

Online Safety Newsletter

May 2025



Group Chats

Is Your Child in Any Group Chats?

Group chats can take place on social media platforms like WhatsApp or within games such as Fortnite. While they can seem harmless, it's important to be aware of the potential risks:

- **Inappropriate content:** Many group chats aren't monitored, which means children may be exposed to language or material that's not suitable for their age.
- **Bullying:** These chats can be a place where hurtful messages are shared, such as name-calling, body-shaming, or deliberately excluding someone from the group. This kind of behaviour often spills over into 'real' non-cyber life.
- **Strangers:** Children can be added to group chats with people they don't know—or even with someone they've previously blocked.
- **Screenshots and sharing:** Anything your child says or shares in a group can easily be captured and shared elsewhere. It's important they understand that group chats are not private.
- **Sharing personal information:** Remind your child not to share personal details, such as their location, school or images that may reveal personal information.

Please note: Pupils at Osidge School should not be part of any group chats with other Osidge Pupils.

Ask Silver Scam Checker

Ask Silver is a free tool that helps protect you from scams—right from your smartphone. To get started, simply sign up for the service. Then, if you receive a message, email, or anything suspicious, just upload a screenshot. Ask Silver will analyse it and tell you whether it looks safe or could be a scam.

Learn more here: <https://www.getsafeonline.org/asksilver/>

Did you know that some Emojis have a double meaning?

If you've watched the popular Netflix series *Adolescence*, you may already know that children and young people often use emojis in ways that don't match their usual meanings. Emojis can have hidden or alternative meanings, and these can change over time.

It's important for parents, carers and educators to stay informed about how emojis are being used — as they can sometimes be used to communicate in ways that may be inappropriate or misleading.

To learn more about emoji meanings and how they're evolving, you can find further information here: <https://www.bark.us/blog/emoji-slang-guide/>