



# Gooseberry Parent

## QZone

### What is QZone?

Predominantly a Chinese social networking app, that enables users to write blogs, keep diaries, send photos, listen to music and chat with others. For users outside of China, QZone is accessed via QQInternational, an app that allows users to share photos, 'friend' and chat with others, and make video calls. The full version of QZone is available only in Chinese and is one of the world's largest social networks.

**QQ International is not a popular app amongst children in the UK but the temptation of being able to contact people on a global scale could encourage more users to sign up.**

### Key Features of QZone/QQ to be aware of

- QQ International can be downloaded for free from the app store or Google play and enables users outside of China to access a limited version of QZone, a popular social networking website.
- The app can be accessed on any digital device and requires use of the internet.
- To register on the app, users must enter their country and mobile phone number. A code is then sent to the phone via a text message, which the user enters to complete registration.
- QQ International requires the creation of a 'nickname' when you sign up. This name can be changed at any point.
- Users of QQ International can upload photos, chat via text or video calling, and friend other users. They can also post comments to their page and 'like' the posts of other users on the app.
- Users can find other users and groups to join by enabling location services. Known contacts can also be found by allowing the app to access your phone's contact list.
- Chats on the app can be translated into many different languages including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French, German, Spanish and English, allowing users to connect and communicate with people from around the world.
- QQ International is currently the largest chat community in the world.
- This is social networking on a global scale.

### Enjoying QZone/QQ safely and managing the risks

- **Signing Up** – Encourage your child to keep log in details and passwords secure and share them with you.
- **Nicknames** – Encourage your child to choose an original and creative nickname that avoids giving away their own. Remind them that they can change their nicknames at any time if they wish.
- **Adding Friends** – Discuss basic rules with your child about adding friends to their account. Encourage your child to add only friends they know and trust in real life.
- **Posting** – Encourage your child to think carefully about what they want to post before they post it, as it may be accessible to many people around the world. Remind them that they can delete any posts on their page at any time. Encourage them to delete any controversial or posts that reveal information.
- **Chatting** – Encourage your child to chat with only friends they know and trust in real life. Discuss the potential problems with chatting with people they don't know. Chatting and contacting strangers should not be encouraged.
- **As this is a global app, your child could interact with people who share very different cultures, views and opinions that could be beyond their understanding and level of maturity.**



- **Act** - Encourage them to leave any chats that make them uncomfortable and to show them to you.
- **Translating Chats** – Remind your child that chats and posts on QQ International are translated literally, and may not accurately represent what they or other users have intended.
- **Posting Photos** – Remind your child to not post any photos that reveal their face, location or any other potentially identifying information.
- **Location Settings** – Ensure your child has these turned off, as it could allow their location to be tracked.
- **Sharing Information** – Remind your child to think carefully about their posts on their page and ensure that they do not give away identifying information about themselves such as their address, phone number, school or location.
- **Communicate your expectations** – As a parent, it is your responsibility to make clear what is and is not acceptable online behaviour. You need to accept that allowing your child access to online apps like these, requires trust and clear boundaries, for their own wellbeing.
- **Having the difficult conversation** – Educate your child in the correct way to communicate online. Avoid writing anything inappropriate or entering any ‘wrong’ conversations. Explain why your child should not send rude pictures. Talk this through with them and explain the possible consequences and how much trouble they can get into both legally and personally.
- **Model positive and safe online behaviour** – Safe behaviour online starts with us as adults. Following basic safety suggestions and demonstrating these will help your child to follow in your footsteps. You also have a better chance of staying safer online yourself.
- **Do your homework** – Take time to read Privacy Policies and Terms of Use to find out how app developers use personal information. You can also learn about acceptable use of the app and find advice on securing online accounts and set privacy settings on devices.
- **Download and use the app** – Having a go yourself can help you understand how the app works and how to secure an account.
- **Read the reviews** for the app, this will give you an idea what other people are saying about it and what potential risks there may be.
- **Making an informed decision** – You are a parent and you will know your child enough to decide on allowing them to use QZone or QQ and any other social networking app. QZone is predominantly used by a Chinese audience but the ability to contact people all over the world using QQ could prove tempting for some children. By following the steps outlined above you have a better opportunity to ensure that your child is protected online.

Remember the World Wide Web should be a fun, creative and liberating experience for all, but take the right steps to make it a safe one!