

A Guide to Getting Started With Bark for Schools

How to Get the Most From Our Online Safety Services



bark.us/schools



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I: Downloading Bark for Schools

Congratulations on signing up for Bark for Schools! Your dedication to online safety will help you protect your students as they use their school-issued accounts. This guide will provide you with step-by-step instructions for getting Bark up and running.

If your school uses G Suite:

1. Log in to your school's [G Suite Admin Console](#).
2. Navigate to Marketplace apps.
3. Search for Bark.
4. Select "Domain Install" for the domain the students are on.
5. Proceed to accept menu prompts for global permissions.
6. Launch Bark from the app or visit bark.us/schools and use G Suite to log in.

If your school uses Microsoft 365:

1. Click here to sign up for Bark for Schools on Office365: [Launch Setup](#)
2. Sign in with an administrator account of the Office365 domain.
3. Accept the permissions needed for Bark by clicking the Accept button at the bottom of the box
4. Choose the account you'd like to use as the first admin account.
5. Accept the permissions by selecting Accept at the bottom.
6. Proceed through the onboarding prompts. You can always change the settings presented during onboarding at a later time.
7. After onboarding is complete, you may see a message about Bark syncing. After the sync completes, you will see the Bark for Schools administrator dashboard.

Note: *If your school uses both G Suite and Microsoft 365 and you want to install Bark on both, please contact us at schools@bark.us.*

Relevant Help Articles

- [How to Set Up Bark for Schools for G Suite](#)
- [How to Set Up Bark for Schools for Microsoft 365](#)

II: Guided Onboarding

Now that you've installed Bark for Schools, it's time to complete your initial set-up. The following steps will enable Bark for Schools to sync with your student accounts. Afterward, your team will begin to receive alerts for potential issues. Remember, each of these settings can be changed at any time.

1. [Log in](#) to your Bark for Schools Dashboard

This URL will be where your staff accesses your Bark for Schools account to manage and review alerts.

2. Tell us about yourself

Input your school's physical address (or district administrative address, if multiple schools are in one domain) as well as emergency contact information for the user setting up Bark. Bark for Schools was designed for technical teams to have minimal involvement in daily monitoring, so we highly recommended that you add your review team members as the primary points of contact for student alerts.

3. Configure sensitivity settings

Bark allows you to adjust the sensitivity of our detection algorithms to better serve your school's needs. If you decide that you're getting too many or too few alerts in a particular category, you can easily adjust its detection sensitivity from your dashboard.

4. Enable Organizational Units

Select the Organizational Units (OUs) you would like Bark to monitor. Turning on top-level directories will not automatically switch on subdirectories, which means each unit needs to be enabled individually.

It's also important to note that when a group or OU is enabled, Bark begins monitoring immediately. Alerts can be detected within minutes, triggering alerts in the dashboard. Email alerts are enabled for the user installing Bark by default — this can be changed in the Profile section, which is covered later in this guide.

5. Invite reviewers

Adding reviewers is the most important step in the set-up process. It ensures that the people working closest to students will receive notifications in urgent situations. Additionally, adding multiple reviewers makes managing Bark easier — alerts are distributed more evenly so each reviewer has fewer to process.

Before inviting reviewers to Bark, it's important to educate them about how Bark works. We're happy to train any of your reviewers on our system and process.

Reviewers can be principals, vice principals, counselors, teachers, and other members of the faculty, staff, or administration responsible for student safety. In general, reviewers will need to be responsible for:

- › Reviewing the dashboard daily
- › Receiving alerts from their assigned OUs
- › Following the school/district's response plan for urgent alerts

6. Activate Parent Portal

Parent Portal enables you to share the responsibility of managing urgent alerts with parents. Here are the resources and launch details:

- › Check out our [help articles](#).
- › Launch via [.csv](#) or connect through [Clever](#).
- › Adjust settings for [severity and timeframe](#) for parent alerts.
- › Send an [introduction email](#) to parents.

Relevant Help Articles

- [How to Launch Parent Portal](#)
- [How to Edit Profile Settings](#)
- [How to Adjust Sensitivity for Alerts](#)
- [How to Turn On/Off OUs or Active Directories](#)

III: Dashboard Reporting

The Bark for Schools dashboard is the first page reviewers see when logging into Bark. It displays information about all monitored student activities and allows users to make custom reports.

Standard Practice

Create a report with a customized date range to help you see if there has been a rise in issue count or type. You can also see which platforms produce the highest number of student activities and alerts.

Best Practice

Use the dashboard to view the effectiveness of behavioral intervention by student, class, department, or graduating year. You can also determine, for example, if your digital anti-cyberbullying initiatives are making a difference.

Relevant Help Articles

→ [A Reviewer's Guide to Bark for Schools](#)

IV: Reviewing Alerts

Once you begin receiving alerts, there are several ways to filter the data, including by:

- **Issue type:** Cyberbullying, Sexual content, Depression, etc.
- **Groups:** OUs, Active Directories, etc.
- **Student name**
- **Platform:** G Suite (Gmail, Chrome, Drive) or Microsoft 365 (Outlook, OneDrive)
- **Status:** “Needs Review” or “Reviewed”
- **Other:** “Review later”, “Severe alerts”, or "Emergency only"
- **Date Range:** Fully customizable or select a pre-set range

Within each issue there is an option to “Send to reviewer” and “Send to parent” with a note, as needed.

At the bottom of each issue, there is also a section for letting Bark know if the issue was helpful or not. Leaving feedback is important and helps us learn what schools are seeking in their alerts.

Standard Practice

Log in to the dashboard to review alerts frequently throughout the day. Being proactive allows schools to get the most out of Bark and possibly catch an issue early before it escalates.

Best Practice

Have a school crisis team in place that can triage intervention for escalated alerts that require immediate attention.

Relevant Help Articles

→ [A Reviewer’s Guide to Bark for Schools](#)

V: Our Web Filter

Bark for Schools is proud to offer free web filtering to schools. We offer a DNS filter for an on-site, network-wide solution, as well as a Chrome extension web filter that enforces policies wherever the student is logged in to their school account.

DNS Web Filter Functions:

- Whitelist/blacklist specific websites
- Whitelist/blacklist entire web categories
- Reporting on general network traffic
- Display top visited sites
- Display top blocked sites
- Display requests-by-day chart
- Reporting on IP-specific traffic
- Safe search
- Youtube restricted mode

Chrome Extension Web Filter Functions:

- Whitelist/blacklist specific websites
- Whitelist/blacklist entire web categories
- Reporting on Organizational Units
- Reporting on individual students
- Display top visited sites
- Display top blocked sites
- Display requests-by-day chart
- Account-level monitoring

Relevant Help Articles

- [FAQs: Bark for Schools Web Filtering](#)
- [How to Set Up DNS Web Filtering](#)
- [How to Set Up Chrome Web Filtering](#)
- [Web Browsing Troubleshooting](#)

VI: Setting Up a Review Team

Schools will need to add, remove, or update users on their review teams as needed. Bark for Schools+ customers will also need to set up their emergency contacts and assign the categories they will be alerted on.

Adding reviewers who are closest to students is important because:

- These are the people who will best know how to handle the students.
- It distributes Bark alerts so that reviewers are only getting notifications on what they own.
- The distributed workload can reduce reaction times.

For example, if the principal of a high school only has the high school OUs/groups assigned to them, he or she would only be presented with and responsible for these alerts — not those from the greater system.

School Safety Teams

School safety teams are a valuable component of a student safety plan and usually consist of counselors, school psychologists, social workers, and other school personnel. Bark for Schools integrates well with school safety and crisis teams.

Super Users

By default, each school has one “super user.” This is the individual who initially sets up Bark. Generally speaking, this is someone in IT with G Suite / Microsoft 365 administrator permissions. Super users get access to set-up menus that help your school fully optimize all of our features. To add additional super users, please place a request in the support window or at schools@bark.us.

Single Sign-On

Bark uses a single sign-on method — no user is required to enter a password for Bark. Once they click the link in their email, their account is activated, and they can access the dashboard at bark.us/schools.

Standard Practice

Add principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors for all monitored groups and set them up to receive alerts. Redundancy is important in case someone is out unexpectedly.

Best Practice

Set up a school safety team and a school crisis team to receive alerts from Bark and have them work collaboratively with counselors and other professionals close to the student body. Create an after-hours response plan or consider implementing extra support solutions such as Parent Portal and Bark for Schools+.

Relevant Help Articles

→ [How to Invite Reviewers](#)

VII: Bark Alerts Explained

What to Expect from Bark Alerts

We use a three-tiered triage method to alert schools to potential alerts based on severity so they can take appropriate action. While there are examples listed below, we look for anything inappropriate or potentially harmful to a child.

Issue

Schools are notified of alerts from their dashboard.

Examples include:

- Mean-spirited teasing
- References in anatomy and biology homework
- Messages about experiencing depression
- Conversations that include sexual content

Severe Issue

Severe alerts trigger email notifications and appear on the dashboard with a **!**.

Examples include:

- Hateful threats and provocations
- A child sending or receiving nude photos
- Diary entries about cutting
- Messages about a child using drugs

Critically Severe Issue

Critically severe alerts trigger emails, and they appear on the dashboard with a **!**.

Bark for Schools+ subscribers receive a phone call and text message.

Examples include:

- Threats of imminent harm to self or others
- An email draft of a suicide note
- Google searches like “how to die by suicide”
- Threats of violence against the school

Relevant Help Articles

→ [A Parent Response Toolkit](#)

VIII: Share Responsibility With Parent Portal

Parent Portal lets schools share responsibility for student alerts with families after school, on weekends, and during holidays. These are times when students still use their school-issued accounts, but your administration might not be available to respond to urgent alerts.

Launching Parent Portal

From your Parent Portal settings page, you can choose two ways to sync contacts. With Clever, we only require the student and parent email addresses. For .csv upload files, student addresses must be listed on the same row as the addresses of their parent or guardian. (When families have multiple children at the same school, parent/guardian addresses should appear next to each child).

[Connect your school with Clever](#)

- Clever allows you to set a date to send parent invitations for every student.

[Upload emails in .csv format](#)

- With a spreadsheet, choose exactly which parents to invite to Parent Portal.

Resources for Parents

Along with launching Parent Portal, equipping parents with the tools for acting on alerts they receive is vitally important. Bark has developed our [Parents Response Toolkit](#) to help meet the needs of parents who need help with recommended actions after receiving alerts.

Educating Parents About Digital Dangers

Tech nights are a great way for parents to learn more about what could occur online and how they can best protect their children. Our [Tech Night resource page](#) provides information, videos, handouts, and more to help you host a successful gathering.

Many parents have children receiving accounts for the first time at schools. We've got those parents covered with our [Parent Guides to Student Accounts](#). These help parents with what to expect on school-issued accounts.

What Parents Can Expect After Launch

Our [After the Invite](#) article outlines what families can expect from the first day of monitoring through the ongoing management of their child’s school-issued account.

Standard Practice

From the Parent Portal settings page, set time to “After Hours” and severity to “Severe Only” while school is in session. For holidays, weekends, and breaks, set time to “Any Time” and severity to “All”.

Best Practice

Prior to launching Parent Portal, announce to parents what Bark is and how it will benefit students. Next, send a letter to parents explaining what Parent Portal is and how it works. Lastly, upload the list of parents in your dashboard to launch the program. To ensure full coverage of the student body, upload a new list to Bark quarterly or any time new students arrive.

Relevant Help Articles

- [Parent Portal — Getting Started](#)
- [Parent Portal — Best Practices for Administrators](#)

IX: Premium Support With Bark for Schools+

Bark for Schools+ is an upgraded, paid service that provides your school with 24/7 contact by phone in emergency situations, alert customization, image removal, and imminent threat detection enhancements.

Getting Started

Adding Bark for Schools+ to your safety suite is easy — just [submit a request](#) for a personalized quote.

Onboarding

Upon finalizing enrollment into our Bark for Schools+ program, school success will reach out to schedule an appointment for onboarding. You can also schedule an onboarding with us [here](#).

What does Bark for Schools+ include?

Bark for Schools+ was designed with student insights and imminent threat protection in mind. With this upgrade, highly trained school safety specialists will review all severe alerts and personally reach out to your review team by phone, text, and email 24/7/365.

This upgrade will also add:

- Customized notifications by category
- Image Removal software (G Suite only)

Standard Practice

Add after-hours reviewers to receive emergency calls and activate Parent Portal to ensure the parents/guardians are also contacted.

Best Practice

Set up safety and crisis teams to be responsible for alerts 24/7 or after hours. Further customize these teams to receive certain alerts by category and establish a call order priority.

Relevant Help Articles

→ [Bark for Schools+: FAQs](#)

→ [Bark for Schools+](#)

X: Monitoring and Sensitivity Settings

From the Settings page, you'll be able to turn on Bark's monitoring service and edit alert sensitivity.

Monitoring

After installing Bark, monitoring will not begin until the school turns on the OUs/groups they wish to monitor. Once that switch is flipped, the effect is immediate — though it could take up to 24 hours for our cadence of issue identification to fully normalize.

Sensitivity

Bark allows you to adjust the sensitivity of our detection algorithms so you can tailor your alerts to the needs of your school. It's important to note that a more relaxed setting may result in missed alerts, while a more strict setting may result in false positives. You can adjust alert settings for:

- Bullying
- Violence
- Drug/alcohol-related content
- Depression
- Sexual content
- Self-harm or suicidal content
- Profanity

Standard Practice

Have a list of reviewers ready before enabling OUs/groups for monitoring.

Best Practice

Prepare a safety team that will take ownership of managing alerts from Bark and integrate it into your safety intervention plan before rollout. Discuss the types of alerts that are important to your school or district.

Relevant Help Articles

→ [How to Adjust Sensitivity for Alerts](#)

XI: Profile Settings

Super users and reviewers can edit the following fields in their profiles:

- First name
- Last name
- Phone number

Note: Only the super user can disable/enable email notifications for reviewers. By default, everyone except the super user has email notifications enabled. We do not recommend disabling email alerts, as doing so could result in missing potential alerts.

Standard Practice

After adding reviewers, pointing them to one of our [weekly webinars](#) for an overview of the product.

Best Practice

After adding reviewers, scheduling training for them with our [school success team](#).

Relevant Help Articles

→ [How to Edit Profile Settings](#)

XII: Support for Admins

In addition to our technical support chat window (located at the bottom right of each screen on the Bark for Schools dashboard), there are numerous ways we can help you get to the information you need.

Talk to a Person

Bark for Schools is available for support Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. EST to 5 p.m. EST. Just email schools@bark.us to set up a time to chat.

Help Articles

Use these [Help articles](#) to learn how to install Bark, set up reviewers, launch Parent Portal, and much more.

Facebook Group

Our [Facebook group](#) is to open all education professionals seeking to join the conversation about online safety in schools.

The Bark Blog

Visit the [Bark Blog](#) to access new content and engaging ways to educate parents and educators about social media trends, new apps, online dangers, and more.

Relevant Help Articles

→ [A Reviewer's Guide: Bark for Schools](#)

XIII: Refer a School

If you know of colleagues at other schools that could benefit from Bark's free online safety services, here's a sample email to help you start the conversation:

Dear [name],

We have been using Bark for Schools' free monitoring program to alert us to potentially harmful alerts on student accounts. It works with both G Suite and Microsoft 365 by scanning emails, chats, and files for signs of digital dangers.

I wanted to let you know about Bark because I think it would be very helpful at your school, as well. The set-up is quick and easy and there are no strings attached — Bark is free as a way to give back to school communities.

Check out their [website](#) to learn more about how they're helping protect more than 2,800 districts across the U.S.

Thanks,

[Your name]

Relevant Help Articles

→ [A Reviewer's Guide: Bark for Schools](#)



@barktechnologies



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Visit bark.us/schools to learn more.