



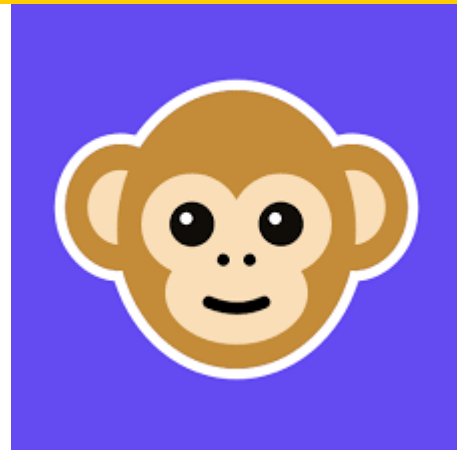
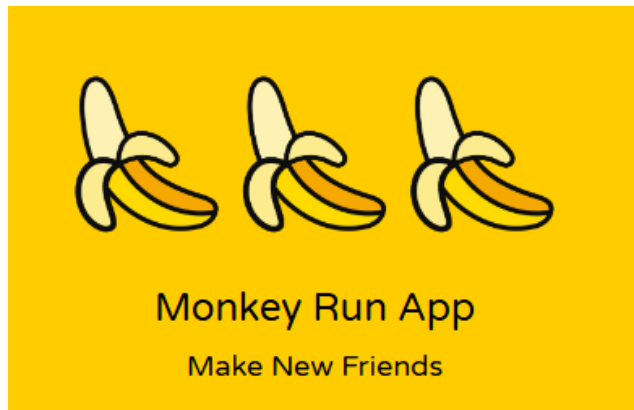
4th February 2025

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have been made aware this week of an app that a number of our students are accessing on their phones called Monkey Run or Monkey.

The Monkey app is a video chat and social networking app that **randomly matches strangers for a 15-second face-to-face video call**.

After pairing you with another user at random, the video chat starts as a 15-second face-to-face call to see if they "vibe with you." If both users tap the Time button on the screen, the video chat will continue. Otherwise, they're automatically reconnected to a new user for a new 15-second chat.



Is the Monkey app safe for students?

No, the Monkey app is not safe for students. Due to lax age verification policies, privacy concerns, and persistent issues with harmful and sexual content, using the Monkey app will not [keep your children safe online](#). The broad consensus among authoritative bodies around the globe is that **kids should not use the Monkey app**.

- The UK-based Safer Schools safeguarding app released [an alert](#) calling Monkey "extremely dangerous."
- The US internet safety advocacy group [Protect Young Eyes](#) concluded that Monkey "is not safe for kids and should be avoided."
- The [Washington Post reported](#) that the Monkey app was inappropriate for teens due to sexual content targeting minors.



Key Safeguarding Concerns

- **Harmful Content** – Whilst testing this platform, reviewers found that every second or third user was a male masturbating, with some attempting to interact. Reviewers found countless examples of adverts for sex, as well as pornography and bestiality. Extremely harmful content can flash up for a few seconds before the user clicks next, meaning there is no time to report in most cases.

The unpredictability of this content is likely to increase the shock factor and harmful impact because users have no warning as to what may appear.

- **No age verification** – There is little to no age verification mechanisms which children of any age can easily bypass. All users must do is tick a box to confirm that they are over 18. If users are signing in using their Facebook or Google accounts, the platform will still ask for a date of birth without any proof. The place where users input their DOB is pre-set to age 18.
- **Designed to attract children** – Everything, from the name, to the graphics used on the platform suggest this is created to attract children. It is described as 'an Omegle Alternative with TikTok vibes'. On Google Play Store, its description reads 'Make friends and chat to celebrities' and the app has copied TikTok's vertical style video feed.
- **In-app purchasing** – There are ample opportunities to spend money via VIP profiles or through buying more in-app currency called coins.
- **Location sharing** – The location of every user is shared publicly (not specifically but will say a country and a town/city) and there is no option to block this.
- **Users can not access this platform without turning their camera on.** If you deny the camera, Monkey will prompt you 'Monkey needs the cam'.
- **Young people access Monkey Web via other mainstream platforms**
 - Online safety experts have located numerous examples of screenshots from Monkey being shared on mainstream social media platforms including TikTok and Instagram. Monkey also has its own accounts on TikTok and Instagram with a link to the site in the bio of each profile. This



means that young people may be driven to the platform by viral videos discussing the site.

- **Sharing personal information online** – As with all livestreaming apps, children and young people could give away personal information without realising. They may also share details with strangers online or via linking their Facebook or Google accounts.

Safety and Privacy Settings

If a user sees something harmful or inappropriate, they can use the reporting tools. Users are then told that 'you have reported successfully'. This feature offers zero opportunity to describe the reason for reporting. The user who has been reported could also be operating from a desktop and not signed in, so there is little to no accountability for those who break the platforms community guidelines.

Users can also report a profile. Users are asked what was inappropriate and given four options: Underage, Inappropriate Content, Spam and No Reason. Users are then thanked for their reporting.

Users can block profiles. This will remove any of the history you and that account may have had.

Users can **turn off features** such as 'Knock Knock' as well as hide their 'Online Status'.

Safer Schools Advice

Top Tips for talking to your child about online risks

- Engage young people in a conversation **about keeping safe online and who they would talk to if someone made them feel uncomfortable online or if they see something online that worries or upsets them.**
- When talking to a child or young person, it's best not to mention the app or website by name. If you do, it is likely that the child or young person will check out the platform on their own if they haven't done so



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already. **Instead, ask them what kind of new sites/apps they are using with their friends.**

- **You should support children to understand the implications of sharing content that is explicit, particularly if this involves images or chats with other children.**
- You can also submit an online report to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP) by clicking [here](#).
- **If you have concerns about the immediate safety of a young person, you should contact the emergency services on 999 (emergency number)**

Please have a look at the following links which give advice about setting up parental controls.

<https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>

[YouTube: Setup iPhone Parental controls](#)

[YouTube: Setup Android Parental controls](#)

Please can we ask that you talk to your student using the safer school's advice detailed and ensure they are kept safe.

If you do have any questions or queries regarding this, please do let us know.

Kind regards

James Fuller (Headteacher)
Tracey Doig (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
Piers Mayfield (Internet Safety Lead)