

# Discord:

## A Parent's Plain-English Guide



Discord started as a chat app for gamers. Today it is used by millions of young people for gaming, homework, hobbies and friendship groups. It is real-time, invite-based and built around communities called servers — which can be amazing, but also risky. This guide explains how it works, what the dangers are, and how to keep your child safer.



**150M+**  
Monthly active users globally

**13+**  
Minimum age to sign up



**FREE**  
Parental controls via Family Centre

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### 01 WHAT IS DISCORD?

Discord is a communication platform built around servers — online communities where people text, voice call and video chat. It is used for gaming, schools, study groups, hobbies and friendships.



#### KNOW THE REALITY

Anyone can create a Discord account with no age verification. Any child can enter any date of birth. Many adults pretending to be teens are on Discord.

Trust and community are built in — which is why it can be such a positive space, but also how some people exploit that trust to harm children.

**Servers**  
Communities organised by topics. Anyone can create a server and invite others to join.

**Channels**  
Servers are split into text and voice channels for different topics and conversations.

**Voice & Video**  
Users can voice call or video chat in real time. Screen sharing is also available.

**Direct Messages**  
Private one-to-one or group chats outside of servers. Strangers can message your child.

**Roles & Permissions**  
Server owners can give roles that unlock access to certain channels and features.

**Mods & Integrations**  
Third-party tools can add extra features — some are helpful, some are not.

**!** Discord is invite-based by default. Most harm happens when a child joins a server they don't know well, or talks to someone they've never met in real life.

### THE PLATFORM PARENTS NEED TO UNDERSTAND

- 1** **Invitation is the key**  
Your child can join almost any server using an invite link. These links can be shared anywhere — games, YouTube, TikTok, friends.
- 2** **Real-time, always on**  
Conversations happen in real time. Once something is said or seen, it can be screenshot, saved and shared elsewhere.
- 3** **Anonymity is easy**  
Usernames and custom avatars make it easy for people to hide who they really are.

### BY THE NUMBERS

- 150M+** monthly active users globally  
Discord is huge — and still growing.
- Any age can sign up**  
No age verification. Only self-reported dates of birth.
- Harm happens in servers**  
Most reports to safety teams involve contact from strangers in servers, not just DMs.

### 02 SAFETY SETTINGS THAT HELP

Discord has a range of built-in protections. Many are on by default — but some need to be checked.

**Explicit Content Filter**  
Scans and blocks explicit images in DMs. On by default for all users.

**DM Safety Settings**  
Limits who can message your child. Set to "Friends" by default. Keep it that way.

**Server Privacy**  
Servers are private by default. Your child must accept an invite to join from someone.

**Safe Direct Messaging**  
Automatically scans DMs for harmful links and sends safety warnings.

**Report & Block**  
Easy reporting and blocking tools. Reports go to Discord's safety team 24/7.

**Quiet Hours**  
Mute notifications at certain times to reduce distractions and support better sleep.

**i** These tools are helpful, but no setting replaces your involvement and conversations.

### 03 SETTING UP FAMILY CENTRE

Family Centre lets you connect your account with your teen's account so you can manage settings, see activity and get insights.

- 1** **Go to Settings**  
On your child's account, click the gear icon (User Settings).
- 2** **Open Family Centre**  
Select "Family Centre" from the menu.
- 3** **Invite Your Teen**  
Follow the steps to send an invite link to your teen.
- 4** **They Accept**  
Your teen needs to accept the invite on their account.
- 5** **You're Connected**  
Once connected, you can manage settings and see activity.

#### WHAT YOU CAN MANAGE (THROUGH FAMILY CENTRE)

	<b>Account Settings</b> Manage privacy settings, DM rules, friend requests and more.
	<b>Weekly Activity Report</b> See how much time they spend on Discord and who they message most.
	<b>Screen Time Limits</b> Set daily time limits and downtime (such as homework or bedtime).
	<b>Content &amp; Privacy</b> Adjust content filter level and privacy options.

### 04 THE RISKS WORTH KNOWING

- Stranger contact**  
Adults can join servers and befriend children.
- Grooming and manipulation**  
Offenders build trust in servers then move chats to DMs or other apps.
- 18** **Explicit content**  
Servers can contain violence, hate, self-harm or sexual content.
- Scams and phishing**  
Fake links, giveaways and "nitro" scams are common in servers.
- Oversharing**  
Location, school, routines and personal info shared in chats can be dangerous.

### 05 THE 10-MINUTE CONVERSATION



- Ask open questions: "What servers are you in?" "What do you like about Discord?"
- Talk about trust: "Not everyone is who they say they are online."
- Explain what to do if something feels wrong.
- Agree on time limits and downtime.
- Remind them they can always come to you.

#### The "10-minute chat"

Sit down with your child and ask them to show you how they use Discord, focusing on understanding their world rather than judging it.

### 06 WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG

- Stay calm and take screenshots**  
Save evidence of the content, messages or profile.
- Report on Discord**  
Use the in-app report tool. Choose the right category and include details.
- Report and seek help**  
Contact CEOP (ceop.police.uk) or Childline for support. For serious concerns, contact police.

**Childline support:** If you or a child you know needs support, Childline is available 24/7 at 0800 1111 or [childline.org.uk](http://childline.org.uk).