What You Need to Know about...

BeReal.

13+ Age Rating

The way children and young people use social media is changing. They want to engage with posts from their friends instead of 'suggested posts' or adverts for content they don't care about. As social media begins to turn away from filters and 'Instagrammable moments', one app in particular has seen a recent surge in popularity with children and young people
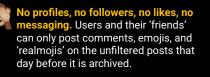
What is BeReal?

BeReal is a free social media app that asks users to take a quick snapshot of an 'authentic moment' during their day to share with their followers.

There are no filters or opportunities to stage the 'perfect photo' – what you see is what you get. It is formatted to make the user show their 'real self'.

This app was developed in France in 2020, but has seen a recent jump in popularity with over **40 million downloads** in 2022 and **20 million** daily active users.

'Realmojis' are selfie versions of emojis a.k.a. YOU get to be the emoji!

image © BeReal

How does it work?

BeReal only lets users post once a day. It notifies users of a two-minute 'posting window' via push notification. If they miss the window, they are marked as late.

No profiles, no followers, no likes, no messaging. Users and their 'friends' can only post comments, emojis, and 'realmojis' on the unfiltered posts that day before it is archived.

Focuses on the 'real' you. Users cannot use filters or other photo editing tools and must take a live photo using the app.

A 'discovery' page is used instead of a search page. This is a feed that lets users see others BeReal posts from all around the world.

Areas of Concern

Notification dependent so a young person could become easily distracted during inappropriate times of the day (e.g. while in school or during family dinner).

Persuasive design uses negative reinforcement if the app isn't used (limited viewing, labelling late posts) so it persuades users to prioritise it in their day.

Perception anxiety means a young person may begin to experience anxiety over what their friends will think of them on the app.

Time constraints like school, jobs, driving, and events mean a young person may not be able to access their phone in order to post.

Possible oversharing could happen in an attempt to be as 'real' as possible and not seem 'fake'.

Risks

Sense of urgency could mean a young person posts something they wouldn't normally post.

Personal information could be compromised in the 'candid' photos (like location, school, or extracurriculars).

Harmful interactions like bullying, exploitation, manipulation, peer abuse, and/or inappropriate behaviour could happen in the comments or with 'realmojis'.

Safety settings are lacking – there are no privacy features, no parental controls, and no blocking abilities on this platform. Just reporting!

The discovery page encourages interaction between complete strangers and could lead to communication on other apps with messaging functions (like Instagram or WhatsApp).

Top Tips for Parents and Carers

☑ **Discuss responsible sharing** - nothing too personal should go online.

☑ **Walkthrough image ownership together** - their image has worth!

☑ **Be an identity reminder** - an app does not define the type of person they are.

☑ **Talk about authenticity** - the difference between 'real' and 'too much information.'

☑ **Identify their Trusted Adults** - ask who they can trust if they are worried!

☑ **Protect their personal information** - how can they stay safe online?

FOMO WARNING

Any attempt to delete or skip a post results in the user not being able to see other posts