



Gooseberry Parent

Omegle

What is Omegle?

A free to use, anonymous chat service that allows users to communicate with strangers. Users can access the service either on its website www.omegle.com, or via the 'Alpha Omegle' app downloaded to any digital mobile device. The website and app both require use of the internet. Chats can be text-based or video-based and can be about any subject or topic. The anonymous and random nature of this app and the way in which it functions increases the risk of inappropriate contact and content for any user.

Key Features of Omegle to be aware of

- Using Omegle, through either the app or website, does not require any registration, profile creation, photos or location information.
- The app asks users to create a 'name' before they begin chatting, whilst the website uses the terms 'You' (referring to you) and 'Stranger' (referring to the person you are chatting with).
- Users can select text or video chatting, where they are paired at random with another user and can engage in a one-to-one chat.
- 'Spy mode' allows users to create their own questions and then 'spy' on the discussion of the question by two other users. Alternatively, users can discuss a question posed by another user with a third user.
- Chats can be saved and posted to other social media sites including Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter and Reddit.
- Video chats on the Omegle website are monitored, though users do have the option of chatting in an 'unmoderated' section. There is also the option to join an 18+ section, which requires the user to click a button confirming that they are 18+.
- Discussions on Omegle can be about anything, and have the potential to be interesting, educational and fun; however, in the unmoderated section, there is the potential for users to post inappropriate content.
- Users must be at least 13 years old with parental guidance up to 18, though the website and app do not request any information about age prior to use.

Omegle, deciding on use and managing the risks

- **To put it simply – This is not an app designed for children.**
- **The safest advice** – Omegle is best avoided by children, as the risks are too many to manage by a parent/carer or the child themselves. There are many social networking apps that have better opportunities to manage and control privacy, our advice would be to make a safer choice from these.
- **Model positive and safe online behaviour** – Safe behaviour online starts with us as adults. Following basic safety suggestions and demonstrating these will help your child to follow in your footsteps. You also have a better chance of staying safer online yourself.
- **Do your homework** – Take time to read Privacy Policies and Terms of Use to find out how app developers use personal information. You can also learn about acceptable use of the app and find advice on securing online accounts and set privacy settings on devices.
- **Download and use the app** – Having a go yourself can help you understand how the app works and how to secure an account. This can be the best way to make an informed decision.



- **Read the reviews** for the app, this will give you an idea what other people are saying about it and what potential risks there may be.
- **Making an informed decision** – You are a parent and you will know your child enough to decide on allowing them to use Omegle or any other social networking app. Omegle is designed to be a fun and appealing app and it takes social networking to another level.
- **Communicate your expectations** – As a parent, it is your responsibility to make clear what is and is not acceptable online behaviour. You need to accept that allowing your child access to online apps like these, requires trust and clear boundaries, for their own wellbeing. The temptations and possibilities of running into problems with Omegle are too greater risks to take.

If you must use Omegle – Adults

- **Video Chatting** – Use this feature with only those they know and trust in real life.
- **Remember** the people that you are chatting with may not be who they claim to be.
- **Keep personal details private** - Avoid any clues as to your location or any personal information in video chats.
- **Avoid** using the 'unmoderated' section as it is likely to contain inappropriate content.
- **Text Chatting** – Leave any chats that contain inappropriate content or where the other user is asking you questions about yourself, your location or other personal information. This is done by clicking the 'New Chat' button.
- **Saving Chats** – Remember that all chats you have on Omegle can be saved by the other user and shared to other social media websites. Think carefully about what you are posting and chatting about.
- **Inappropriate chat** – If you find yourself involved in a chat that is inappropriate you can save the chat and consider reporting the content directly to the app developers.
- **Spy Mode** – Leave chats where inappropriate questions are being asked or discussed by clicking the 'Stop' or 'New Chat' button, this will take you to a new chat with a different user.
- **Location Settings** – Omegle does not contain any location settings. However, it is possible for users to find each other by finding their IP address and tracing it to their general location.
- **Sharing Information** – Remember to keep any photos or personal information private through Omegle, even if you are asked for it by another user.
- **Make a safe choice** – Consider avoiding Omegle and choosing an app that enables privacy settings to be enabled, managed and controlled.

As an adult, you may choose to use Omegle to connect with others...but this is an app best avoided by children!