

QUICK-GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Meta Horizon Worlds

What is Meta Horizon Worlds?

Horizon Worlds is a social experience created by Meta (formerly Facebook) where people, including teens under 18, can hang out and talk with others, explore, attend concerts and events and play games in virtual spaces that can feel like walking around a 3D cartoon. Meta created the app for their virtual reality headsets, including the Meta Quest 2 and the Meta Quest Pro. The app is free to download.

What are the risks?

Just like any interactive social experience, possible risks include unwanted or inappropriate contact and communication, inappropriate content for children and teens, false information and propaganda, cyberbullying and harassment and grooming and sexual solicitation that could lead to online sexual abuse or harmful offline contact. VR adds greater immersion, which can lead to a more visceral reaction to such things as harassment or simply having someone's avatar get too close to yours. ConnectSafely has guides and tips that cover [these and other risks](#).

How can I keep my teen safe?

We recommend families use Meta's parent supervision tools, which allow parents and guardians to see the teen's follower list, VR activity, screen time, and safety default settings and block access to apps, including **Horizon Worlds**. Technology solutions have their place but are no substitute for conversations between parents and teens. At the end of the day, it's the software between the teen's ears that helps them stay safe online, in virtual reality, and in the physical world, now and later on.

Age Honesty Is Important. Here's Why

Horizon Worlds and other apps have tools, policies, and other safety precautions for teen users. But some protections won't work if that platform doesn't know the user's age. So it's critical that your teen gives their real birth year for any account they sign up for. That's especially true for Horizon Worlds, which restricts teens from worlds or events labeled 18+, which may include sexually suggestive content or content that involves gambling, marijuana, tobacco, alcohol or intense violence. A correctly stated age will also prevent adults from contacting teens they aren't connected with (i.e., following each other).

How do I talk to my teens about Horizon Worlds?

Have regular conversations with your teens, but don't make them lectures or inquisitions. It's important to listen to them too. Conversations can be short and casual, but regular communication is important. You can watch your teen explore **Horizon Worlds** (or any app on a Quest headset) by [casting the VR video](#) from the headset to a phone, tablet, computer or smart TV. It's a good way to explore VR together and talk about safety strategies and what to do if they encounter anything that makes them uncomfortable.

Important Horizon Worlds safety features and settings

Safe Zone

Safe zone is a top tool for safety. It can quickly pause the action when a person or your surroundings makes you uncomfortable. Make sure your teens know how to enable safe zone quickly. From here, they can **block**, **mute** or **report**. To access safe zone, look at your wristwatch and select the shield icon. You can access the wristwatch by turning either controller and looking at your wrist.

Personal Boundary*

Personal boundary keeps other avatars from coming too close to your avatar. The boundary is on by default for non-friends, but it can also be on for everyone or off for everyone. We recommend teens keep the personal boundary default setting on. Additionally, if someone attempts to touch your avatar, their hand will fade away. You can't adjust this setting; it's on for everyone. To access personal boundary settings, go to **Settings > Safety**.

Voice Mode*

By default, users will hear all nearby users at the same volume, but with voice mode, users can easily switch to garbled voices, in which non-friends voices come across as unintelligible, friendly sounds. The default setting for teens is garbled voices. We recommend teens keep this setting on. To access voice mode, go to **Settings > Sounds**.

Block

Anonymously block others so you don't see or hear that person, and they don't see or hear you. It does not remove them from the world at that time, but in the future, you won't be placed in the same copy of that world. To block, look at your wristwatch and select the shield icon. Select the nameplate above the person's avatar and **block**.

Mute

You can mute others if they're too loud or say things you don't want to hear. You can also mute your microphone. To mute other people, look at your wristwatch and select the shield icon. Select the user's nameplate and **mute**.

Report

You can report others who may have violated Horizon Worlds' community standards. The service automatically captures a rolling video of the last two minutes of your experience, which normally remains on your device but can be attached to any reports. To report, look at your wristwatch and select the shield icon. Select the user's nameplate and **report**.

Privacy Controls

Privacy controls, accessible under your teen's profile image in Horizon Worlds, allow them to choose whether their followers can see if they are active in Horizon Worlds or where they are within Horizon Worlds. Both of these settings are off by default for teens.

**Parents can control this feature using Meta VR parental supervision tools.*

About ConnectSafely

ConnectSafely is a Silicon Valley, California-based nonprofit organization dedicated to educating users of connected technology about safety, privacy and security. We publish research-based safety tips, parents' guidebooks, advice, news and commentary on all aspects of tech use and policy.