Canva Education: Image Filters and Age-Based Restrictions

Briefing note for the ARPS Tech in Ed parent working group. Compiled from Canva's published documentation and independent reviews, October 26, 2026.

Summary

Canva does not publish a distinct "under 13" image filter. The stock image and graphics filtering applies to every Canva Education account regardless of student age. What is age-gated is access to apps and generative AI features, which are blocked for students by default and can only be unlocked by a school administrator. Under Canva's Terms of Use, children under 13 may only use Canva at all through Canva Education (Terms of Use).

1. Image library filtering (applies to all Education users)

Canva describes a three-layer system on its schools and districts page:

- A set of blocked search terms.
- A machine learning platform that scans the library of millions of photos and graphics to identify, flag, and remove access to "not safe for school" content for Canva Education users.
- Human content moderators who review the collections against Canva's "not safe for school" definitions.

Source: Canva for schools and districts (FAQ)

In a written Q&A reproduced by TCEA (Texas Computer Education Association), Canva stated that image search results are filtered and restricted for Canva Education users by default, and that in some cases Canva can provide an even more restrictive content environment for a school or district based on its concerns. Canva does not document this as a self-service setting or as an age threshold; it is something a district requests.

Source: TCEA, Should Districts Block Canva? The K-12 Control Question

2. What is actually age-gated: apps and generative AI

Canva's Help Center sets out the Education defaults, managed by admins under Settings > Apps:

- AI connectors are blocked for all Education users.
- Generative AI apps and social media apps are allowed for teachers and blocked for students.
- Students under 18 need administrator approval to use third-party apps.
- When a student tries to open a restricted app, they see a banner telling them to contact their teacher or admin.

Source: Canva Help Center, App Restrictions for Students

Settings that show a lock icon in a student's privacy menu are either managed by the school team or restricted by an age-based policy, and the student cannot change them. One school district's help page summarizes the practical effect: students under 13 may not be able to see certain apps, including AI apps or extensions, and there is no workaround.

Sources: Screenwise, The Canva Safety Playbook · Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education, Canva for Education

3. AI prompt safeguards ("Canva Shield")

For the AI tools that admins may choose to enable, Canva's 2023 education launch announced automatic review of input prompts to prevent inappropriate content, more than 10,000 words blocked from AI prompts, and reporting options for unwanted terms or content. Canva also states that student content in Canva Education is never used to train AI models.
Source: Canva Newsroom, Introducing Canva's biggest education launch

4. Caveats from independent reviewers

- TCEA notes that even with content moderation, search systems are not perfect, and suggests districts may decide elementary students should use teacher-provided templates and assets only, with search reserved for older students under supervision.
- Bark's parent review says Canva for Education filters inappropriate stock images and has guardrails not available to regular accounts, but still allows collaboration and website creation, and offers no parental controls.

Sources: TCEA · Bark, Is Canva Safe? A Review for Parents

5. Questions for the district

The levers a district controls are not visible from outside. Worth asking ARPS tech staff:

- Which app categories (generative AI, third-party apps, AI connectors) are enabled for K-5 students?
- Are external sharing and publishing (public links, Canva Sites) disabled for students?
- Has the district requested Canva's more restrictive library environment for elementary accounts?
- How was parental consent obtained for students under 13, as Canva's terms require?

All sources

Canva for schools and districts: https://www.canva.com/education/schools/
Canva Help Center: App Restrictions for Students: https://www.canva.com/help/app-restrictions-c4e/
Canva Terms of Use (age requirement): https://www.canva.com/policies/terms-of-use/
Canva Newsroom: Canva Shield announcement:
https://www.canva.com/newsroom/news/canva-for-education-new-tools/
TCEA: Should Districts Block Canva?:
https://blog.tcea.org/should-districts-block-canva-the-k-12-control-question/
Screenwise: The Canva Safety Playbook:
https://screenwiseapp.com/agents/the-canva-safety-playbook-locking-down-apps-sharing-and-team?view=human
Bark: Is Canva Safe? A Review for Parents: https://www.bark.us/app-reviews/apps/canva-app-review/
Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education: Canva for Education: https://www.mhcbe.ab.ca/canva