



What parents & carers need to know about...

TELLONYM

17+

Tellonym is a messaging network that allows children to send messages to each other anonymously. Users are encouraged to share their Tellonym link with others through social platforms like Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram, and wait for friends to reply to questions anonymously. The app is free to download from both the Google Play and Apple Store and is very similar to the Sarahah app that was removed in 2018 due to repeated incidents of online bullying and inappropriate use.

Online bullying concerns

Like many other anonymous messaging platforms that exist, Tellonym can encourage online bullying behaviour. The security of remaining anonymous means that some users may use the platform to send hurtful messages or insults to others, knowing that they are unlikely to be caught or face any serious consequences. In 2018, the app received national attention for its potential to facilitate cyberbullying.



You're worthless. Absolute trash.

I don't even know you!

Risk of online grooming

Users can create a Tellonym account using their email address or mobile number. All profiles created on Tellonym are automatically made public on the account and cannot be privatised. This means that children can easily be found by other users and can receive anonymous messages directly from others, leaving them susceptible to being exploited by online groomers.



Hey, how old are you?

Why do you wanna know?

Is your account private?

Yeah, of course.

Inappropriate content

Anonymous messaging platforms such as Tellonym can also open users up to receiving age-inappropriate or sexually motivated content. Whilst the app does offer moderation tools and the ability to filter explicit language, it can be linked to social media accounts such as Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, which means inappropriate messages can also be accompanied by inappropriate visual content.



Can impact mental health

Anonymous apps have in the past been linked to causing teenage depression and suicide, as children ask more personal questions and find it hard to manage negative responses. Both Ask.fm and Sarahah received widespread publicity in the past for their role in facilitating harmful behaviour, with the latter eventually banned from the Apple and Google store after a successful petition to have it removed.



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Safety Tips

Talk about the risks

It's important to educate your child about the risks associated with anonymous messaging apps and how other users might use it as a vehicle to send abusive or inappropriate messages. If your child is insistent on using Tellonym, explore it with them and discuss how it works and how they should use it. Always make sure they feel comfortable speaking to you about any concerns they have and that they can come to you if something upsets or worries them.



Set language filters to very high

Tellonym allows users to set different language filter levels to help protect children against receiving any spam, offensive messages or being sexually harassed. If your child is using Tellonym, it's a good idea to set these to very high, at which point content will be filtered on 'what may not be appropriate' rather than 'what is presumably not appropriate' if just set to high.



Use Custom Word Filter

Parents can add words to their children's custom word filter to exclude specific topics completely. If messages include that exact word, it gets instantly removed without further notice. This way you can control which messages your child receives. General harsh language is already filtered, so Tellonym recommends to add words that are connected to inappropriate messages that your child might receive.



Report tells and block users

If your child receives any inappropriate messages, they can be reported directly to Tellonym on the app. Similarly, Tellonym has blocking mechanisms to exclude people you don't want your child to interact with. This removes their ability to see your child's posts and interact with them. Furthermore, you can block senders of individuals tells which will remove their ability to comment on anything further.



Stick to the age rating

Tellonym requires users to be 17 years of age or older. This reflects the nature of content that is available on the app and what younger children might be exposed to. Children who are under the age limit require an adult to email Tellonym directly confirming they have been provided with permission to use the app.



Keep personal profile private

When signing up with Tellonym, the profile page allows users to display a picture and enter their name, gender, phone number and email address. It also asks users to create a username. Given that all profiles on Tellonym are public, it's important to talk to your child about protecting their personal information and restricting the details they provide. The use of avatars and using randomly generated usernames are a good way to keep identities hidden.



Meet our expert

Jonathan Taylor is an online safety, social media and online grooming expert who previously worked as a Covert Internet Investigator with the Metropolitan Police for over 10 years. He has worked extensively with both UK and international schools in delivering training and guidance around the latest online dangers, apps and platforms.



So this is the Tellonym app then?

Pretty much!