



## What Parents & Carers Need to Know about

# ONLYFANS



OnlyFans is an online platform, created in the UK. It is free to join either as a user or creator, but creators monetise their content by charging subscription fees for users to view it. This content can take the form of photos, videos, live streams and one-to-one chats. In many cases, users are also required to pay for any additional content they would like to access. The site has around 50 million users worldwide and is aimed squarely at an adult audience.

### Falsified Profiles

OnlyFans asks users to provide personal information, a 'selfie' and a copy of their ID to verify their age. However, in 2020, a BBC documentary found evidence of under-18s building profiles on the platform by using forged documents or other people's ID. Payment information is also required to activate an account – but an under-age user could simply input someone else's bank details.

### Explicit Content

Although it hosts various types of content creators (chefs, fitness trainers, artists and so on), OnlyFans has developed a particular reputation for showcasing adult material. Even if a young person on the platform is *not* selling explicit content of themselves, it's likely they will be exposed to profiles that *are* – and they may even come under pressure to do so from older users of the app.

### Potential Financial Costs

OnlyFans is subscription based, raising the risk of racking up sizeable costs very quickly. When a user clicks 'follow' on an account they want to subscribe to, their debit or credit card is charged. Subscriptions are non refundable and set to auto-renew as default. Many accounts labelled as 'free' still encourage users to donate tips for content they've liked.



### Online Grooming

Due to the platform's commercial nature, there is the potential that young people may be offered money by other users to create specific content. This represents an increased possibility of young content creators being put at risk. If the requests are for explicit photos or videos, a content maker who is under 18 would therefore be producing their own child abuse material.

### Risk Taking

In trying to produce the 'right' content or fit in with other OnlyFans users, young people may be more susceptible to taking chances with the material that they upload. Adolescents are more inclined to take risks as they develop their identities and seek approval in their peer groups. Online, this tendency may lead them into producing content that they would not normally consider making.

## Advice for Parents & Carers

### Maintain a Dialogue

It can help to talk honestly with your child about the dangers of using adult platforms such as OnlyFans. Discuss the types of content that they feel is appropriate (or not) to post online and the potential consequences of sharing too many images, too much information and – especially – explicit photos or videos.

### Parental Controls

Ensure that you implement adequate safety measures on your child's phone and other devices – especially parental control settings. Depending on the device, age-inappropriate websites, content and downloads can be filtered by age rating and blocked.

### Monitor Their Finances

This is particularly relevant for teens with their own bank account. If you notice a drastic change in spending habits or your child suddenly has more disposable income or high-value items (like designer clothes or new gadgets) that you did not think they could afford, then you may need to initiate a discussion about how they obtained this money.

### Discuss Strangers on the Internet

Highlight to your child the dangers of meeting people they might have engaged with through a platform like OnlyFans. Make sure they know to inform a trusted adult straight away if someone they have only spoken to online attempts to persuade them to meet up in real life.

### Meet Our Expert

Dr Rina Bajaj is a Counselling Psychologist who has worked in mental health since 2004 (for the NHS, statutory organisations, in the corporate world and the voluntary sector). Her areas of specialism include dating and relationships counselling, and she has diverse experience in helping people from a range of backgrounds.



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