

Kaspersky Safe Kids: Parental Control Certification Test

A test commissioned by Kaspersky and performed by AV-TEST GmbH. Date of the report: June 25, 2020

Executive Summary

In May and June 2020, AV-TEST performed a feature and website blocking test on Kaspersky Safe Kids Parental Control application for Windows, Android and Apples iOS. The test focused on website blocking, showing how well the user of Kaspersky Safe Kids is protected from categories of websites like “Adult Content”, “Gambling” or “Profanity”. Also included is a feature review, which evaluates how well the product provides guardians with tools to keep their wards safe when using modern technologies independently and unobserved.

A fundamental way to differentiate between parental control products is reviewing how well and effective non-desired websites are blocked. This is commonly done by selecting the undesired categories, which are then blocked from accessing. Kaspersky Safe Kids offers 14 categories for the user to select for blockage and it does a great job doing that. It is a frustration-free process browsing appropriate web content without the burden of much over-blocking for the user.

Overall, an average of 85% in Windows and 80% in Android of the websites tested for the categories are detected as potentially inappropriate. For example, the most undesirable category “Adult Content” managed to pass with an almost perfect 99.4% detection rate, achieved with less than 10% rate of over-blocking.

This feature review shows that Kaspersky Safe Kids provides numerous features sufficient to provide extensive and complete protection on all major operating systems. Covering all required areas such as harmful website blockage; Social Media control and Search Engine monitoring, to ensure only appropriate content can be accessed online; Time and schedule restrictions to foster a balanced amount of device use; Application Control, to restrict installation and usage of unsuitable apps; Reporting, to help guardians understand the children’s device interaction; Security and Tamper Protection, providing security and in digital environment securing devices and improving privacy.

Kaspersky Safe Kids also features YouTube Safe Search feature blocking search results by requests referring to prohibited categories like “Adult Content” or “Alcohol, tobacco, narcotics”.



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Methodology

Feature Review

The Feature review is performed on Windows 10, Android 8 and iOS 12.4.

For the feature test, all three operating systems are evaluated for the availability of the listed features. They are not tested for functionality but availability only.

Website Blockage

The following 14 categories available in Kaspersky Safe Kids “Restriction for website categories” have been enabled for blockage for this test.

- Adult content
- Alcohol, tobacco, narcotics
- Anonymous access systems
- Computer games
- E-tailers, banks, and payment systems
- Gambling, lotteries, sweepstakes
- Internet communication
- Job search
- Profanity
- News media
- Religions, religious associations
- Software, audio, video
- Violence
- Weapons, explosives, pyrotechnics

Each website is validated up to three times to accommodate changing website content. A website is considered blocked, when either the entire website or the unsuitable content is blocked.

Website Samples

Close to 10,000 websites have been selected for testing. 8,500 websites are used to evaluate how well the product blocks the defined categories. Just over 1,500 websites are used to cross-check the detection and determine the rate of possible over-blocking by the product. There are five languages represented in the website test set: English, German, French, Italian and Spanish.

Feature Test

The Feature test provides an overview of the basic functionality required for a complete parental control application, providing all options for managing a device and its user interaction. This may vary between different operating systems. Some operating systems provide more options for control than others do.

FEATURE REVIEW	Windows 10	Android 8	iOS 12.4
Search Engine Monitoring	+*	+*	+*
Time and Usage Duration Restriction	+	+	+
Application Control	+**	+**	+ ²
Social Media control	+***	+***	+***
Security - Tamper Protection	+	+	+
Security - Supervision and Control from other Device	+	+	+
Reporting - Central user interface	+	+	+
Reporting - Incidents Overview	+	+	+

* Bing, Google, Mail.ru, Yahoo!, and Yandex

** Choose apps yourself or by application categories

*** Facebook and VK

² By age restrictions (available for iOS in the app version 1.38.0.14 and later)

As presented in the table above, Kaspersky Safe Kids provides a variety of support for various parental control must-have features.

Search Engine Monitoring allows filtering inappropriate content of the most common search engines, using either the integrated safe search feature of the search engines or blocks the entire results page.

Time and Usage Duration Restriction manages the number of hours the user may interact with a device in a day, this is customizable to the day of the week. Also, it provides the option to set the timeframe of the day during which it is prohibited to use the device.

The Application Control in Kaspersky Safe Kids allows access to previously approved applications. Kaspersky Safe Kids goes a step further and provides the option to control the applications through provided categories. The user can decide to block an application category or generally prohibit all applications except those specifically selected application categories, such as online shopping, games or social networks. This is unfortunately limited to Windows and Android.

Facebook is still the biggest social network in the world. Kaspersky Safe Kids provides a report on the users' public Facebook activities. It also supports VK the social media predominant in Russian Federation.

To obstruct accidental or purposely circumventing the parental control application, Kaspersky implemented extensive tamper protections.

The settings management is done through a web interface to provide access for the guardian at any location and time not requiring direct access to the supervised devices.

The product is completed with a reporting system providing details on all events and possible infringements or attempts on such. It provides a wide range of information such as search history, website access and usage time.

Website protection

The website protection by a Parental Control application displays how well an application is capable of restricting access to age-inappropriate web sites. This is most often done by blocking pre-defined categories. The definition and scope of these categories vary by product and the focus set by that the vendor.

The table below shows how well Kaspersky Safe Kids blocks the provided categories and includes a cross-site reference for webpages, which did not fit into the provided categories and therefore should not be blocked.

Categories of Age inappropriate Webpages	Windows	Android
Adult content	99.4%	99.1%
Alcohol, tobacco, narcotics	93.9%	92.3%
Anonymous access systems	80.9%	77.6%
Computer games	86.7%	85.6%
E-tailers, banks, and payment systems	92.6%	84.3%
Gambling, lotteries, sweepstakes	98.5%	98.1%
Internet communication	93.1%	89.0%
Job search	76.9%	73.1%
News media	74.4%	68.8%
Religions, religious associations	72.3%	70.2%
Software, audio, video	80.8%	76.5%
Violence	87.5%	85.4%
Weapons, explosives, pyrotechnics	87.4%	79.3%
Profanity*	54.9%	31.2%
Average	86.5%	83.0%
Falsely detected	9.2%	8.4%

* Not included in the overall average

Kaspersky Safe Kids provides 14 different block categories to choose from. Detailed definitions for each category and what they entail are provided on the Kaspersky webpage¹.

The overall average for the tested categories is a very respectable 86% in Windows and 83% in Android with a limited over-blocking detection rate of around 9% and 8% respectively. Excluded from the average but included as additional information in the table is the block rate for the Profanity category. This is because of the ambiguity of what might be considered profanity.

¹ <https://support.kaspersky.com/12264>

There are some differences between the results of the two tested operating systems, which is due to varying technologies used and to some degree the difference in desktop to mobile content. The difference is a few percentages only.

By far the best block rate is achieved for the “Adult content” category, the category is mostly associated with pornography, which likely is the category parents and guardians are most concerned with. The other four categories with more than 90% detection rate are “Alcohol, tobacco and narcotics”, “E-tailers, banks, and payment systems”, which is e-commerce, the ‘Gambling, lotteries, sweepstakes’ category and “Internet communications”, which include the like of forums, boards and chats.

More than 80% of sites are detected for five categories. Those categories are “Anonymous access systems”, which include websites aimed at hiding internet presence and anonymizing access to internet content; “Computer Games”; “Software, audio and video”, which doesn’t just include video and audio streaming and software downloads, but also websites with potentially illegal content such as torrent indexes; “Violence”, such as amateur violence and generally distasteful videos and also legal sports considered violent such as mixed martial arts; “Weapons, explosives, pyrotechnics”, which includes everything related to weapons from sales over depiction to construction and their display.

The remaining three categories just missed the 80% block rate. Those are “Job search”, “News media” and “Religions, religious associations”.

Certificate: APPROVED Parental Control Software



Criteria

The parental control products by Kaspersky for the three different operating systems were reviewed for features as well as the general ability to block categories as advertised in Windows and Android. The iOS system has not been tested for webpage blocking due to technical limitations but bound to have similar block rates to Android and Windows.

To receive the AV-TEST APPROVED Parental Control SOFTWARE certificate it is necessary to fulfil all the feature requirements as well as achieving adequate blocking results without over-blocking non-affected content websites.

Awarded

Kaspersky Safe Kids is awarded the AV-TEST APPROVED Parental Control Software certificate in 2020 for all three operating systems.

Conclusion

Kaspersky Safe Kids for Windows, Android and iOS convinces by a wide variety of features. All the tools needed to accompany children and young teenagers in their journey through the world wide web are handed to the user.

The well implemented Application Control and Time Restriction limit the usage of the device and allow some offline time. A clever reporting system provides a detailed overview of activities.

Independently from the device, the web-based management system allows access from anywhere. A reliable website restriction of inappropriate websites provides as save internet use.

For those reasons, all three products achieved an APPROVED Parental Control Software certificate in 2020.