



WhatsApp

What are the risks for children?

WhatsApp is one of the most popular instant messaging apps.

It allows you to send and receive messages, as well as make voice and video calls.

You can connect with people individually, or join group chats where lots of people can contribute.

All you need to set up a WhatsApp account is a phone number. (***Users are expected to be over the age of 13.***)



Although this sounds amazing, there are inherent risks for children using WhatsApp. Over the next few days, we shall highlight these risks in order to help you keep your child safe online.

Features of WhatsApp

To connect you with others, WhatsApp checks your phone's address book for other users and automatically suggests these as your WhatsApp contacts.

It also updates your WhatsApp contact list whenever your phone contacts sign up to the app. This is an optional feature, and you can switch it off, but this puts limits on the app's functionality.

When you are using WhatsApp, certain information is shared with your contacts – unless you turn that functionality off:

- **Status** – this allows you to share updates on your profile in the form of text, photo, video, or GIF that disappears after 24 hours.
- **Last seen** – this tells your contacts what time you last used the app.
- **Online** – this tells your contacts if you are currently using the app.
- **Read receipts** – this allows users to see if the message has been sent, delivered, and read.