



Decoding Discord

A Guide for Keeping Children Safer



Discord is a social platform for people with similar interests to connect. It is popular amongst the gaming community as it offers players a way to communicate with each other during gameplay.



How Does It Work?

The platform functions via servers, that are set up with a specific theme to encourage people to meet and discuss the chosen topic. Servers can be started by communities and friend groups and can be either public (meaning anyone can join) or invitation only. **Any user can start a new server for free.**

The most popular servers on Discord are text channels, which are identified with a hashtag (#) beside the channel name, while voice channels have a speaker icon next to them. When users join voice channels, they automatically hear ongoing conversations and can join in either through voice or chat options.

Users are invited to servers or find links online to access them. The person who set up the server often sets rules about who it is for and the expected behaviour. They can also provide strict guidelines for filtering out explicit content.



The minimum age requirement for Discord is 13 years old and the platform now requires users to take part in an age verification process to confirm they are 13 or older.



Risks



Inconsistent Moderation

Moderation is server-specific and different levels of content will be allowed dependent on the group rules. Additionally, moderation is not always consistent, so inappropriate content may not be labelled which can lead to children and young people encountering it by accident.



Inappropriate Content

Some servers contain user-generated adult content and are labelled as only being accessible to those over 18 years old. An under 18 account is automatically banned from accessing these servers, but some servers may have adult content that has failed to be reported on and will be accessible by under 18s.



Exposure to Strangers

Interactions on Discord are private to the server, so it is not visible to those outside of the group. This can potentially lead children and young people to harmful contact with strangers with possible grooming or exploitation and it is much harder to track or identify due to the privacy of the servers.



Bullying

As Discord operates on a live chat basis, it can contain inappropriate language that is derogatory or offensive and exhibits bullying behaviour.

What Can You Do?

Check out our tips on how to make Discord a safer experience for the child or young person in your care.

Discord Family Centre

Family Centre is a parental control tool and allows you to view:

- Recently added friends, including display names and icons.
- Which users your child has messaged or called in direct messages.
- What servers they have joined or participated in.

To connect your account with your young person, download the Discord app on a mobile device. Tap 'Family Centre' in 'User Settings' and toggle 'Enable Family Centre tab'.

To connect the child account, scan the QR code in their Family Centre tab under 'Connect with Parent'. Once you scan and they've accepted, you have access to the family centre!

Other Safety Settings



Toggle off Direct Messages

Click the settings gear icon, click 'Privacy & Safety', and scroll to 'Server Privacy Defaults'. Next, toggle off 'Allow direct messages from server members'.



Filter Explicit Content

Click on the 'Privacy & Safety' tab in the child's Discord profile. The 'Keep me safe' tab is the safer option as it screens all direct messages for explicit content.



Block and Report

Teach the children in your care how to block and report users or content that makes them uncomfortable. They can do this by clicking the three dots on a person's profile and then selecting 'Block'.



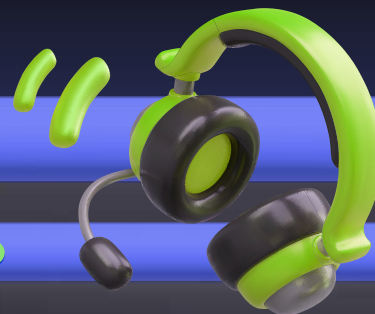
Have Open Conversations

Regular, judgement-free conversations about the online world can create a safe space for children to talk about what they are doing online. Ask positive and non-confrontational questions like, 'What do you like talking about on discord?'. This will foster trust and allow them to approach you if they have questions or need to confide in you.



Discover Discord Together

Help the child in your care to identify age-appropriate servers, explaining to them why it is important and ask them to show you how the platform works. This will widen your knowledge of the platform as well as showing them you are open to their interests.



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