

Our Ref: Safeguarding/LFo

13th September 2022

Dear Parent/ Guardian

Re: Omegle

Launched in March 2009, Omegle is now a popular site/app. It provides a 'virtual chat room' offering random users unmoderated (or moderated) chats with each other – from anywhere in the world.

Omegle pairs random users as 'You' and 'Stranger' to chat online via text, video or both. Users can choose to add their interests and Omegle will then pair them with someone with similar interests.

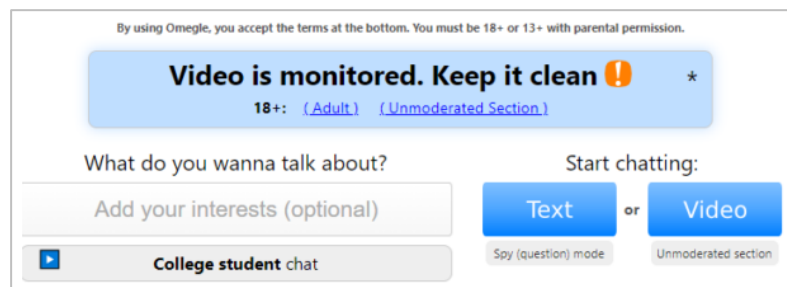
Chats are anonymous unless the user states who they are. It is free and no account sign-up is needed.

Omegle has a minimum age rating of 13, with parental permission. Without permission, users must be 18 years or over. The site is very popular in the UK, US, India and Mexico. It's extremely popular amongst children and young people as social media influencers use the site. As an example, the #omegle hashtag has approximately 5 billion views on TikTok!

Is Omegle Safe?

As with other 'chat' sites there is a risk of sharing or viewing inappropriate content.

The site does not appear to have powerful moderation and, as it does not require registration or have age verification, it makes young people a potential target for online abuse and grooming.



Children and young people may be asked by 'strangers' to share their name, age and location. They may be asked to share photos of themselves.

It is important that your children are aware of the dangers of sharing their personal information online with anyone they don't know personally.

Mr S Strickland - Principal - BA (Hons), MA, NPQH

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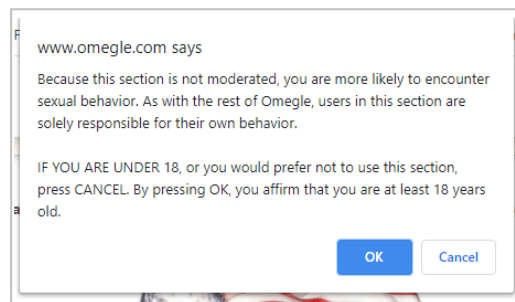
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A BBC investigation found sexually explicit videos and live streams involving children as young as 7 which spread across the site during the Covid-19 pandemic; the relevant authorities were alerted. Additional investigations were made into online child abuse on Omegle, together with reports of racism, extremist views, scams and cyberbullying.

Omegle's Chat Options

- **Adult** - Can be accessed by anyone; contains heavily explicit content and sexual acts. The user confirms by clicking a button, they are then redirected to an external site.
- **Moderated chat** – Omegle's disclaimer that they moderate chats states '...moderation is not perfect. You may still encounter people who misbehave.'
- **Unmoderated chat** – This option does come with a warning (below) but anyone under 18 can just click 'OK' and they have free access. Users are at high risk to online grooming and sexually explicit and violent content.



There is also a 'spy' function that enables users to be the 'spy' and log on as a hidden third party in a chat between two people. They can ask the other chat users to discuss particular topics etc., and view their replies. Or, they can be a participant and discuss with another user. They can exit without ending the chat.

Omegle does **NOT** have any parental controls.

Useful Links/Info:

- Safer Internet UK: [Homepage - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)
NSPCC: [Online Safety for Children - Tips & Guides | NSPCC](#)
Barnado's: [Online safety | Barnardo's \(barnardos.org.uk\)](#)
Childline: [Online Grooming - Staying Safe](#)

If you have any concerns about your child's (or another's) use of social media please don't hesitate to contact us.

Please ensure your children know that they can speak to any member of staff in school if they are concerned about any activity on social media – Anything reported to us will be addressed with the utmost importance and discretion.

Yours faithfully,

Mr L Martin
**Designated Officer for Safeguarding &
Child Protection**