

Discord Parent Guide

Complete privacy & safety walkthrough — no technical knowledge required

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WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

Discord has become one of the most active reporting subjects for state attorneys general in 2026 — multiple states allege the platform's default settings and light moderation leave children exposed to predators, including the FBI-investigated "764" network, which routinely uses Discord as the second step after first contact on a game like Roblox (see our October Journal issue, "Inside 764"). Discord's own age check is a simple self-reported birthdate with no real verification. This guide walks through every setting that actually matters, in the order to check them.

⚠ Important: Discord's default settings allow strangers to message your child, see mutual servers, and add them as a friend. This guide changes all of that in about 10 minutes.

STEP 1 — LOCK DOWN WHO CAN CONTACT YOUR CHILD

- 1 Settings (gear icon) → Privacy & Safety
- 2 Set "Who can add you as a friend" → Friends of Friends or No one (not Everyone)
- 3 Turn OFF "Allow direct messages from server members" for servers your child joins
- 4 Enable "Keep Me Safe" — Discord's built-in explicit content scan filter

STEP 2 — USE DISCORD'S REAL PARENTAL TOOL: FAMILY CENTER

Discord's own Family Center lets a parent see (with the teen's consent) who their child is friends with, which servers they've joined, and time spent in each — without reading message content, which keeps it honest with the teen rather than covert.

- 1 Parent: create a Discord account, go to Settings → Family Center
- 2 Send a linking request to your teen's account; they must accept it
- 3 Review the weekly summary together — a low-pressure way to open conversation, not a surprise inspection

✓ Tip: Frame Family Center to your teen as "I want to see the shape of your Discord life, not read your messages" — that honesty is what keeps them from hiding a second account.

STEP 3 — UNDERSTAND THE ROBLOX → DISCORD HANDOFF

Predators very often make first contact on a game platform your child already trusts (Roblox is the most common), then ask to "keep talking" on Discord, where moderation is lighter and there's no meaningful age check. This single request — "let's move to Discord" — is one of the highest-value red flags a parent can teach a child to recognize.

⚠ Red flag: any online "friend" from a game who asks to move the conversation to Discord (or any app) should be treated as a stop-and-tell moment, not a normal next step.

STEP 4 — REVIEW SERVER MEMBERSHIP TOGETHER

- 1 Open your child's server list (left sidebar) together
- 2 Ask about any server you don't recognize — who invited them, what it's for
- 3 Leave any server tied to a game or "friend" you haven't personally reviewed
- 4 Turn off DMs from members in any large public server (Settings within that server → Privacy Settings)

STEP 5 — WARNING SIGNS TO WATCH FOR

- Secrecy about a specific server or "friend," or minimizing the screen when you walk by
- A new "friend" who was first met on Roblox, Minecraft, or another game
- Being asked to keep a friendship secret from you — always a red flag, never a sign of real trust
- Gifts, Nitro subscriptions, or in-game currency from someone they don't know in real life
- Anxiety, mood changes, or sudden device secrecy after Discord use

STEP 6 — HOW TO REPORT & BLOCK

Block a user: click their username → "Block." **Report a user or message:** right-click the message → "Report Message," or visit discord.com/safety to file a detailed report with screenshots. **Report to law enforcement:** for suspected grooming or exploitation, also file with the FBI (tips.fbi.gov) or NCMEC's CyberTipline ([CyberTipline.org](https://www.cybertipline.org)) — Discord's own report queue is not a substitute for law enforcement in serious cases.

CONVERSATION SCRIPT FOR PARENTS

Use this with children ages 8–14:

"I want to look at your Discord with you for a few minutes — not to take it away, just so I understand it like you do. If anyone from a game ever asks you to move to Discord, or asks you to keep a friendship secret from me, that's the one thing I need you to tell me right away. You won't be in trouble — ever. Can we look at your servers together?"

QUICK REFERENCE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Friend requests limited to Friends of Friends or No one
- ☐ DMs from server members turned off
- ☐ "Keep Me Safe" explicit content filter enabled
- ☐ Family Center linked (for teens, with their consent)
- ☐ Server list reviewed together, unknown servers removed
- ☐ Child understands the Roblox→Discord handoff red flag
- ☐ Child knows how to block and report
- ☐ Regular check-in conversation scheduled