

Sharing personal information...

From an early age, children in school are taught the importance of not sharing personal information online. This includes WhatsApp.

Please support your children in not sharing -

- their name, phone number, location and school name
- their home address
- their date of birth
- other people's personal information (family/friends)
- photos of themselves

We encourage children to consider what they would feel happy sharing with a stranger on the street. Hopefully, they wouldn't hand out their mobile number. Sharing this information online is the same as it could potentially find its way into the hands of people you do not know.

Learning together...

If you are unsure of all that WhatsApp offers and holds, it is a good idea to sit down with your child and explore it together. By learning side by side, you both become aware of the possibilities and potential risks.

It also gives you a chance to talk about privacy settings and agree some rules together.

If you have any concerns or would like any further support please speak to your class teacher.

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WhatsApp is a free app that facilitates users in sending encrypted messages to each other. All that is needed is an internet connection. Users have the availability to send written messages, images, videos, voice notes and a wide range of emojis and meems. WhatsApp also allows both audio and video calls between people who have the app.

Keeping Children Safe

The minimum age restriction of users for WhatsApp is 16 years old. This is an increase since 2018 from the previous guidance of 13 years old.

Despite this age recommendation, many young people side-step this and continue with verifying an account of their own.

If your child has access to WhatsApp, here are some informative links to support you -

[7 Tips for Parent WhatsApp Groups - Exploring your mind](#)

[WhatsApp: A guide for parents \(net-aware.org.uk\)](#)

[WhatsApp: a guide for parents and carers | Parent Zone](#)



WhatsApp Risks

Reporting Concerns -

There is no direct way to report a user or specific abuse other than to block them on WhatsApp.

To **BLOCK** a contact when the conversation is open -

- Click on the ... at the top right of the screen
- Select 'More'
- Select 'Block'

Blocked contacts will no longer be able to see your profile or contact you.

If your child does have access to their own WhatsApp profile, encourage them to talk to you and other adults they trust about any concerns they have or situations which make them feel uncomfortable.

Group Chats -

The group chat function allows up to 256 people to chat in one conversation. Each group is set up by one person (known as the 'admin') and they are the only people who can add or remove participants and change the chat title and photo.

Users can however remove themselves from chats they are added to.

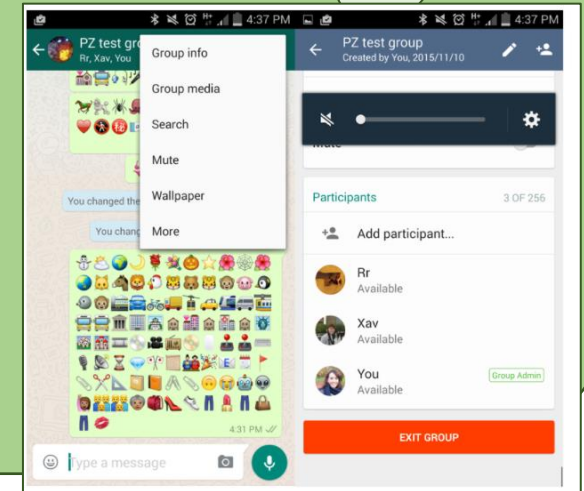
Possible risks and dangers to users –

- Children can be added to groups with both users they know and unknown people. This includes people who you may have previously blocked.
- Anyone in groups you are added to can see and save copies of any text, photos, videos and voice notes you share.
- Once added to a group, everyone else within that chat will have access to your personal details including your profile name, photos and phone number.

While you cannot control being added to groups, you can remove yourself from them. Here is how -

It is thought that WhatsApp has over 1.5 billion active users each month.

If your child does have their own WhatsApp profile, ensure their picture is an avatar and not a real photo of them.



NSPCC

Online Resources for Parents

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/parents-and-carers>

<https://nationalonlinesafety.com/guides>

