondary school may wish to have official accounts for different departments.
- It is advisable that the main admin for the YouTube channel is a member of the leadership or management team.
  - In some cases it will be appropriate to have more than one admin and schools/settings will need to consider how this can be managed.
- The school/setting will need to ensure that any admins have signed an appropriate Acceptable Use Policy and have accessed sufficient training to enable them to manage the YouTube channel account(s) successfully. Admins must be professional at all times and be aware that they are an ambassador for the school/setting.
- The school/setting will need to consider how admins will access and manage the account e.g. will they have a school/setting provided device.
  - It won't be appropriate for members of staff to use their personal devices if they are uploading videos of children so the school/setting will need to provide appropriate resources and access.
- Ensure the admins use a strong password which is only available to the admin and the leadership or management team in order to reduce the risk of the site being hacked.

## What are the privacy options for a YouTube channel?

- YouTube channels are public by default. If videos are public then schools/settings need to be aware that everyone can see their videos.
- Admins can choose to restrict content to be private or unlisted.
  - A private video can only be seen by you and the users you select. The video won't appear on your channel or search results and will be invisible to other users.
  - An unlisted means that only people who have a link to the video can view it. Unlisted videos don't show to viewers in the Videos tab of your channel page. Unlisted videos don't show up in YouTube's search results unless someone adds your unlisted video to a public playlist
  - More information about privacy settings can be found here:  
[https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/157177?hl=en-GB&ref\\_topic=2946312](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/157177?hl=en-GB&ref_topic=2946312)
- Choosing to upload private or unlisted videos gives schools/settings control over who can see their content. Many schools/settings choose this approach initially. It does require administration work and schools/settings will need to regularly review the account.
- Restricting videos can be a downside if the school/setting wants to share learning etc. on a wider scale.
- Admins can also use tools to disable, moderate or remove comments posted on videos. It is recommended that schools/settings disable or moderate comments.
  - More information about this can be found here:  
[https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/111870?hl=en-GB&ref\\_topic=2946312](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/111870?hl=en-GB&ref_topic=2946312)

## Can we involve children aged 12 or under in using an official YouTube channel?


- YouTube's age limit is for children aged 13 and over, so it is inappropriate to use an official YouTube channel to directly communicate or inform children under 13.

- In many cases the school/setting will not be using YouTube to directly target communication with children but to share pupils work or events.
- It must however be acknowledged that if children are aware they are appearing in videos posted publically on YouTube then there is a significant chance they will choose to actively seek the content out. This could potentially place them at risk of being identified, for example if a pupil comments on the video and name themselves or others.
- When posting content involving pupils or their work on YouTube then schools/settings will need to appropriately assess the decision, considering the potential benefits and risks. Schools/settings will need to demonstrate that all reasonable precautions have been taken to reduce the risks of children being identified or placing themselves at risk.
- Schools/settings will also need to ensure that information can be accessed in other ways e.g. Facebook, Twitter, school website or learning platform for those not wishing to engage with Twitter.

## What should we avoid posting on an official YouTube channel?

- Admins must not disclose information, make commitments or engage in activities on behalf of the school/setting unless they are authorised to do so.
- Admins should ensure the image policy is followed at all times.
- Leaders must ensure there is a clear procedure for admins to follow if there is a concern, for example reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
  - Admins should not engage in public debates if opinions or concerns are raised.
  - Admins should be cautious when deleting comments, unless they contain credible threats or offensive comments. Opportunities to engage with parents/carers and demonstrate that the school/setting listens to the community might be missed if legitimate comments are removed.
- Admins must not engage with any private messaging with children or parents/carers.

## How do I block or report a YouTube account?

- Blocking someone on YouTube will stop them from making comments on your videos or Channel, and they won't be able to contact you through private messages either.
  - To block a user visit their Channel page (which should have a URL similar to [www.youtube.com/user/NAME](http://www.youtube.com/user/NAME))
  - Access their "About" tab, click the **flag icon** 
  - Click **Block User**
- For further advice on how to "flag" content or users or report content to YouTube visit the YouTube safety centre: [https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/2803138?hl=en-GB&ref\\_topic=2676378](https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/2803138?hl=en-GB&ref_topic=2676378)

## Evaluating a YouTube channel

- Once your channel is live, ensure you set a timeframe in which to evaluate its success and have clear aims and objectives to help you measure this.
  - If a concern occurs, revisit your training and policies and identify any lessons to be learnt.

- Involve all members of the community in reviewing the success (or not) of the YouTube channel – have they had a good or bad experience and do they have any constructive comments or views to help inform you?