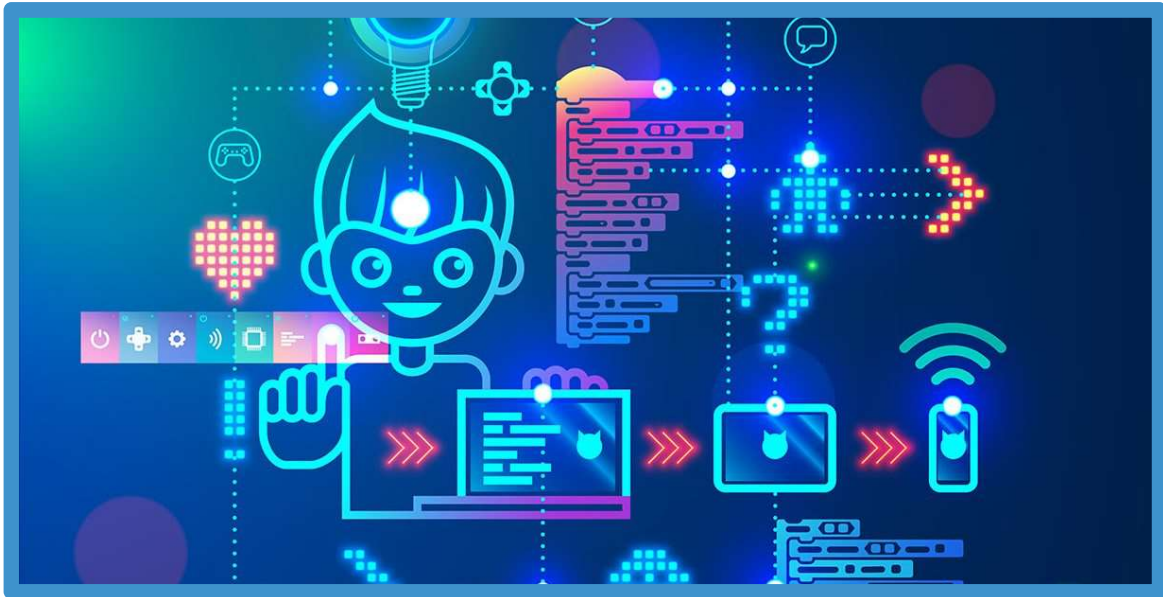


Produced by Chris Simpson | Digital Police Community Support Officer

Digital Safeguarding

Helping to keep you informed on the online world



Hi everyone, recently I've been asked about an app which has come to the attention of a number of schools within the county, the app is called **BeReal** and is becoming quite popular amongst teenagers at the moment. So to provide you with some further information about the app please.....

Read on.....



BeReal is a French social media/photo sharing app released in 2020, gaining popularity in 2022. It encourages users to post a photo of themselves and their lives without filters or editing every day at a different time.

The information provided below is taken from [What is the BeReal app? -- What parents need to know | Internet Matters](#)

Creating an account

When a user downloads the BeReal app, they must add their phone number, name and age. They then create a username and password to use the app. At this point, they are asked to create their first BeReal post to start seeing others' photos too.

Posting a photo

Then every day at a different time, the app alerts users that it's time to take a photo of what they are doing in the moment. Users have 2 minutes to take a photo and submit it to BeReal for others to see. The picture features whatever the user focused on as well as an image of the user in their current state in the top corner.

Before submitting the photo, they must choose an audience (friends only or everyone). Users can also share their location and save the image to their device. After the user posts the photo, they can add a caption. If the photo is shared outside of the standard two minute window, other users can see a note that tells them this.

You cannot see someone else's photo if you have not yet posted your own for the day.

Interacting with others

After a user posts their own image, they can see others' and react to them. To comment on someone's photo, users must be friends. However, if 'everyone' can see the photo, then anyone can react to it.

There are six standard emojis to react with along with an option to create a RealMoji. With RealMoji, users can create their own by taking a picture of themselves. For example, instead of the thumbs up emoji, a user could send themselves give a thumbs up.

Reporting inappropriate content

BeReal's Terms of Use encourages users to report any content that is sexual or pornographic, or related to hate speech, extremism, violence, suicide or self-harm. Photos, RealMojis and comments can all be reported if they fall into these categories or breach other items on the Terms of Use. This includes spam and advertising as well as bullying and discrimination. However, the company itself is a hosting company, which means it is not required to monitor the information others post.

What to watch out for

Like any app or platform where users might interact with strangers, BeReal has some features that parents should be aware of:

- **Pictures are unmoderated:** this means that if your child is scrolling through the Discovery feed, they may come across an item someone posted that features inappropriate content. Additionally, RealMojis could feature the same kind of content. It's important that users report this kind of content if seen for review.
- **No parental controls:** because of the nature of this app, there are minimal privacy controls and no parental controls. That doesn't mean it is unsafe. However, if your child is under the age of 13, they may not understand the nature of the app and misuse it.

- **Photos use the front and back camera:** although the user might point at one thing to photograph, the camera will also take a picture of the user themselves. It's important for young people to be aware of their surroundings to avoid posting anything they don't want online.
- **Some people are photographed without their permission:** scrolling through BeReal reveals images that users have taken that feature other people who may not be aware they are being photographed. This is an issue of consent that some young people might not consider.
- **It's easy to connect with strangers:** some young people may send or receive friend requests from strangers through the Discovery tab if they are sharing with everyone. Once another user is on the 'Friends' list, they are able to comment on photos. They may also receive notifications about your posts. However, users can delete others from this list very easily.

How to keep teens safe on BeReal

With any new [social media app](#), gaming platform or similar, it's important to discuss with your child the benefits and risks to ensure they are aware of how to get help where needed. Some conversation points might include:

- how to [report inappropriate content](#)
- the importance of considering their surroundings when taking photos. If they wouldn't like their photo posted without consent, they should extend the same courtesy to those around them
- who they are interacting with; have they met outside of BeReal?



Next issue we will take a look into online gaming..... Just in time for the Christmas Holidays.

See you next time!

