

# Portland and Lewiston Public Library: Discord FAQ

## What is Discord?

- Discord is a social media platform which makes it easy to talk to other users. By using Discord, you can use **channels** to chat with other users on the server through text, voice, or video. You can also share images, GIFs and links.
- **Channels** have names corresponding to the topic they are about. The channel “Book Recs” is for discussing recent reads and recommending books; “Introduce Yourself” is a channel in which users can post a short introduction and meet other members of the server; and so on.
- Discord also has a private message function. Through privacy settings, users can choose whether to allow only friends to directly message them, or allow members of the same server to send direct messages. See more on how to change your privacy settings below.
- Unlike other social media platforms like Facebook or Instagram, you cannot see everything on the Discord site automatically. You must join a server before you can see anyone’s posts. If you have ever been a member of a private Facebook group, Discord servers are somewhat similar.
- The open format, different customizable channels, and slightly more private forum make Discord an excellent place to organize and participate in live community activities.

## How do I get started on Discord?

You need to join a **server** in order to see other people’s posts or participate in channel discussions. A **server** is essentially a set of chat rooms that all members of that server share. Most servers are invitation only, meaning you need to receive a link from an existing member to join. You can join ours by sending in an [application](#)!

You will see a list of all the servers you’ve joined on the far-left side of the Discord screen – they are represented with circular icons. Click or tap on an icon to change between servers. Other users will only be able to see posts in a server if they are also a member. The different permissions for members can be changed between servers. The P&LPL Teen server settings are relatively strict to protect your privacy and the privacy of other users, so if you have any specific questions about who can do what, ask the moderator of the server. The moderators of the P&LPL Teen server are Teen Library staff members.

## Are there any rules?

Yes. Just like the real Teen Library, the Teen Library Discord has a simple [virtual Code of Conduct](#). When you apply to join the server, we will ask you to read and agree to the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct exists to keep all teen users safe and to ensure the server environment is welcoming to all.

## What kinds of posts can I make? How can I post things?

Once you've joined a server, you can participate in a discussion by choosing a channel from the list on the left side of the screen, next to the list of servers, and then typing your message at the bottom of the screen.

- **Using text chat:**
  - Text channels are marked with the # symbol.
  - Choose a text channel from the list on the left to display the posts in that section.
  - Type your message in the box at the bottom of the screen.
  - When you're satisfied with your message, press enter to post it to the channel.
  - If you've made a mistake, you can edit your post by clicking the pencil icon when hovering over your post (computer) or pressing and holding on your post, then choosing "edit" (smartphone).
  - You can also delete your post from the chat by clicking the trash can icon. Once a post is deleted, no user will be able to see it, and it cannot be restored.
- **Using voice chat:**
  - Voice channels are marked with the speaker icon.
  - Tap or click a voice chat channel from the list on the left to join it. Discord will connect with your microphone, and you should be able to immediately hear anyone else who is speaking in that call.
  - You can mute yourself by tapping the microphone icon at the bottom of the screen.
  - To leave a voice call, disconnect by selecting the icon of a phone with an x.
- **Using video chat:**
  - There are no video-only channels. To video chat, you must first join a voice channel (see above).
  - Once you're in a voice channel, you can choose to start sharing your video by tapping the icon labeled "Video" at the bottom of the screen.
  - Alternatively, you can choose to screen share by clicking the icon of a computer screen labeled "Screen" (computer) or swiping up from the bottom of your screen and pressing "Screenshare" (mobile).
  - You can turn off your video at any time by tapping the same "Video" icon or leave the call entirely by choosing the "Disconnect" phone-and-X icon.

Keep in mind that all your posts in one server will be visible to anyone who has joined the same server, unless you are posting in a channel with additional privacy settings.

## How do I format my posts?

**Mentioning other users:**

If you want another user to receive a notification of your message, you can mention them in your post. Typing “@” will bring up a list of other members of the server. You can choose from this list or continue typing to narrow it down to the desired person.

### Changing the appearance of your text:

You can change the appearance of your post by adding certain characters around your text:

**Bold:** \*\*your bold text goes here\*\*

*Italics:* \*this will be in italics\* \_this will also be in italics\_

~~Strikethrough:~~ ~~this text will have a line through it~~

Underlined: \_\_use two underscores to make underline text\_\_

Spoiler: ||This text will be hidden!||

You can also combine these functions:

***Bold italics:*** \*\*\*Three asterisks\*\*\*

*Underlined italics:* \_\_\*Two underscores, one asterisk\*\_\_

***Bold, underlined italics:*** \_\_\*\*\*Two underscores, three asterisks\*\*\*\_\_

### How do I make safe connections with other teens online?

- Do not reveal personally identifying information: address, birthday, phone number, etc.
- Do not accept friend requests from users you do not know.
- Explore and customize the Privacy & Safety features on your account by clicking on the settings icon next to your circular profile icon/picture.
- Public conversations are safer than private messages – be wary of anyone trying to convince you to take things to a DM or switch to a different platform (Instagram, Facebook, etc.)
  - Change your privacy settings by clicking the settings gear next to your username in the lower left and selecting “Privacy & Safety” from the list on the left. We recommend keeping “Allow direct messages from server members” off. This will keep your direct messages limited to users that you choose to friend on the platform.

### How do I go to a Library program on Discord?

First, you must be a member of the P&LPL Teen Library Discord. You can join by [applying here](#). Teen staff will review your application and email you an invitation link. **Please do not use a school email address** as many school email systems, including Portland Public Schools email addresses, are unable to receive our emails.

Once you are a member, you can join a Library program online by choosing the appropriate channel at the time of the program. See the “Announcements” text channel for the time and location, then select the designated text or voice channel. Depending on the activity planned, you may be able to join in with your own microphone or camera!

## Why can't I post anything?

Sometimes you might try to send a text message or join a video chat, only to find that it isn't working. There are a few reasons why this might be happening:

- **Did you *just* join the server?** Newcomers to the P&LPL Teen Library server are not able to post for the first ten minutes. Just wait until the time is up. That gives you time to read our rules and introduction, and it lets Teen staff make sure everyone who joins the server is supposed to be there. Once Teen staff approves your membership, you will be able to view and post in channels.
- **Is the virtual Library closed?** Our Discord server is like a virtual version of the Teen Library space, and just like the Teen Library space it needs to be staffed. When there is no staff available to work on the server, then the Library server is “closed”. This means posting is turned off for all members.
  - The server's hours are 10-6 Monday to Thursday and 9-5 on Friday.
  - These hours are subject to change based on staff availability.
  - Special programs and events may take place outside of these hours. Check the “Announcements” channel for more info!
- **Do you need special permissions to post to a specific channel?** It could be that the channel you're in is specifically for a certain program. These channels may be limited to allow only members who have signed up for the program to post. If you want access to a channel that you are not able to post to, alert Teen staff that you would like to join that activity. A staff member will be able to add you to the group and give you posting permissions.

## Anything else?

If you have additional questions, please contact us either through email at [teens@portlib.org](mailto:teens@portlib.org) (PPL), [lplreference@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:lplreference@lewistonmaine.gov) (LPL), or by reaching out to a moderator directly on the P&LPL Teen Server.