

# Guidance on Social Media Groups



- **Be vigilant:** It's easy to believe that what is shared in a group chat will be kept private to that group. However, anything shared in a digital space can be made public at any time. If you're ever put under pressure online it's never your fault and you can get help.
- **Be smart, stay safe:** If you are put in a group text and don't personally know all the people in the group, be sure to never give out personal or confidential information such as your full name, home address, phone number, social security number, passwords, names of family members, or credit card numbers.
- **Speak to an adult** if nasty messages are being sent. It doesn't matter if the messages are about you or someone else - you don't need to deal with it alone.
- **Check your [privacy settings](#):** See if you can change the settings on your app to make sure that only contacts, friends or followers can add you into group chats.
- **Leave the group if you don't feel comfortable:** Don't laugh along with something that's upsetting or embarrassing, either to you or someone else. Even adding an emoji or commenting on what's said could encourage more mean comments. Leaving the chat will show you don't agree with that behaviour. Make sure this is then reported either at school or to someone at home.
- Remember that **it's difficult to delete** comments and photos that have been shared with groups. Once the messages have been read by recipients, it's difficult to take them back. Make sure you think about what you share with large groups of people. Keep your messages kind and respectful.
- **Consent:** It is illegal for nudes or semi nudes of under 18s to be shared in group chats. If you do not have consent to forward on or send a photo with someone else in it, don't send it. This goes for whether you know the person or not.
- **Age Limits:** Remember that you have to be 13 to use most social networks, including Facebook Messenger and Snapchat. For WhatsApp the age is 16.