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WhatsApp: group chats

You must be at least 16 years old to register for and use WhatsApp.

WhatsApp is a free messaging app that allows you to send messages and videos.

Group chats

One of the main features is that it has a Group chat function that are set up by one person (who is the admin). Everybody in the group, even if they're not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see all messages within that group. *If your child is added to a group with someone that they have previously blocked, that person can still see their messages and send them messages within the group.* You can leave a group chat at any point so talk to your child and encourage them to leave any chat that makes them feel uncomfortable.

Change Group Privacy settings

In settings, you can change who can add your child to groups, for example, you can change the settings to 'my contacts', which means that only those in your child's contacts can add them to a group.

Online Bullying

WhatsApp has been used in instances of online bullying, for example sending nasty messages or sharing images of other children without their permission to embarrass them. It's important to have regular chats with your child about their online life and that they understand that they must talk to you or another trusted adult if they are being bullied. This is a helpful article from BullyingUK which talks about what to do if you are being bullied online:

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network/>

Blocking/Reporting

If your child is using WhatsApp, then show them how to block and report a contact. You can find out how here:

<https://faq.whatsapp.com/android/security-and-privacy/how-to-block-and-unblock-a-contact>

Be Kind

How we behave online should be the same as how we behave face to face. This YouTube video from Dr Linda Papadopoulos tells us how we can encourage our children to be kind online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BqKi3J7g6Q>

Further information

- <https://www.whatsapp.com/safety/>

What is Discord?

Discord is a social networking app that is used by gamers to **chat to each other**. There can be in app purchases through Discord's premium subscription service. The minimum age to access Discord is 13.

How does it work?

Discord is made up of servers, which are spaces for groups of friends to chat, upload files and share images etc. Anybody can set up a server and they can either be public or private. Users can video call and send direct messages to other individuals or to groups of up to 9 people. By default, all direct messages are scanned and explicit content is blocked.

How can I make it safer?

Discord have created this article, which outlines four steps to creating a safer account, including how to block users.

<https://discord.com/safety/360043857751-Four-steps-to-a-super-safe-account>

How is it linked to other games?

Children who play online games such as Fortnite may use Discord to chat about the game (rather than the game's own chat facility).

What do I need to be aware of?

We always encourage you to chat to your child to see why they use different apps/websites and ensure that they know how to block users and what to do if they see any inappropriate content. It's important to be aware that Discord does include video/voice calling which cannot be filtered.

Discord is used by an array of users and therefore adult content can be found on Discord as well as inappropriate language. Discord have produced this article which answers common questions:

- <https://discord.com/safety/360044149591-Answering-parents'-and-educators'-top-questions>

Further information

- Discord app safety – What parents need to know:
<https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/esafety-news/parents-guide-to-discord-on-how-your-kids-can-use-it-safely/>
- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/discord-everything-you-need-know-about-chat-service>
- <https://discord.com/safety>

In-game spending tips

Internet Matters and Barclays Digital Eagles have created this 30 second YouTube video to support you in talking to your child about in-game spending. Watch it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N060J59YKBI&list=PLJSbhHkqYnrSHEmsr8jwYk7pdJsoHZQcR>