

## WhatsApp



### What is WhatsApp?

WhatsApp is a free app that allows users to send encrypted messages to other users, so long as they have an internet connection. It is available on all major mobile operating systems. Users must verify their account with a standard mobile number to start using the app. WhatsApp offers users the ability to send images, voice notes and a wide range of emojis, in addition to voice and video calls.

It is estimated that WhatsApp has over 1.5 billion active monthly users worldwide.

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### What parents need to know

## **Minimum age restriction**

The minimum age of use for WhatsApp is 16 years old. It had previously dropped to 13 years old but in April 2018 returned to 16, as a response to data-protection legislation.

Like many age restrictions on social media apps, some children may choose ignore this and sign up for WhatsApp when they're younger.

WhatsApp's main purpose is to send messages to friends - it isn't public in the same way that Twitter is, and people can only message friends who are already added on their phone. As long as your child only has trusted people as contacts on their phone, it is a relatively safe social media app.

If this is the case, the only thing you'll need to make your child aware of the fact that can come into contact with strangers on group chats.

## **Group chats**

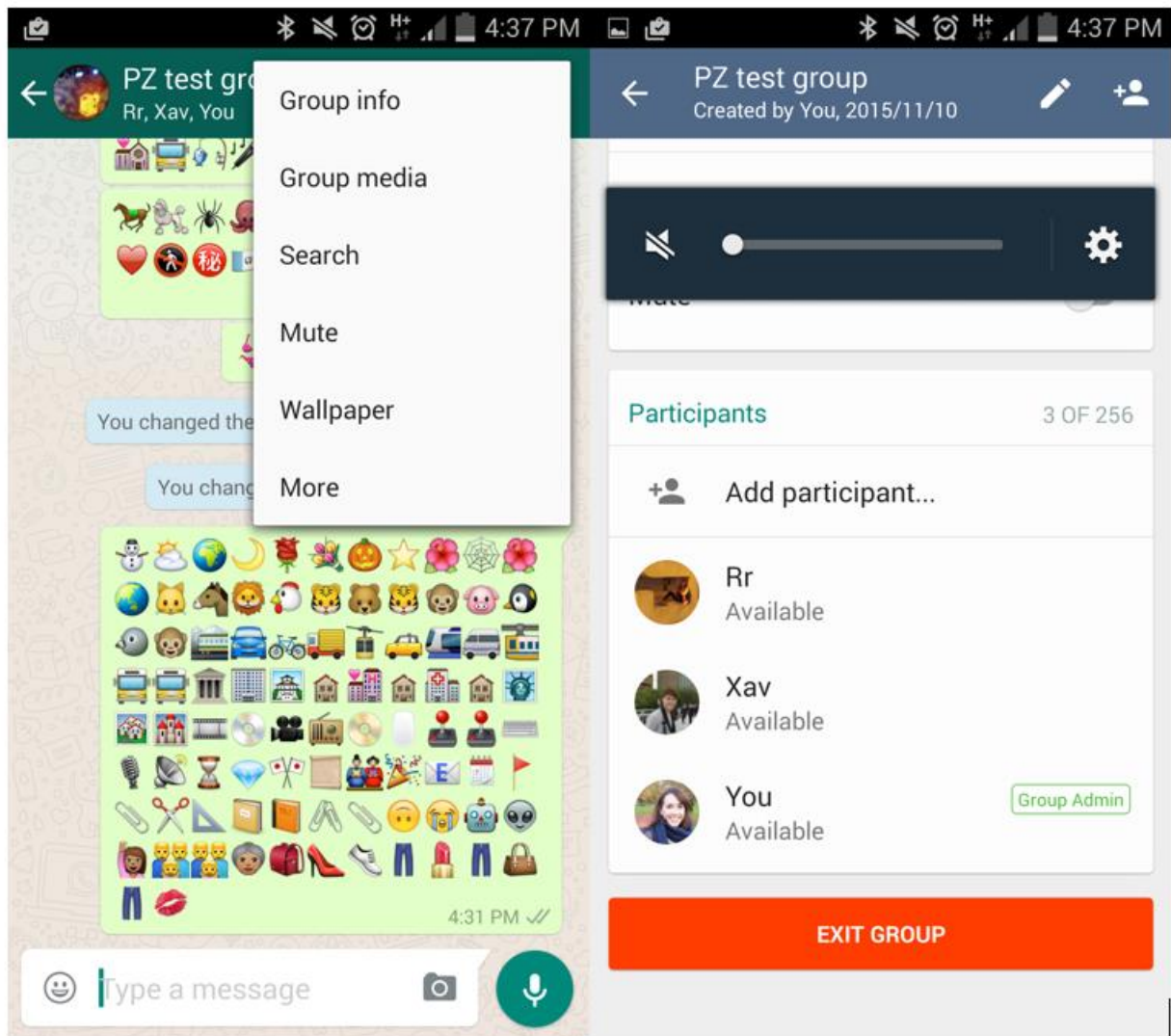
The group chat function allows up to 256 people to chat in one conversation stream. Each group is set up by one person, known as the group admin, who is the only person who can add or remove participants and change or add further group administrators.

Anybody in the group, even if they're not one of your child's phone contacts, will be able to see messages that your child posts and likewise your child will be able to see theirs. Also, if your child is added to a group with someone they have themselves blocked, that person will then be able to contact them.

Although your child might not be able to control if they're added to a group chat, they can always control their own participation within it – they can leave whenever they want to.

**To do this, when on the group's page, tap the 3 dots in the top right (or the name of the group at the top of the screen on an iPhone), then tap Group info, then EXIT GROUP in the red box at the bottom of the screen (or scroll down to Exit Group on an iPhone).**

**exit group advice.PNG**



If your child has or wants WhatsApp, it is a good idea to talk to them about group chats, stating the risks and showing them how to exit a group if they're invited to one that has people in it that they don't know.

### **End-to-end Encryption**

WhatsApp uses end-to-end encryption in all its users' communications. This means that only those with access to the phones of the sender and receiver of a message conversation between the two can access them. This has caused problems for law enforcement agencies when trying to access the communication records of suspects. However, it is an attractive feature for those concerned about the privacy of their messages. Even WhatsApp cannot access them.

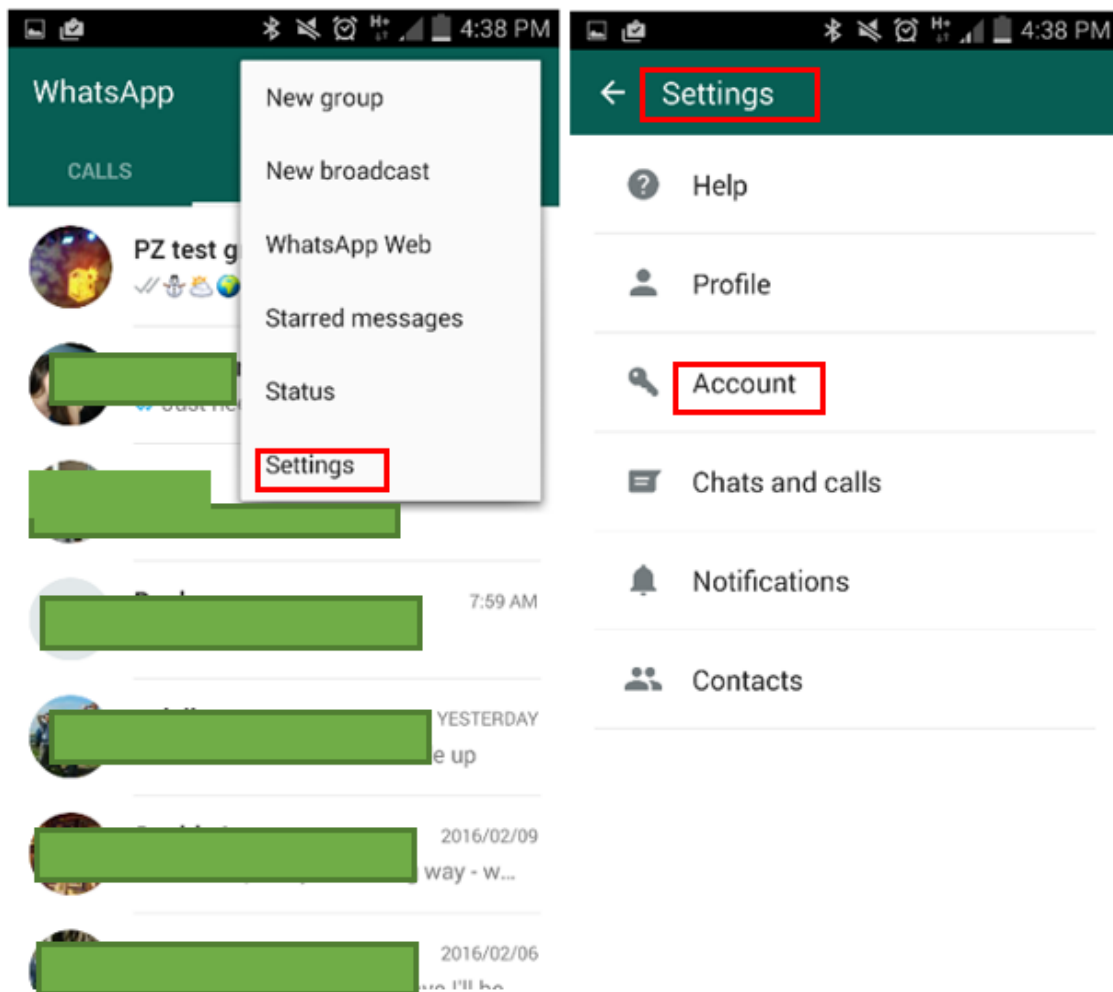
### **Privacy settings, reporting and blocking**

The app has a default privacy setting which allows anyone else on WhatsApp to view the user's profile photo, status, and when they last used the app.

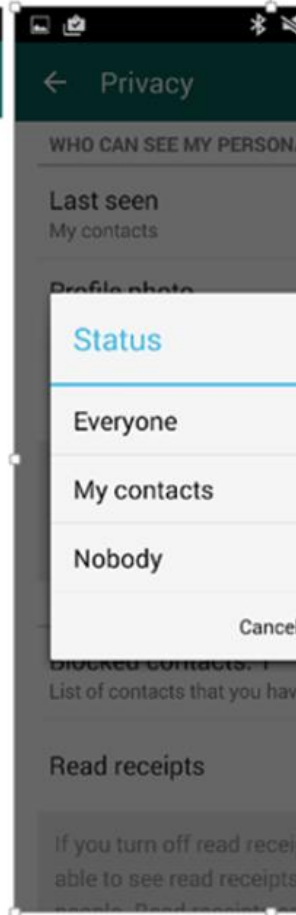
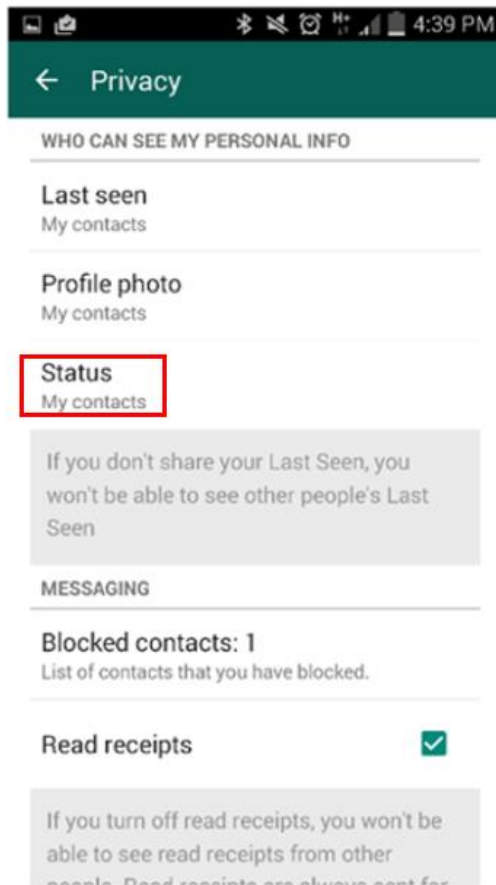
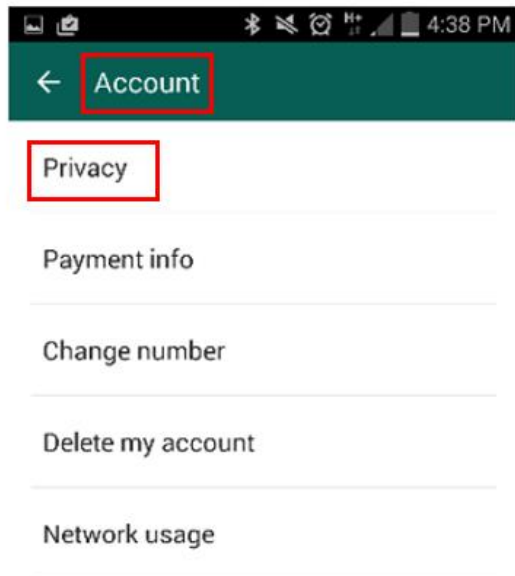
It's easy to change this setting to specify that the WhatsApp profile is only seen by 'My contacts' or 'Nobody' making the app feel a lot safer for younger users.

To do this, click on the WhatsApp icon on your phone's home screen, then tap the 3 dots on the top right then tap Settings > Account > Privacy > Status.

## part 1.PNG



## part 2 final final!.PNG



In this area, you can also manage any blocked contacts.

In addition, WhatsApp now gives you the ability to request and view all the data that it holds on you. This option is found under Settings>Account below Privacy.

Full safety details for WhatsApp can be found in their FAQs. This can be from spamming content to abusive or inappropriate content or behaviour. However, WhatsApp reminds users that if they feel that they or someone else is in emotional or physical danger, they should contact their local law enforcement authorities.

## Status Update

Users can now update their WhatsApp status by posting images or videos. These will only last 24 hours and if more than one status update is posted then they will collate into a story, similar to Snapchat and Instagram.

You can choose who sees your status update by amending the Privacy Settings. The original text-based status update is still available through the general settings menu.

## WhatsApp Web

WhatsApp can also be accessed via a user's computer and PCs by using WhatsApp Web. The feature is an extension of the app and users can have conversations as normal using the browser version. The web version lets people stay logged in by default so it's important to make sure to either choose not to stay logged in or log out after you're finished using it. [Read our guide on WhatsApp Web for more information.](#)

### **Reporting any concerns**

There is no direct way to report a user, or specific abuse, other than to block them from sending you further messages. To block a contact, when the conversation is open, click on the 3 dots on the top right, tap 'More', then 'Block'.

Blocked contacts won't be able to see your profile information, and they won't be able to contact you. To permanently delete a contact from WhatsApp, you'll need to delete them from the contacts on your phone.

*Updated June 2018.*

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