

# Discord/Telegram dangers –Sept 2025

Parents /Carers need to be aware of the following apps your child may be using or have on their mobile devices:

## Discord - Exposure to Harmful Content & Individuals

### Inappropriate Content:

Servers can contain adult themes, graphic images, and other content unsuitable for minors, despite age-restricted labels.

### Predatory Behaviour:

The platform's accessibility to users over 13 can expose children to individuals with harmful intentions, including those who may exploit or harm them.

### Cyberbullying:

The anonymity and distance of online communication can increase the risk of users experiencing bullying or harassment.

### Exploitation and Scams

### Financial Exploitation:

Users might be pressured to send money to other users or join paid servers, leading to financial risks.

### Extortion and Blackmail:

Groups like "764" have been documented targeting vulnerable minors for extortion, forcing them to create harmful content, according to the British Psychological Society.



This poster is now on the Academy website under the Safeguarding section at the bottom of the page.



**What Parents & Carers Need to Know about DISCORD**  
Discord is a free app which allows users to communicate in real time via text, video or voice chat. Available on desktop and mobile devices, it was originally designed to help gamers cooperate – but has evolved into a more general networking platform for a range of online communities, discussing topics like TV series, music, Web3 and more. Discord is organised around closed groups, referred to as 'servers'. To join a server, users must be invited or provided with a unique link. It's a space for users to interact with friends, meet others with shared interests and collaborate privately online – but it's also a place where young people can be exposed to risks if the right precautions aren't taken.

**AGE RATING 13+**  
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**WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

- CYBERBULLYING**  
 Discord's easy accessibility and anonymity, particularly in one-to-one text messaging, makes it an ideal place for cyberbullying to occur – especially in private and voice servers. Bullying could take place without being reported. Closed groups can also be created, giving young people the opportunity to hide their views or send text messages without adult oversight.
- DIFFICULT TO MONITOR**  
 Like many private communication apps, Discord's real-time messaging can be difficult to control. The administrator of an individual server – so different groups can set their own rules for what's acceptable, and some groups may not monitor for inappropriate content. Anything that happens in an audio or video stream is also initially unrecorded once the stream has concluded.
- INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT**  
 Discord mainly hosts private groups, making it harder to monitor. Pornography, racism and inappropriate language can be found in some groups. Server members are required to add a two-factor authentication code when their content is being shared – but this solution isn't foolproof as the platform doesn't always verify users' ages when they sign up.
- ACCESSIBLE TO PREDATORS**  
 On many chat platforms, users can be about their age or true identity – and content is moderated. Predators have attempted to abuse the platform by using it to contact and communicate with underage users – by creating private servers or by using an age-appropriate channel, for example. While Discord has implemented the safety settings, some users will still try to bypass them for malicious reasons.
- CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**  
 While Discord isn't a platform for the sale of services and cryptocurrency, it has been used by criminals to recruit, groom, rape, spread, harassment, and distribute malware. In 2024, Discord received over 17,340 reports of illegal activity on the platform.

**Advice for Parents & Carers**

- REVIEW SAFETY SETTINGS**  
 Discord has a series of safety settings, including users who share and direct messages them or send them friend requests. Your child's experience will be much safer if the app's privacy and safety settings are configured to allow messages from outside the group contacting them.
- EXPLAIN AGE FILTERING**  
 While Discord requires users to be at least 13 to sign up, many servers provide content that is inappropriate for children. It can be easy to click through settings without properly reviewing them, so ensure your child understands why age filtering is important and that it's there to protect them.
- SCREEN OUT EXPLICIT CONTENT**  
 In the privacy and safety settings, Discord users can opt to filter direct messages for inappropriate content or settings that should be enabled if your child uses the platform. Discord automatically filters out explicit content that is explicit, but this setting must be manually enabled for text. If a server user is sent explicit content in a direct message, Discord will scan and (if necessary) delete it.
- MONITOR ONLINE ACTIVITY**  
 It's wise to regularly review your child's activity on Discord. This can include checking their safety settings to ensure they're correctly enabled, talking about which servers they've joined and reviewing some of their friend and direct messages. Ask if anything has made them feel uncomfortable or if they can change quickly online, so plan routine check-ins and follow up frequently.
- DISCUSS GOOD ONLINE BEHAVIOUR**  
 The anonymity offered by the internet often leads people to communicate more openly and behave differently than they would at school or home. It's crucial to bear in mind that anything shared online in the real world, that every internet user has the potential to screenshot and share. Remember that anything shared online can have in the real world.
- HAVE CANDID CONVERSATIONS**  
 It can sometimes be awkward to discuss topics like grooming, pornography, racism or explicit content with your child, but it's important to ensure they're aware of the dangers these things can pose. Talking openly about these issues can help your child feel more comfortable about reporting any inappropriate content they encounter on Discord (or anywhere else online).

**Meet Our Expert**  
 Coral Coppola (@coppolacoral) is a London-based tech journalist and award-winning author of things we can't see (@thingswecan'tsee). With a focus on tech and future, we're interested in how the way we use our devices is changing the lives of our young people. @coppolacoral

**NOS National Online Safety**  
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## Telegram – The dangers

### Malware and Hacking:

Malicious files can be distributed through the app, and attackers can gain control of your account, impersonating you and sending messages or joining groups. Some malware can even hijack your device's microphone and camera.

### Scams and Fraud:

Telegram's anonymity makes it a breeding ground for scams like pump-and-dump schemes, fake investment groups, and other Ponzi schemes, potentially defrauding users of vast sums of money.

### Illicit Content and Misinformation:

Telegram's unmoderated private groups make it difficult to control the spread of harmful content, including extremist material and hate speech.

### Data Privacy and Server Compromise:

While chats are end-to-end encrypted, the decryption keys are stored on Telegram's servers. If these servers are compromised, an attacker could access user data.

### Risks for Minors:

The platform is recommended for users 16+, but age verification is not required at signup. The availability of unmoderated groups and anonymity makes it an unsafe choice for children and young users.

### Identity Theft:

With access to your account, attackers can impersonate you, sending messages and manipulating conversations to deceive your contacts.



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**Please check and speak with your child about these apps. They can lead to abuse, bullying and online harassment. In some cases, Telegram can also encourage extremist groups to message children who use the app.**

**If you have any concerns around safeguarding,**

**then please contact:**

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