Anonymous chat
Parent Guide —●

Everything you need to know about anonymous chat apps

What is it?

Anonymous chat takes place on **platforms or services** that allow users to **communicate** with each other **anonymously.**

Some popular anonymous chat apps and platforms include **Ask.fm, Whisper and Kik.**

Why are they popular?

Anonymity gives young people **freedom** to **explore who they want to be.** In face-to-face or other non-anonymous chats, they may have to deal with **pre-judged opinions** based on their **name, age or physical appearance** that they would rather avoid.

Chatting anonymously can also be very important for **young people from minority groups** – such as those **identifying as LGBTQ+ or who have a disability** – to feel safe to say what's on their mind.

They can also encourage **honesty and vulnerability,** especially about issues they might **feel embarrassed or unsure** about. Many young people report that what started as an anonymous online chat has **developed into a close friendship.**

What are the risks?

The freedom that comes from being anonymous can be **positive,** but it does have a **more harmful side.** Users may feel free to say **hurtful or even criminal things,** as anonymity can make it feel like there are **no consequences.**

It is **difficult to report or block anonymous users,** especially as anonymity means that they can just sign up with another account.

Many anonymous chat apps, **although rated 13+,** have age-verification systems that are **easy to bypass.**

Although rare, there are cases of **much older users using anonymity to contact young users.** Remind your child that they should **never share personal details** on these platforms, or arrange to **meet someone in person.**

What else should I know?

Adolescence is hard, and it can be helpful for young people to **explore who they are without having to be pinned to a specific identity.**

While anonymous chatting can be useful, it is **important to know the risks.** Make sure that you and your child **fully understand the safety settings** of whatever app or platform they are using, and **encourage them to come to you** if they have any issues.