

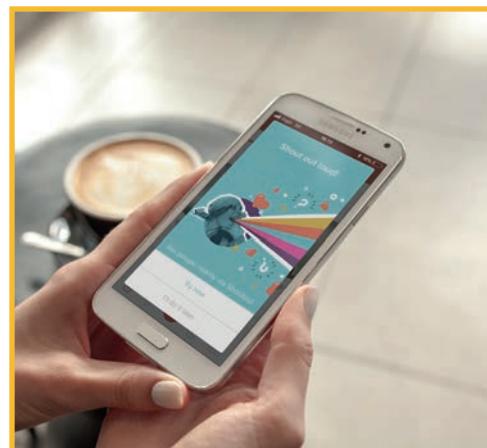
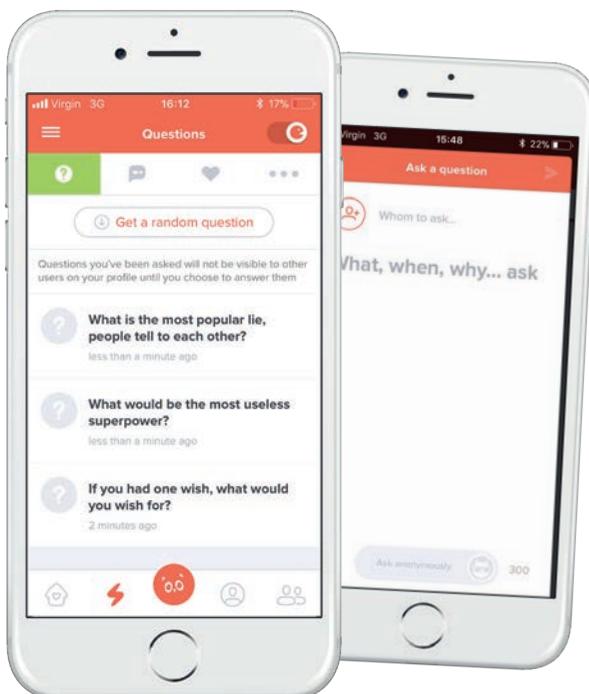
ASKfm: A Parent's Guide



What is ASKfm?

ASKfm is a question and answer social networking app/website designed to be a 'safe, fun and engaging place for learning more about yourself and exploring the social world around you'. It has faced criticism for allowing its users to post anonymously.

What does it look like?



Main Concerns for Parents

askfm



Insults, gossip and bullying

ASKfm has been labelled a hotbed of bullying with some people using the service to pick on others and make cruel comments. While online bullying is rife on other social-networking sites, ASKfm is more worrying because it allows people to post comments in anonymity. ASKfm has been associated with a number of teenagers committing suicide.

Children may feel they're obliged to answer uncomfortable questions

When asked a personal or otherwise uncomfortable question, your child may feel obliged to answer. Due to the speed of our online world, it's possible for people to gang up on someone, pressuring them to say things that they otherwise wouldn't say. As such, compromising information could soon slip out for the world to see.

You can link other social media profiles

On the app, users can link their other social media profiles (Facebook, Twitter, etc) to their ASKfm profile. If this is done, ASKfm users can not only find out information about an individual from their other profiles but any bullying carried out on ASKfm can then move on to these other platforms, making victims feel trapped, like they have no escape.

Children can learn to falsely rely on the anonymity

Even if they have good intentions and are not trying to be sinister, users can use the app's anonymity to say things to friends that they wouldn't be comfortable saying in real life. This can damage their social skills as it could lead to them saying too much online and too little in the real world.

It's possible to find the identity of an anonymous user

As a result of 3rd party tracking websites, it's very possible for users to uncover the identity of those who post anonymous messages. On one side, bullies can't always get away with being mean without any consequences but on the other hand, those who post anonymous messages responsibly can be negatively affected.

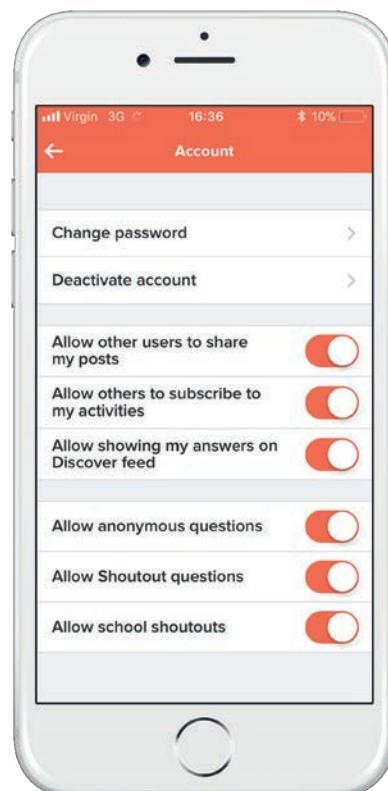
ASKfm: Tips for Parents



Don't allow anonymous questions

Seeing as most negative ASKfm messages come from the anonymity, turning this off should at least decrease how many of these messages your child gets, somewhat. Follow these steps to turn off anonymous questions:

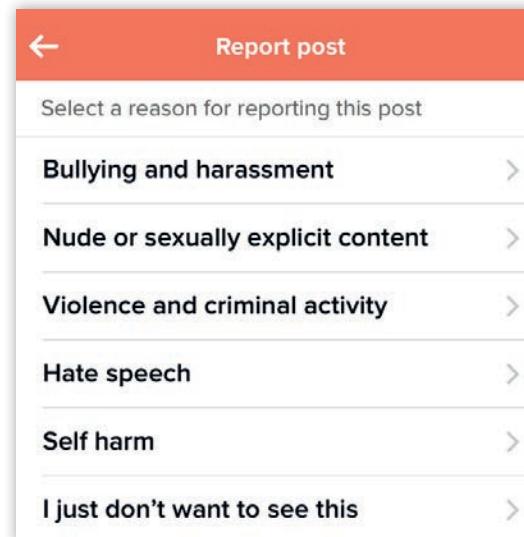
- Click on 'Settings' and then 'Privacy'.
- Tap on 'Do not allow anonymous questions'.



Report inappropriate Content

If your child does encounter a problem or any question/answer that seems inappropriate, they can report the user by doing the following:

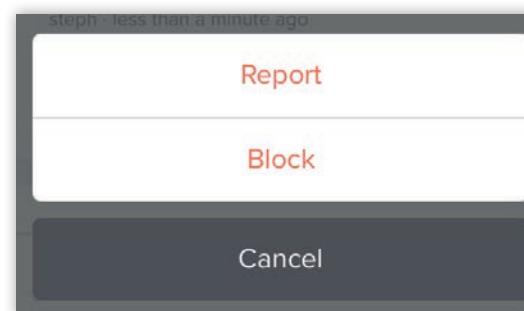
- Press the down arrow on the post you want to report
- Press 'Report'.
- Select one of either, 'Spam or Scam', 'Hate Speech', 'Violence' or 'Pornographic Content'.



Block users you don't want your child to interact with

If anyone is causing your child trouble and/or you don't want your child to talk to them on the app, do the following to block them:

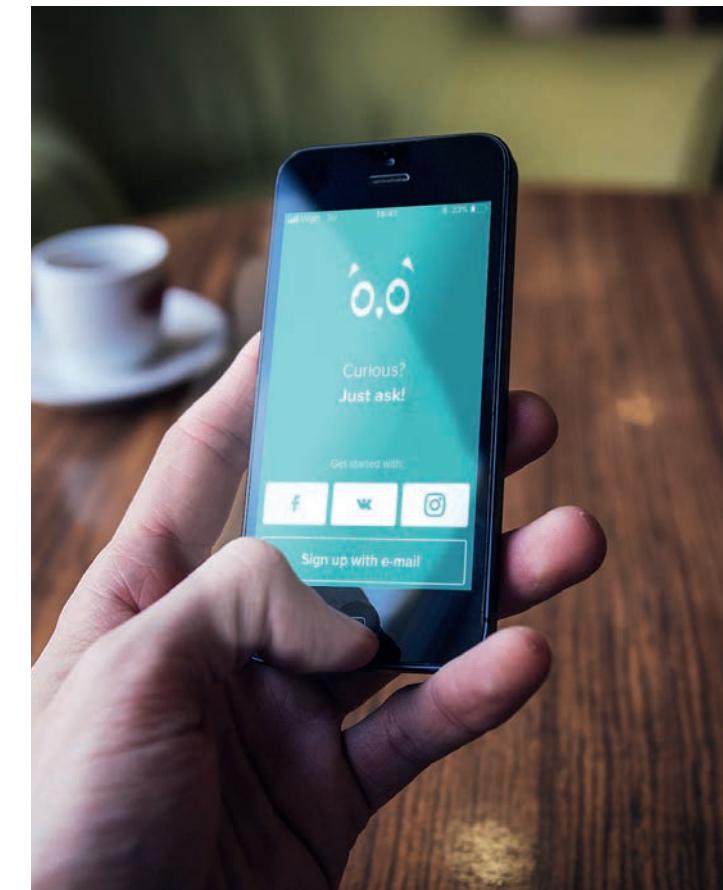
- Scroll to the bottom of a profile you wish to block.
- Press, 'Block'.



Have a conversation with your child

Express an interest into your child's enthusiasm about the app/website but also talk to them about the risks, make sure they're mature enough to use it and educate them about the following:

- Treat people the way you want to be treated.
- Your profile is public and can be seen by ANYONE.
- Don't say anything overly personal.



Sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sX-bc9kKP8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUOkM25RVdk>
<https://www.teensafe.com/blog/everything-a-parent-needs-to-know-about-ask-fm/>
<https://swgfl.org.uk/Uploads/8f/8f6d4705-25ad-4709-9171-cc624249ff9d.pdf>
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