

# SAFE ON SOCIAL NEW APP CALLED 'AMONG US'

## A GAME CALLED - AMONG US

This online game has become the go-to Pandemic entertainment of the past few months.

The game is very simple, and has been in existence since 2018, but its popularity has exploded with the advent of the global pandemic.

The game is available on all mobile devices and on computer where it has a substantial following on Discord, and Steam.

Players on the game streaming service Twitch, TikTok and major YouTube stars have all played with millions of viewers tuning in. As an example of just HOW popular this game is – a recent New York Times articles referenced at least 200 millions hours logged by users viewing others playing the game on Twitch alone just this year. The majority of players come from the 13-20 age group, but the numbers of adults participating is increasing.

“Among us” is everywhere right now and looks to only expand in popularity, of the games being played during the pandemic – this is possibly the most innocuous if basic online safety rules be followed.

## AGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Apple 9+

Google Play 10+

Includes: In app purchases, and ads

## WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

The premise is simple.

The game involves 4-10 players being confined on a space ship in desperate need of repairs. Every player is given a random designation as either a crew mate or an imposter. Players must move around the space ship trying to complete given tasks while trying to out the imposters before they destroy the ship. Players suspected of being the imposter are voted off the ship by team members, with the loser being ejected from an airlock into space.



An imposter is actually an alien, seeking to murder the crew before the repairs can be completed. The crew wins when they complete the repairs, the imposter when all the crew have been taken out.

The graphics are very simple, with minimal graphic realities that are typical too many online multiplayer games.

In reality there is a considerable similarity to old school board games such as Cluedo. This is an online whodunit, where once dead, the player may still watch the outcome, but must remain silent about their death and who killed them.

There is a ninety second window offered at times throughout the game where players are able text chat and question the other players on their suspicions and deductions.

Most messaging is between player is via text windows, and the language content is heavily censored. Drop the F-bomb, and all you will see is \*\*\*\*. Users names may at times border on the offensive but the language control is excellent.

At this time, the game itself does not offer multiplayer live chat.

## **BUT.**

It is possible to use third party chat apps whilst playing, with Discord being the most versatile and the most common. Given that Discord is largely an invite only chat room host, players can control the access to voice chat, not allowing random players to join the conversation without an invite to a private chat space.

## **ISSUES**

The behaviours required to survive on the space ship, and ultimately obtain victory over team mates involves flattering the strong, attacking the weak, lying, obfuscating and engaging in deceptive behaviours.

The subterfuge necessary to stay on the space ship may not be reflective of values parents wish to see their younger children engaging in or learning about, nor may the requirement that the imposter must assassinate all other team members to win appeal.

The most risk comes from the group of ten playing being randomly selected from global participants and players failing to keep their personal information secure.

Players have reported individuals sharing SnapChat and other social media contact details via the text chat option, and all people playing this game should be reminded that keeping personal details offline whilst playing such a game is vital.

In app purchases are available. This maybe irresistible for a child, so using a separate prepaid credit card with a very low set limit can prevent any accidental purchases being run up without a parent being aware when children are gaming.

The developer's original intent was for this game to played in the same room as the other players - and as a family activity. This could provide an entertaining option to allow parents to engage with their children online, and at the same time model good digital behaviour.

## **SUMMARY**

Play this with your children and respect the age restrictions.

Decide for yourself if this game is appropriate for your child.

Advise younger players to keep all personal details and other social media accounts private.

Create a group of personal friends to play together.

