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WhatsApp

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.

least 16 years old to use WhatsApp. WhatsApp is an app that allows you to send messages and videos.

Group chats: One of the key features is that WhatsApp has a group chat function that are set up by one person (the admin). Everybody in the group, even if they are 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.*

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

Location sharing: If switched on, then when you share images/videos, it will show the location of where they were taken. This can be switched off in your phone settings. There is also a Live Location feature which allows you to share your location. Talk to your child about when this would be appropriate to use but also the potential danger of sharing their location, for example with strangers.

Blocking/Reporting: Show your child how to block and report.

Online Bullying: WhatsApp has been used in instances of online bullying, e.g. to send nasty messages or share images of other children without their permission. It is 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: <https://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying/what-to-do-if-you-re-being-bullied-on-a-social-network/>

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/>

Sendit

Have you heard of Sendit? It allows users to play games together and links with Snapchat. Although rated as 12+ by the App store, **Sendit state on their website that the app was made for 17+**. If you know that your child is using this app then you can contact Sendit to ask them to disable their account. The app does contain in-app purchases ranging from £0.89 to £25.99 so ensure payment details are not stored/accessible on your child's device to avoid unexpected bills.

Further information

<https://www.getsendit.com/parents>



Online Challenges/hoaxes

“The internet and social media provide a perfect hoaxes about challenges or trends that are said young people to be spread quickly. You should challenge or scare story is a hoax. Generally hoax and providing direct warnings is not fuelled by unhelpful publicity, usually generated be based on confirmed or factual occurrences or young people.”



platform for hoaxes, especially to be harmful to children and carefully consider if a speaking, naming an online helpful. Concerns are often on social media, and may not any real risk to children and

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes> [Accessed 27.6.22].

Reassure your child that challenges that suggest that bad stuff will happen if they do not complete the tasks are not real.

It is important to talk to your child about hoaxes and challenges that may appear on the internet. Some challenges are fun and provide no risk, however there will be challenges that are risky/dangerous. Your child may see others complete certain challenges online without being harmed and therefore may want to repeat them **and not weigh up the potential risks to themselves**. Make sure they know that they should talk to you about what they see online, particularly if they plan to try a challenge or if something scares or upsets them.

The following links will provide you with further information as well as content to help you talk to your child:

- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/articles/theres-a-viral-scare-online-what-should-i-do/>
- TikTok have produced this resource to help you talk to your child about challenges and the potential risks: <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en-sg/online-challenges/>.