



WhatsApp



Bedford Inclusive Learning
and Training Trust

Achieving • Believing • Collaborating

Helping you to support your child online

With over 2 billion people using WhatsApp, it is the most popular way to send messages, photos, videos, and documents. WhatsApp keeps your messages private with "end-to-end encryption", this means only the person who sends the message and those who receive it can see it – not even WhatsApp itself can read it.

Many pupils, parents, and staff across the BILTT Trust use WhatsApp regularly. We wanted to make all aware of the following with regard to WhatsApp:

Tips for safe WhatsApp use:



16+ Age Limit:

- o In the UK and Europe the minimum age for use of WhatsApp is 16 years old.



Receiving unexpected messages:

- o Think twice before believing unexpected messages.
- o Consider if it is from a known friend or family member.
- o When in doubt, avoid replying immediately and show the message to a trusted adult.



Keep personal information private:

- o Don't share personal details like your address or phone number.
- o Be cautious, even if someone seems friendly.



Beware of links in messages:

- o Avoid clicking on unknown links in messages – they may lead to unsafe websites that could cause potential harm or ask for personal information.



Set up 'Two-Step Verification' for extra security:

- o Add an extra layer of protection to an account – help your child set this up if it is available on their account.



Control who can add you to group chats:

- o Update privacy settings to manage group chat invitations and prevent being added without prior approval.



Use 'Live Location' wisely:

- o Enable it only when necessary and remember to turn it off afterward.



Watch out for Scams:

- o Be aware of scammers posing as your child/parent or asking for verification codes.
- o Never share personal or financial information with strangers.



Think before you post or forward:

- o Consider the impact of your messages and the potential harm they may cause.
- o Be respectful and kind in your online interactions
- o Before sending messages or pictures, ensure it is something you are comfortable with others seeing.



Discuss 'Locked Chat' folders:

- o If your child has a 'locked chat' folder on their phone ask them who they are chatting to and why they want to keep the chats private. Discuss the importance of being careful with private conversations.



Understand 'View Once' content

- o Discuss the 'View Once' feature of WhatsApp with your child and whether it is appropriate for them to use it.



Tell your child to report problems

- o If something on WhatsApp makes them feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult.
- o Advise them that the adult can help to solve problems and ensure their safety.

If you would like additional guidance on this topic and any other online safety concerns, please get in touch with the Designated Safeguarding Lead for your school or contact Claudine Rowley.

Further reading on this topic – and others - is available on the school website. Below is a link to the Safer Internet website, with detailed information and advice on all of the above bullet points.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/blog/helping-your-child-with-whatsapp>

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