

Online Safety News

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Whatspp for Under-13s: What's Changing?



WhatsApp is gradually introducing parent-managed accounts, designed to give younger children a more limited version of WhatsApp with a parent or guardian involved in managing the account.

For families whose children are already asking to use WhatsApp, this is an important change.

What can parents do?

Parent-managed accounts give parents greater oversight of who their child communicates with and what happens on the account.

Parents can receive alerts when their child:

- adds, blocks or reports a contact;
- receives a chat request from someone unknown;
- creates, joins or leaves a group;
- turns on disappearing messages;
- changes their profile name or picture.

Parents can also review their child's activity through **WhatsApp → Settings → Parental controls**.

Parents cannot read their child's messages. Personal messages remain end-to-end encrypted.

 **Important:** Parent-managed accounts are being rolled out gradually and WhatsApp says they **may not yet be available in every region or on every account**.

When a child reaches 13 — or the minimum age required in their country — the account can transition out of parental management and features including Channels, Status and Meta AI become available.

Does a Parent-Managed Account Make WhatsApp Safe?

It gives parents more oversight, but it does **not remove all of the risks of messaging**. Children can still send and receive messages, photos and videos. Parents are alerted to certain activity — such as a new contact or group — but they **cannot read their child's messages or see everything being shared**, because conversations remain end-to-end encrypted.

This means children could still:

- receive upsetting, inappropriate or sexual content;
- experience bullying or pressure within chats or groups;
- share photos or personal information they later regret;
- have messages, photos or videos copied, forwarded or shared with other people.

Parent-managed accounts are an extra layer of protection — not a guarantee that inappropriate content cannot reach your child.

Talk about it before they start

Make sure your child knows:

- they can tell you if anyone sends them something that worries or embarrasses them
- they should never feel pressured to send a photo or keep an online conversation secret
- messages and images can travel beyond the person they originally sent them to
- blocking and reporting someone is always okay

And remember: Just because it is available doesn't mean your child is ready for, or needs it.

Source: WhatsApp Help Centre – Parent-managed accounts, Privacy and View Once media.



iPhone & iPad : iOS 27 Has New Parental Controls

Apple released iOS 27 in September, bringing significant changes to Screen Time and child accounts.

If your child uses an iPhone or iPad, it is worth checking your settings again — even if you set them up previously.

Three Changes Worth Knowing

1. Ask to Browse

Parents can require children to ask permission before accessing a new website in Safari and supported browsers.

For children under 13, Apple says Ask to Browse is switched on by default when the appropriate Child Account settings are in place.

2. New Time Allowances

Instead of managing every app separately, parents can set overall allowances for categories including:

-  Games
-  Social Media
-  Entertainment

Parents can also create different schedules for different times of day.

3. Stronger Communication Safety

Apple's Communication Safety protections have expanded beyond nudity and can now intervene when violent or graphic content is detected in shared images or videos.

Do This Now

Go to:
Settings → Family → your child → Screen Time

Check that:

- ☐ your child has their **own Child Account**
- ☐ web and content restrictions still suit their age
- ☐ Screen Time limits reflect your current family rules

Going Live: Why Livestreaming Is Different



Livestreaming is now built into many of the online spaces children watch and use.

Unlike uploading a normal video, **going live removes the opportunity to stop, edit or think again before something is shared.**

New Ofcom research published in September found that livestreams can be very easy to start, while safety information and reporting tools can sometimes be less prominent.

Ofcom has identified livestreaming as a **higher-risk online function for children**, partly because everything happens in real time.

Children might accidentally reveal:

-  their school or uniform
-  where they live or regularly go
-  details inside their home
-  information about family members
-  their routines and when adults are around

Try This Conversation

Ask your child:

"If you went live from your bedroom right now, what could a stranger work out about you just by looking and listening?"

It's a much more useful conversation than simply saying, *"Don't share personal information."*

Source: Ofcom, Behavioural Audit of Livestreaming Services, 9 September 2026.

But Remember...

These tools have limits. Apple states that **all relevant devices in a Family Sharing group need the latest software** to use the new Screen Time experience.

Ask to Browse also applies to Safari and other **supported browsers** — it does not mean that everything a child can access through every app is automatically filtered.

Parental controls are a useful safety net, but they work best alongside conversations, boundaries and supervision.

Source: Apple, "Apple's new child safety features now available", 14 September 2026; Apple Support UK.