Tips and recommendations for moderating a group chat

Hopefully you'll never be in a tricky situation; but sometimes people can troll, spam or act against XR's principles and values on group chats. In general this is less likely to happen on closed, secure chats, but it is a good idea to have 'agreed in advance' rules for this type of behaviour.

1. Always make sure there are at least three admins to moderate the chat.
2. Make sure you have an agreed group agreement in advance. It is up to your group what rules you agree to, but it is best to ensure these rules are agreed to in advance. It also helps for rules to be the same on all platforms you are using to communicate. Ensure that when people sign up to the group they are pointed to the group agreement so they know what they are agreeing to, or that they are shown it before joining the group.
3. Follow a 'two strikes and you're out' policy. On the first occasion of 'misbehaviour' an admin should remove the person/people from the group, private message them to explain they have been removed, and calmly explain why (citing the rules you have agreed). On the group chat itself that they have been removed from, explain that you have removed them from the group and why. If you have a group agreement in place most people will know the policy and know what will happen if there is bad behaviour on a group chat.
4. Give the removed person a cooling-off period and discuss re-adding them to the group provided they are willing to follow the group agreement. Ideally, if the person is happy to apologise, and wants to be added back into the group then you can add them back in, on the basis that there is only one more chance. As we said, if this is covered in the group agreement policy in advance, and everyone knows what happens in a bad behaviour situation, then nobody should be upset about this. Once that person has been let back into the group, admins should ensure that ongoing conversations are monitored and enforce the 'two strikes and you are out policy'. If necessary, you may need to remove them from the group conversations permanently, and you may also want to assess whether or not you want them involved in the XR Local Group, Community Group, or Working Group at all.
5. You may decide in your group on a zero-tolerance policy for some misbehaviour. For example: spamming (so spammers are removed straight away) and also inappropriate sexual behaviour, stalking behaviours, violent threats etc.
6. With the other moderators (ideally 3 or more) take it in turns to do the moderation, and make sure there is some kind of system where you know who is covering what and if somebody is going to be away (So you are not all away and off chat at the same time!) Make sure you provide each other with support because it can be quite stressful if it all kicks off on a chat. Just make sure that moderators also follow the policy, and are ready to be challenged and justify the removals from a group - so make sure you choose people that understand the rules that the group have agreed, and are tactful and not using it as a

power trip!

7. If something comes up that is part of a long running dispute that you do not feel able to deal with within the group, we recommend that you contact the XR Transformative

   Conflicts team by emailing xr-conflict@protonmail.com

We know that this task seems a bit onerous at first and everyone is generally quite happy on XR chats, but we really can't stress enough how important it is to make sure difficult or contentious situations don't escalate and also that everybody knows what the rules of behaviour are on the chats.