

The **musical.ly** app is one you may have heard of and there are certainly children here at Fieldhead who are regular active users, but...

What is it? Is it safe for your child?

What is musical.ly?

musical.ly is free social media app for phones and tablets which allows users to watch and create their own short music videos.

The app allows people to choose a song or a piece of music and then **create their own short video**. Most popular is the lip-sync feature where users can video themselves miming and dancing along to a song, before uploading and sharing the finished clip.

With certain downloadable extras, users are also able to send **live videos** of themselves to their friends and followers.



What are the dangers?

Although good fun and superficially harmless there are a few significant dangers associated with musical.ly, particularly for younger users.

Here are the 5 biggest problems...

1. Adult content...

Many parents have complained about the volume of adult content on musical.ly. No matter how you have your privacy set within the app they will not block adult content. This could include **swearing** and **inappropriate lyrics** in the songs or **pornography** and **violent graphic** content in the videos.

2. Location sharing...

musical.ly users can **search for other users near their own location**.

3. Videos can be viewed, saved and shared...

There is nothing to prevent **other users sharing** uploaded videos on other social media and messaging apps.

4. Live streaming is not private...

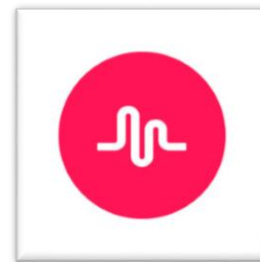
The **live video is not private**, even if you have the privacy setting set up. Members who stream video live could be viewed by any other user.

5. Easy for users to create multiple accounts...

This means it is **easy for children to create a range of accounts**, some of which may be hidden.

Who is musical.ly for?

The musical.ly app has a **12+ age restriction** meaning it is not intended for use by any child younger than 13. The potential risks of such social media apps have been determined too great for young children both in terms of the content they may have access to and the required responsibility necessary to use the app safely.



Children younger than this have been found to not fully understand the risk with sharing media and videos of themselves. Seemingly simple mistakes such as wearing school uniform while filming; standing in front of a window or filming in a private bedroom can unintentionally give away a user's age, location and favourite hobbies and interests.

It is very easy for unsuspecting younger users to give away far more information about themselves than they realise.

Can I delete a musical.ly account?

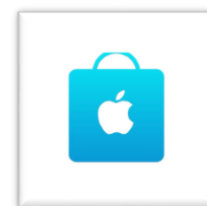
No. You can't.

Once uploaded the content remains on the musical.ly server and removal is impossible. Of course, you can delete the app from any tablet or phone, but any videos already created will still be on the musical.ly data base for others to view.

If you have any concerns about your child's account and any material that they have created you should contact musical.ly directly via email (privacy@musical.ly) and they will take the appropriate action.

You can prevent the app being downloaded onto a phone or tablet.

As musical.ly is for users 13 years old and over only, this allows you to use your parental controls to simply block apps from your underage child's phone. Please see the Apple App Store or Google Play Store instructions for more on parental controls and how to enable them.



We encourage you to oversee your child's internet use, including any apps they may download. Both Apple and Android provide parental controls that let you block or limit specific apps, features, movies, music, and more at the device level.

Can I control any of it?

Yes. Members can make their account **private** and **block** any unwanted followers.

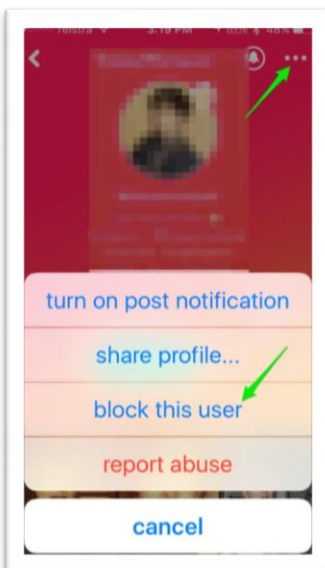
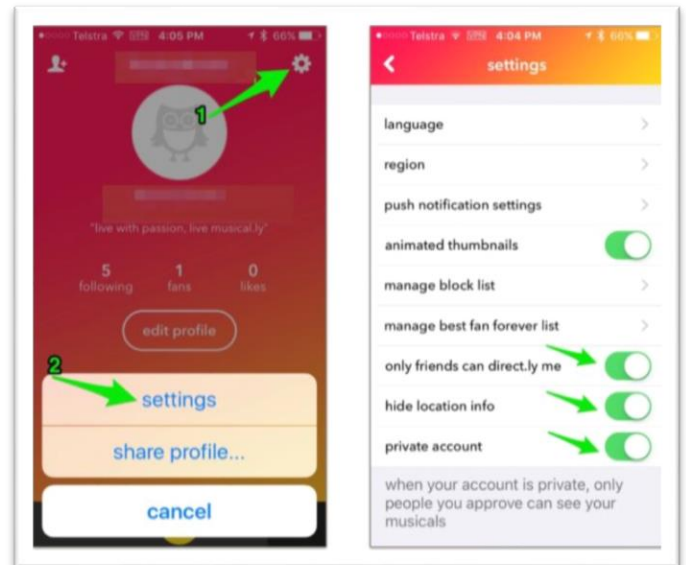
Users can control who can see their uploaded content, follow them, and send them messages by **making their account private**. With a private account, users are able to approve or deny followers, and restrict their uploaded content and incoming messages to followers only.

If a user has a public profile, **anyone** signed into the musical.ly app can view that user's public videos. However, only approved followers can send that user a message. Users can also block another from contacting them at any time.

1. Making an account private...

To make an account private click on the cog wheel in the top right hand corner of the users profile page, then go to settings.

Now you can change the account to private. Here you can also hide a user's location and prevent unknown members directly contacting your account.



2. Blocking unwanted followers...

To block an unwanted follower, visit that user's profile, tap on the three dots in the upper right corner (...), and select "block this user". When your teen blocks someone, that person will not be able to send them direct messages (direct.ly).

This menu can also be used to report a user for any reason.

Please note altering the privacy settings and blocking accounts **will not block adult content**.

Also remember: Even with a private account, a user's profile information (their photo, username, and bio) will be visible to all users. Make sure your child **does not give personal information, such as age, address, or phone number, in their profile**.

What can I do?

Talk... and don't panic.

Find out if your child is using the musical.ly app and discuss how they use it – it is important to remember that it is highly likely that your child is (and has been) perfectly safe.

Talk to them about the dangers of the app and if you still decide to let them continue using musical.ly then talk to them about the ways of remaining as safe as possible. Make sure the account is private and your child knows how to block any unwanted followers. Show them how to report unwanted messages and inappropriate videos and teach them how vital it is to be open and honest with you.

What if I'm still unsure?

If you require any further help or advice then the police run Child Exploitation and Online Protection website thinkuknow.co.uk is always a good place to start. It has a wide range of resources and information for parents, carers and children.



The CommonSenseMedia.org website has a specifically designed area to answer questions and ease parental concerns. It offers a huge range of advice from how to discuss issues like this with children, through how to operate parental controls and even reviews of popular social media apps written by experts along with other parents.

[Youtube](https://www.youtube.com) also has a few helpful guides on what musical.ly can do and how to use it as safely as possible. Just search for "[musical.ly parent guide](#)".



Finally, you can always pop into school and ask for help and advice. Even if we don't have the answers straight away, we will know where to start looking.