

# Telegram:

## Your Online Safety Guide

Online Safety Shareable by

**INEQE**  
SAFEGUARDING GROUP



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### What is Telegram?

Telegram is a cross-platform messaging app that combines familiar elements from platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter into one app. Through use of AI bots, instant messaging, chat customisation, and time-bound messages, Telegram allows users to communicate with individuals, small groups, or large groups (up to 200,000 people).

It is free to download on iOS, Android, Windows, Linux, and other popular platforms. It is rated '17+' on the Apple App Store while Google Play advises 'Parental Guidance'.

According to Ofcom's 'Online Nation 2022 Report', about **3%** of 8-11 year olds and **4%** of 12-15 year olds in the UK are using Telegram.

### Special Features

- Secret Chats** – Also known as 'disappearing messages', users can set 'self-destruct' times on messages, ranging from 2 seconds to a week.
- Chat Bots** – Accounts operated by Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems are used to play various games and engage in conversation with users.
- People/Groups Nearby** – These features allow users to connect with individuals or groups nearby, without making their physical location known.
- Channels** – A tool that lets a group of administrators or an individual administrator broadcast messages to an unlimited subscriber base.

### Safety and Privacy Settings

- Blocking** – Users can block other users from sending unwanted messages and making contact.
- Reporting** – Users can report a group chat or channel using the tools on the app.
- Location Settings** – The sharing of your location is automatically switched off. You can enable this setting by making yourself 'visible' on the 'People Nearby' feature.
- Privacy Settings** – There are multiple privacy settings, these include options such as hiding your 'Phone Number,' 'Last Seen' status, and your 'Profile Photo.'

In our digital world, there are so many apps and platforms created to help us stay connected to those we love and find new connections with people from all over the world. This means children and young people are growing up in a time where instant messaging and video calls are equal to in-person chats – something the COVID-19 pandemic enhanced significantly. It's never been more important for parents, carers and safeguarding professionals to ensure they know the safety concerns and risks around every app available to those in their care.

## WARNING

This messaging app has **NO EFFECTIVE AGE VERIFICATION** and features **unmodified chats with lots of INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT!**



### Risks to Children and Young People

 Limited moderation	 No effective age verification	 Accessible harmful content
 Live location sharing	 Encouraged stranger interaction	 Secret Chat (Disappearing Messages)

### Top Tips for Parents and Carers

- Discuss responsible sharing.** "It's important to know who you're talking to online and understanding what you are sharing isn't as private as you think."
- Walkthrough image ownership.** "Your photos and videos only belong to you."
- Talk about authenticity.** "Being 'real' and oversharing are not the same thing."
- Practice screentime boundaries.** "No one should be looking at a screen 24/7."
- Discern deepfakes & misinformation.** "Don't believe all content at first glance."
- Identify Trusted Adults.** "Who are the people you can always rely on to help you?"
- Protect personal information.** "The details that identify us should be kept private."
- Set Safety Settings.** "Let's explore how to keep you safer on this app together."
- Report inappropriate content.** "Let's figure out how to report and block together."



As with any social messaging app, it's important to note the potential of risk to young people - but it does not necessarily mean they are using the app in this way. If someone in your care is using Telegram, remain calm and use the opportunity to engage in a discussion.