Discord
Parent's Guide

What is Discord?

Discord started in 2015 as a way for video game players to communicate with each other and develop a community outside of the games themselves. Since then, it has grown into a full social network with a **wide range of ways to interact with over 100 Million users.**

How Discord works

Discord works on the basis of servers. These are set up with a particular focus or emphasis as a way for people to congregate, discuss and exchange images, links, and information. These servers offer both text and voice communication via a microphone on the device.

Users can be invited to servers or find links online to access them. The person who set-up the server usually sets some ground rules about who it is for and the expected level of courtesy and etiquette.

What you need to use Discord

- **A computer or smartphone** to download the app

- **An email address** to set up an account

- **Be at least 13 years old** to use the platform *(although there is no age verification on sign-up)*

What is the age rating?

13+

According to Discord's terms and conditions, the age rating is 13+, however, it is rated 12+ on the Apple App Store. Infrequent/Mild Profanity, Crude Humor, Mild Sexual Content and Nudity, Mild Mature/Suggestive themes are featured from user content on the app rather than the app itself. The Discord app has a Parental Guidance orange warning from PEGI on the Android App store, with the note that "parental guidance recommended".
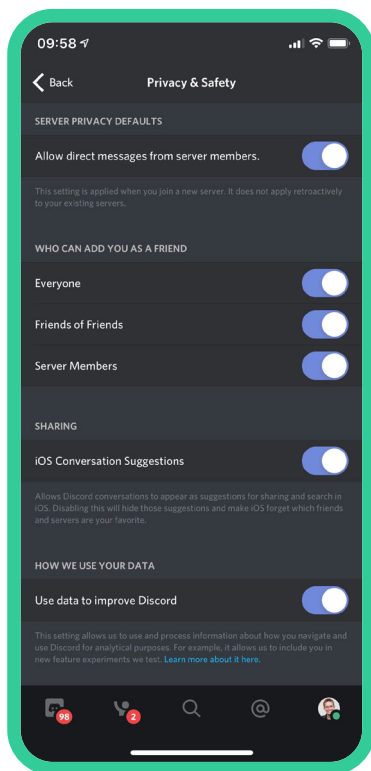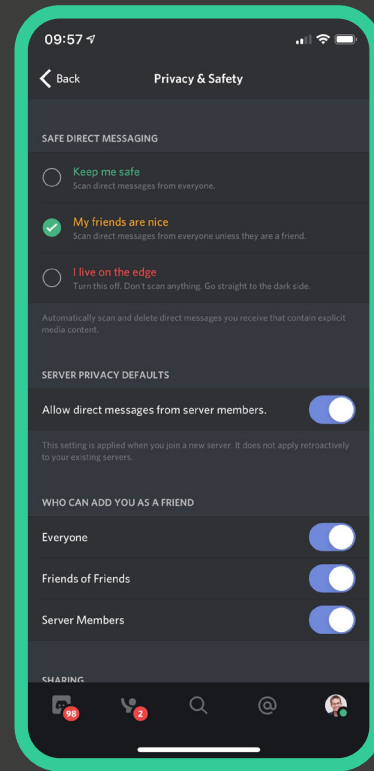
Age verification upon signup is partially rolled out right now, and full rollout will completed by end of June 2020
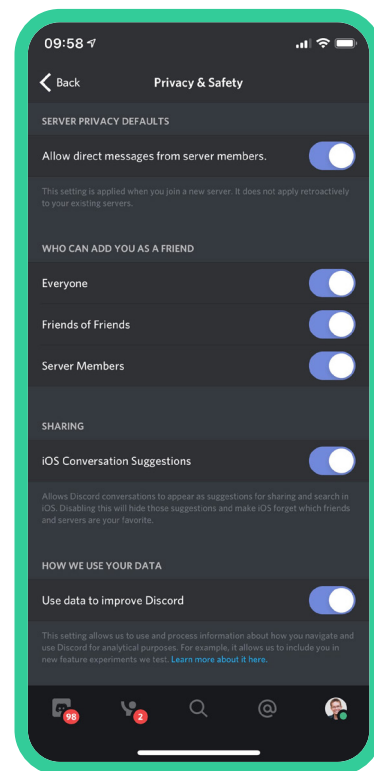
What are the privacy settings on Discord?

When you create an account you can specify a wide range of privacy settings to control who can contact you. Safe Direct Messaging offers a traffic-light colour-coded system to determine whether messages should be checked for inappropriate content:

- **Keep me safe**
  (Scan direct message from everyone)

- **My Friends are nice**
  (Don't scan friends messages)

- **I live on the edge**
  (Don't scan anything)

You can also **disable direct messages** from other members and control who can add you as a friend. However, these settings are only for the user themselves are can't be locked in place by a parent. They can be switched off.
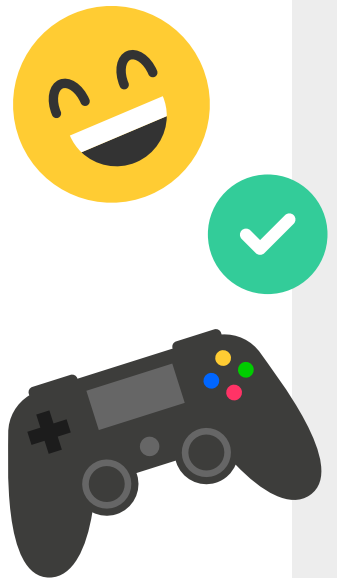
As you can tell from the settings here, and the language used, **this is a space designed for adult and older teen users** rather than children.

What are the benefits of Discord?

Discord is a really powerful way for children of an appropriate age to **discover other people with similar interests and build community**. This may be from playing a video game, but it can also be any other interest. Playing a particular instrument, collecting fossils, a favourite author. In this way, Discord can support and expand hobbies by developing friendships with other people of similar interests.

Take the time to **check-in with them** to make sure you are across who they are chatting to and it is important to encourage them to keep conversations positive and appropriate. It can also give you an opportunity to equip them with the tools to deal with any risky situations that they may face.

What to watch out for on the Discord

The platform is built for adults

As with any social network designed for adults, **only children of appropriate age should use it and then with considerable caution.** The main focus of most concern is that chat, groups and servers will offer mature conversations and a mix of ages. Even though the servers are set up for younger interests too, it will likely have adults participating too.

Most conversations are private and allow live video and location tracking (strictly opt-in)

Most conversations in Discord are private to the group so **it's less open and visible than other social networks**. Along with this, you can type, talk, listen and watch live video of other users. There is also a 'Nearby' feature that allows you to add friends who have the location features on their device turned on that are physically near.

Is Discord safe for your child?

Discord is a beneficial way to connect with other people if they are the right age to use it and have the proper support and context from parents and carers. Younger children would be better served by using social apps that are designed specifically for them, like **YouTube Kids** and **Pop Jam**.

You can apply settings in the Discord app, but these are not password protected. In addition, you can also use the settings on your mobile device or computer to further limit interactions and location-based information.

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