



SAFE and SECURE

During our work for Safer Internet Day it has again come to our attention that a number of KS2 pupils are using WhatsApp and KS1 and KS2 pupils are playing Fortnite.

Please be aware of the minimum ages and the additional information below...

WhatsApp 16+

The minimum age of use for WhatsApp is 16 years old. It had previously dropped to 13 years old but in April 2018 returned to 16, as a response to data-protection legislation. Like many age restrictions on social media apps, some children may choose ignore this and sign up for WhatsApp when they're younger. WhatsApp's main purpose is to send messages to friends - it isn't public in the same way that Twitter is, and people can only message friends who are already added on their phone. As long as your child only has trusted people as contacts on their phone, it is a relatively safe social media app. If this is the case, the only thing you'll need to make your child aware of the fact that can come into contact with strangers on group chats.

The group chat function allows up to 256 people to chat in one conversation stream. Each group is set up by one person, known as the group admin, who is the only person who can add or remove participants and change or add further group administrators. Anybody in the group, even if they're not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see messages that your child posts and likewise your child will be able to see theirs. Also, if your child is added to a group with someone they have themselves blocked, that person will then be able to contact them.

*Although your child might not be able to control if they're added to a group chat, they can always control their own participation within it – they can leave whenever they want to. The app has a default privacy setting which allows anyone else on WhatsApp to view the user's profile photo, status, and when they last used the app. It's easy to change this setting to specify that the WhatsApp profile is only seen by 'My contacts' or 'Nobody' making the app feel a lot safer for younger users. **To do this, click on the WhatsApp icon on your phone's home screen, then tap the 3 dots on the top right then tap Settings > Account > Privacy > Status.***

Fortnite 12+

Epic Games: Fortnite Battle Royale says it does not direct the game to children under the age of 13 in the UK.

The PEGI rating for this game is 12 years old. However, PEGI does not take chat features into consideration when rating games.

The App Store says that users must be 12+ to play.