



GROUP CHATS:

A PARENT'S PLAIN-ENGLISH GUIDE

Group chats are where young people connect, share, and laugh. They can also be where pressure, drama, and hurtful behaviour happen.

Here's what parents need to know.



72%

of teens are in group chats daily.

Pew Research



64%

have seen unkindness in a group chat.

Ditch the Label



40%

of teens worry about what's said in chats.

Internet Matters

1 WHAT IT IS



A chat with 3 or more people online.

2 HOW IT WORKS



Everyone can send messages, photos, videos and links.

3 SAFETY FEATURES



Most apps have tools to block, mute and report.

4 CONTROLS



You can change settings, privacy and notifications.

5 RISKS



Drama, pressure, rumours and inappropriate content.

6 CONVERSATION



Talk early. Listen often. Keep it open.

WHAT IS GROUP CHATS?



Multiple people.
Chats with 3 or more people at once.



Share anything.
Text, photos, videos, voice notes and links.



Always on.
Messages can come at any time.



Many platforms.
Apps, games and social media.



Everyone can reply.
Anyone in the group can respond.



People can be added.
Anyone can add others (in some apps).

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO UNDERSTAND

- 1 Group chats move fast.**
Things can escalate quickly.
- 2 Your child's behaviour matters.**
Kindness online is important.
- 3 You don't need to read everything.**
Build trust so they come to you.



BY THE NUMBERS



70%

of teens feel pressure to reply in group chats.

Common Sense Media



1 in 3

teens have been left out on purpose in a group chat.

Pew Research



45%

of teens have seen mean or hurtful messages.

Ditch the Label



34%

of teens have seen inappropriate content.

Internet Matters

SAFETY FEATURES / SETTINGS

WHAT EXISTS

- Block & Report**
Block users and report bad behaviour.
- Mute**
Mute chats and notifications.
- Privacy Controls**
Limit who can add you or see you.
- Message Filters**
Filter spam and inappropriate content.

WHAT TO CHANGE

- Check who can add your child. >
- Turn on privacy settings. >
- Mute chats that stress them. >
- Teach them how to block and report. >

STEP-BY-STEP SAFETY GUIDE

- 1 Know the apps.**
Find out which group chats they use.
- 2 Check the settings.**
Review privacy and safety settings together.
- 3 Talk about kindness.**
Set clear expectations for how to treat others.
- 4 Plan for problems.**
Agree what to do if something goes wrong.
- 5 Keep talking.**
Check in often. Listen without judgement.
- 6 Lead by example.**
Show kindness and respect online.

THE RISKS WORTH KNOWING

- Exclusion**
Someone may be left out on purpose.
- Bullying**
Mean messages can hurt and last.
- Rumours**
False stories can spread fast.
- Inappropriate Content**
Harmful photos, videos or language.
- Pressure**
Peers may pressure others to do things.
- Oversharing**
Too much info can affect their safety.

THE 10-MINUTE CONVERSATION



- ? Who do you chat with the most?
- ? What's fun about your group chats?
- ? Has anything ever upset you in a chat?
- ? What would you do if something felt wrong?

TRUST OVER SURVEILLANCE
Connection builds safety.

IF THINGS GO WRONG

STAY CALM & GATHER EVIDENCE



- Stay calm and listen.
- Take screenshots if safe.
- Note the time, date and what happened.
- Keep the evidence secure.

REPORT & SEEK HELP



- Use the app's report and block tools.
- Talk to a trusted adult.
- Get help from school if needed.
- Contact Childline for support.

★ You did the right thing. Help is available.



NEED TO TALK?
CHILDLINE



0800 1111
childline.org.uk



YOU ARE NOT ALONE
We're here for you.