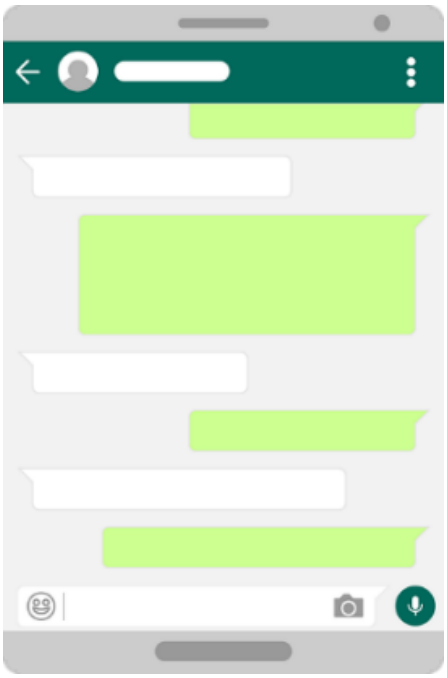
Knowsley
City Learning Centres

Online Safety Newsletter Feb 2025

WhatsApp



Users should be at least 13 years old to use WhatsApp. We frequently receive reports of children not using WhatsApp appropriately, such as sharing images to embarrass others, sending hurtful messages, spreading rumours, or excluding people from group chats to make them feel left out.

Since WhatsApp lacks parental controls, it is important to think about whether it is really the right platform for your child. For example, you should consider if your child has the critical thinking skills to recognise bullying. Furthermore, do they understand how to manage peer pressure and refrain from joining in on harmful behaviour?

If your child is using WhatsApp, it is crucial to have regular conversations with them. Talk about who they are chatting with, encourage them to think carefully about the messages they send and how they might be perceived by others. Finally, make sure to model good digital behaviour yourself, as children often learn by observing the adults around them.

What should I be aware of if my child is using WhatsApp?

- **Group chats:** Everyone within a group, even if they are not one of your child's 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 chat. If your child is using WhatsApp, check their group privacy settings to see who can add them to groups. Ensure your child understands that they can leave a chat at any time, and they know how to report users. Find out more here: https://faq.whatsapp.com/424124173736394
- **Inappropriate content:** users can be exposed to content that is not suitable for their age.
- **Location sharing:** talk to your child about when this would be appropriate to use and the potential danger of sharing their location.
- **Chat lock/secret code:** users can lock chats as well as apply a secret code setting so a chat does not appear in the main chat.
- **Blocking/Reporting:** Show your child how to block and report other users. Find out how here: https://faq.whatsapp.com/1142481766359885/

Further information

Internet Matters have produced a how to guide available here:
https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/whatsapp-safety-a-how-to-guide-for-parents/

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into.
Current as of the date released 01.02.25.

Roblox

You may have seen the recent investigation about Roblox by Hindenburg, which highlights very worrying concerns about the content that can be seen on Roblox, even when users have listed their age as under 13. You can read the full report here: https://hindenburgresearch.com/roblox/

What is Roblox?

Roblox is a platform consisting of a collection of games. Players can either create games or play games that other users have created. It is free to download (however subscription options and in game/app purchases are available) and can be played across numerous devices. **A lot of the content is user generated, which may mean not all games will be suitable for your child to view/play.** If your child is playing Roblox, it is important to monitor what your child is accessing and set up appropriate parental controls.

PEGI rate Roblox with a Parental Guidance label, this is because it is difficult to rate due to the huge level of user generated content.

What should I be aware of?

Game content – as mentioned, users create games so the content/themes may not be appropriate for your child.
Chat Facility - Players can chat to each other. You can turn communication off completely or add restrictions, such as only communicate with friends.
Virtual Currency - Players can buy Robux (their virtual currency) to buy in-game upgrades or accessories.

Age Categories

This article discusses the difference in accounts based on age (under age 13 and aged 13 – 17): https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/30428367965460-What-happens-as-I-get-older-on-Roblox

Roblox accounts with Parental privileges - NEW

Roblox have just launched a new system to manage your child's experience on Roblox through 'Roblox accounts with parent privileges.' The new format allows you to view and update parental controls from your own device. Controls include setting content restrictions, managing screen time and setting a spending limit. You can find out more here:
https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/30428248050068-Parental-Controls-FAQ

Content Labels - NEW

Roblox have begun labeling experiences based on the type of content rather than by age. You can set limits on which content labels are accessible in parental controls. The labels are Minimal, Mild, Moderate and Restricted. You can find descriptions of each here: https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/30428310121620-Parental-Controls-Overview

How do I report abuse and block users?

This article outlines the different reporting facilities:
https://en.help.roblox.com/hc/en-us/articles/203312410-How-to-Report-Rule-Violations

What else can I do?

Chat to your child regularly about what they are doing online and as always, remind your child that if anything is worrying them then they should talk to you or another trusted adult.