

Is my child old enough?

Qooh.me



Get the answers to the questions you're asking about Qooh.me



Qooh.me is a social networking platform where users create profiles with photos and information about themselves. Users ask each other questions and can ask questions anonymously. Users can limit who they accept questions from or can leave themselves open to questions from anyone, including anonymous users. People can look at open profiles and ask questions without creating their own account. If a user has linked their Qooh.me account to another social networking account, like Facebook, users can find their Qooh.me name.

What do people do on Qooh.me?

Many of the questions are between school mates, and cover daily school happenings, including who likes who etc. Unkind questions and comments, e.g., “why does everyone hate you”, “why are you so ugly”, are often asked anonymously. There are many overtly sexual questions asked. Some users deflect the sexual questions and comments well, while others are not as skilled and engage in the sexual banter.

Qooh.Me encourages users to link their Facebook and Twitter accounts to their Qooh.me profile. If children do this they are linking a lot of information together making it easier for their identity and other information to be discovered and used.

What is Qooh.me doing to protect children?

Qooh.me's Terms of Service state that users must be 13 years or older. It advises that anonymous users cannot be traced. It does not provide a “Report abuse” function.

Qooh.me has an opening page that states there are ‘a lot of haters on this site’. It advises users to

1. Delete all offensive questions
2. Don't even bother saying “Say it to my face” Just Delete
3. Delete nasty questions/rumours about other people

Will banning my child from Qooh.me protect them? Are there other platforms like this?

Banning the use of sites or apps may not be the best option as new platforms are being developed all the time. It is more useful to talk to your child about the risks and your concerns and establish boundaries and expectations.

It is a good idea to explore the different social networking sites with your child and decide together which are the most appropriate to use.

It is also important that you explore the reporting and safety functions with them.

Talk about cyberbullying and inappropriate comments before they are confronted with it. Look at some of the questions on open profiles on Qooh.me and discuss the questions and how your child would respond (check the profiles are appropriate before exploring). Discuss that it is possible they will receive unpleasant comments from ‘anonymous’ users trying to upset them and sexual comments from other ‘anonymous’ users. Discuss how they will manage this and get them to agree to tell you or another trusted adult if it happens.

When should I be worried about my child?

If your child's behaviour changes at home and/or school you should talk to them. Examples of changed behaviour could include disinterest in things they used to like, seeming very unhappy and/or their sleep and eating is being impacted. Seek professional advice if necessary from a school counsellor, your GP or a psychologist. If your child has particular vulnerabilities, be vigilant about their contacts offline and online. Help them join groups out of school where they can find friends and support. Talk to the school and make sure they are supported.

Kids Helpline provides free online and phone counselling for children and young people. Visit www.kidshelpline.com.au or call 1800 55 1800.