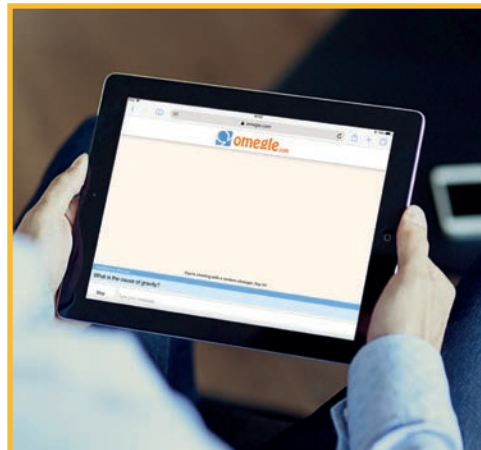
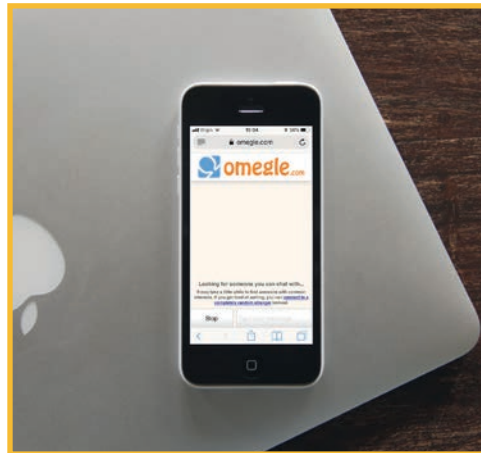
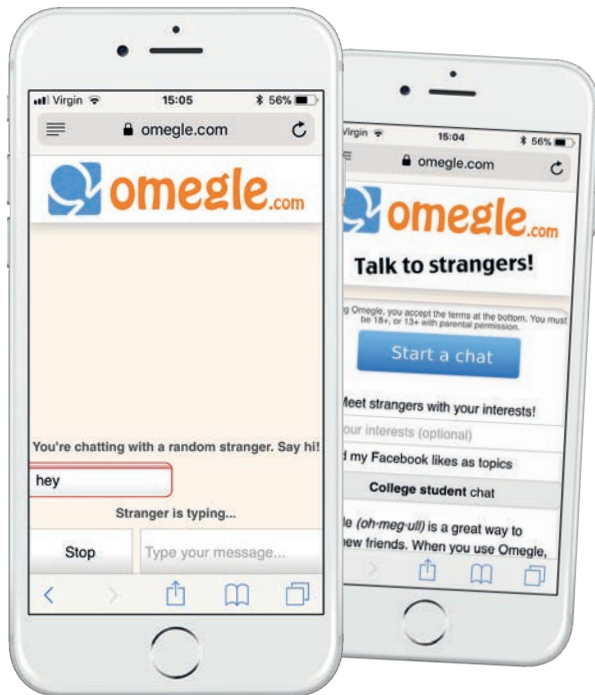




What is Omegle?

Omegle is a free online chat service which pairs random strangers into an online video call or text conversation, without the need to register or create an account. According to Omegle, the service is a great way to meet new friends while staying safe and anonymous, but openly admits that 'predators have been known to use Omegle'.

What does it look like?



Main Concerns for Parents



Omegle is not aimed at children

According to the terms and conditions of Omegle, children below the age of 13 years should not use the service but children between 13 and 18 years old can use the site if they ask for permission from their parent or guardian. This level of caution would suggest that Omegle isn't really a service that is suitable for children or young teenagers.

Sexually explicit content

Some people use Omegle so that they can enjoy sexually explicit conversations and share photographs or images with others in a live video call. There is the danger that some of the random people Omegle pairs your child with may have this intention. As well as the risk of seeing others take part in sexually explicit activities, these individuals may also ask your child to do similar things. It is illegal to make, possess, download, store and share sexual images, photos and videos of a person under the age of 18.

Predators target children on Omegle

For a website to openly state on its homepage to be careful because predators have been known to use its service is concerning. According to media reports, in 2017 a couple found their daughter talking to a random man via Omegle who asked the girl questions, such as whether her parents were strict, all while keeping his webcam covered. Predators will typically hide their identity in this way, pretending to be a different age or different person entirely. Due to Omegle's anonymity, events can be very hard to track.

Chats on Omegle can be recorded

Although calls can't be directly saved on Omegle, people can and do use third-party devices and software to record their conversations. As such, even if your child thinks they can do things on Omegle without it being tracked or with no consequences, this is far from the case.

Omegle stores conversations

Although Omegle guarantees anonymity, it can store conversations after they have ended. An internet researcher found that each chat log is saved in Omegle's server after they exit a conversation with someone. Words to this effect may be stated in the company's privacy for those who read it, which means Omegle's promise of anonymity may not be as private as everyone thinks.

Adult Chat

By clicking on the adult chat option, you are taken to an external adult pornography website. While it asks people to confirm that they are 18 when they click on this button, there is no way for Omegle to check for sure whether the individual really is 18 or over. As such, your child could be accessing porn at the click of a button through Omegle.

OMEGLE: Tips for Parents

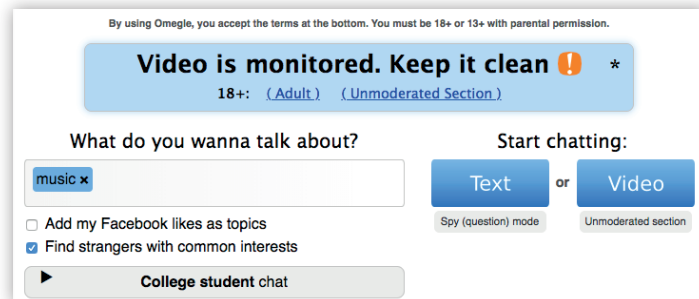


Monitor your child closely

Despite the fact that many teenagers use Omegle, it will feature content that simply isn't designed or appropriate for this age group. If you allow your child to use Omegle, it probably isn't wise to allow them to use it alone. Perhaps sit down and use the service together – that way you can protect them from any potential dangers and react quicker to uncomfortable situations.

Make sure your child only uses the 'moderated' chat

When your child uses the 'moderated' chat option, messages will advise that the 'video is monitored, keep it clean' while on other sections, 'unmonitored' and 'adult', warnings state that potential sexual content may appear instead. The moderated section exists to try and lower the possibility of viewing sexual or inappropriate content but while it's probably safer than the other chat modes things may slip through.



Be mindful

Encourage your children to think critically about the things they see online. Chat about any messages where there is any uncertainty that someone is telling the truth.

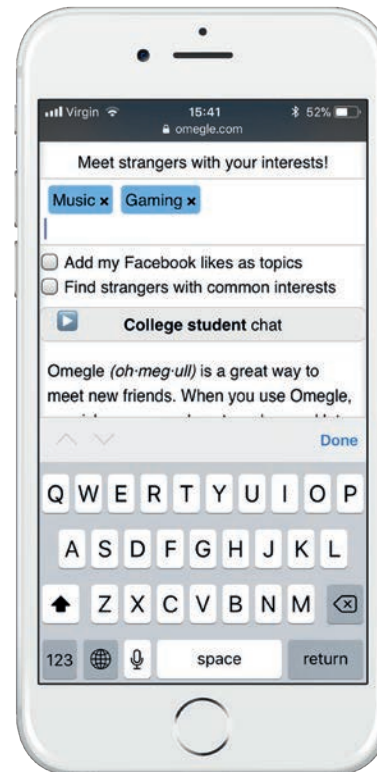
Talk to your child about the risks

The following topics are good conversation starters to sit down and have with your child:

- Video calls and messages aren't as private as you think and can easily be recorded or stored
- The dangers and illegality of sexting underage
- What to do when they see inappropriate content on Omegle
- Why it's important not to go on the 'adult chat' or 'unmoderated chat'

Don't give out personal information

It is important that children don't give away personal details, such as their full name, age, address, or phone number to strangers.



Be mindful

Encourage your children to think critically about the things they see online. Chat about any messages where there is any uncertainty that someone is telling the truth.

Learn how to identify bots or 'trolls'

Bots leave automated messages and are often instant replies that don't relate to the conversation topic. People who use rude or inappropriate language straightaway or type weird messages before you have introduced yourself are quite often internet trolls who want to cause mischief.

Enter relevant interests

Providing genuine interests when starting a chat can increase the chances of your child being paired with someone they have something in common with rather than a bot.

Be ready to disconnect

If your child feels uncomfortable during a conversation, reassure them that they can exit a chat. To do this, they can simply disconnect from the session and exit the service or start a conversation with another user.

Be safe

Your child should never agree to meet up with someone they only know online. No matter how friendly they might seem or how well they think they know them, they are still a stranger.

Find an alternative service

Talking to random strangers is always going to be potentially dangerous. There are other online chat services available where it is clear who you are talking to and they are who they say they are.