What is Kik Messenger?
Kik Messenger (Kik) is a free smartphone messenger application that allows users to send texts, pictures, videos and sketches. Kik uses a wireless connection or mobile data to send and receive messages.

What is the age classification for Kik?
The age classification for the messenger function is 13 years old. Kik also have a feature called 'Kik cards' which allows users to find images, videos and play games. This feature is restricted to users 17 years and older due to the inappropriate nature of some of the content available. It is important to know that these classification are set by the apps creator and are not overseen by an independent body.

What are the potential problems with Kik?
Kik is a popular application amongst young people of all ages. Issues arise when this app is used to transmit messages that are menacing, harrassing or offensive. In some cases this can see young people in breach of State and Commonwealth legislation. Ethically, young people need to be aware that the messages they send can have a significant impact on other people.

As Kik also has the capability for users to share images, it is important that your child is aware of the legal and ethical ramifications of sharing sexualised, provocative and nude images.

It is extremely important that parents and carers are aware of the issues associated with various apps and websites so that they can openly communicate with their child about their safe and responsible usage of Kik.

How can I block someone on my child’s Kik account?
It is really important that children know how to block and report on every social networking site or app that they might use. To block a user in Kik select Settings > Privacy > Block List, click the + to select the username of the person you want to block and select Yes or Block to confirm. This will make sure that all messages from this user will be hidden.

Note: A user will not be notified when they have been blocked.

How can I delete my child’s Kik account?
If after talking with your child about the ethical use of Kik and your family’s rules around technology, you may think it’s appropriate to delete the Kik account.

To delete a Kik account you require your child’s username and password. To delete the account select Settings > Your Account > Reset Kik Messenger. You then need to delete the Kik application from your child’s device. Ask a friend with Kik to send a message to your child’s old account and within a few days your child will receive an email (sent to the email address used to sign up for the account) from Kik saying you have unread messages. At the bottom of this email will be a deactivation link – click on this and within a few days your account will be deleted.

Note: If your child logs into their Kik account before you have clicked on the deactivation link the request will be cancelled and the account will remain active. It is important that you and your child agree to delete the account and understand the reasons behind that decision.

Open and supportive discussions around technology usage are vital in ensuring your child understands their responsibilities when using technology. Simply removing the technology is not the best response as it could potentially drive your child’s usage underground where there are fewer opportunities for you to support them.