Configuration

Groups

OpenClaw treats group chats consistently across surfaces: WhatsApp, Telegram, Discord, Slack, Signal, iMessage, Microsoft Teams.

Beginner intro (2 minutes)

OpenClaw “lives” on your own messaging accounts. There is no separate WhatsApp bot user. If **you** are in a group, OpenClaw can see that group and respond there.

Default behavior:

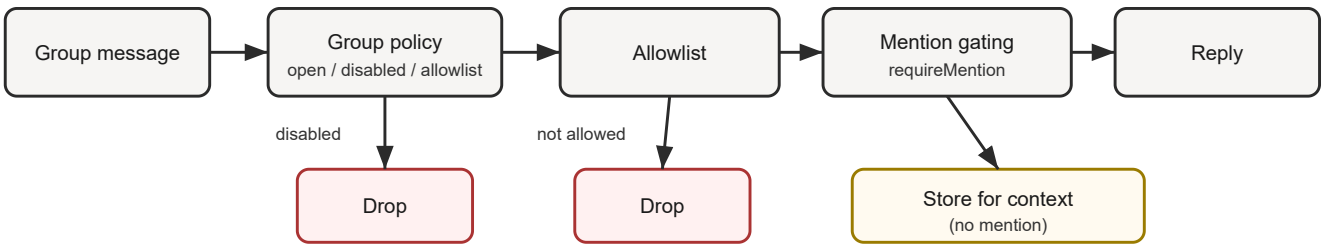
- Groups are restricted (`groupPolicy: "allowlist"`).
- Replies require a mention unless you explicitly disable mention gating.

Translation: allowlisted senders can trigger OpenClaw by mentioning it.

> TL;DR
>
> - **DM access** is controlled by `*.allowFrom` .
> - **Group access** is controlled by `*.groupPolicy` + allowlists (`*.groups` , `*.groupAllowFrom`).
> - **Reply triggering** is controlled by mention gating (`requireMention` , `/activation`).

Quick flow (what happens to a group message):

```
groupPolicy? disabled -> drop
groupPolicy? allowlist -> group allowed? no -> drop
requireMention? yes -> mentioned? no -> store for context only
otherwise -> reply
```



If you want…

Goal	What to set
Allow all groups but only reply on @mentions	`groups: { "*": { requireMention: true } }`
Disable all group replies	`groupPolicy: "disabled"`
Only specific groups	`groups: { "<group-id>": { ... } }` (no `"*"` key)
Only you can trigger in groups	`groupPolicy: "allowlist"` , `groupAllowFrom: ["+1555..."]`

Session keys

Group sessions use `agent:<agentId>:<channel>:group:<id>` session keys (rooms/channels use `agent:<agentId>:<channel>:channel:<id>`).

Telegram forum topics add `:topic:<threadId>` to the group id so each topic has its own session.

Direct chats use the main session (or per-sender if configured).

Heartbeats are skipped for group sessions.

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Pattern: personal DMs + public groups (single agent)

Yes — this works well if your “personal” traffic is **DMs** and your “public” traffic is **groups**.

Why: in single-agent mode, DMs typically land in the **main** session key (`agent:main:main`), while groups always use **non-main** session keys (`agent:main:<channel>:group:<id>`). If you enable sandboxing with `mode: "non-main"` , those group sessions run in Docker while your main DM session stays on-host.

This gives you one agent “brain” (shared workspace + memory), but two execution postures:

DMs: full tools (host)

Groups: sandbox + restricted tools (Docker)

> If you need truly separate workspaces/personas (“personal” and “public” must never mix), use a second agent + bindings. See **Multi-Agent Routing**.

Example (DMs on host, groups sandboxed + messaging-only tools):

```
{
  agents: {
    defaults: {
      sandbox: {
        mode: "non-main", // groups/channels are non-main -> sandboxed
        scope: "session", // strongest isolation (one container per group/channel)
        workspaceAccess: "none",
      },
    },
  },
  tools: {
    sandbox: {
      tools: {
        // If allow is non-empty, everything else is blocked (deny still wins).
        allow: ["group:messaging", "group:sessions"],
        deny: ["group:runtime", "group:fs", "group:ui", "nodes", "cron", "gateway"
      },
    },
  },
}
```

Want “groups can only see folder X” instead of “no host access”? Keep `workspaceAccess: "none"` and mount only allowlisted paths into the sandbox:

```
{
  agents: {
    defaults: {
      sandbox: {
        mode: "non-main",
        scope: "session",
        workspaceAccess: "none",
        docker: {
          binds: [
            // hostPath:containerPath:mode
            "/home/user/FriendsShared:/data:ro",
          ],
        },
      },
    },
  },
}
```

Related:

- Configuration keys and defaults:
- Debugging why a tool is blocked:
- Bind mounts details:

Display labels

- UI labels use `displayName` when available, formatted as `<channel>:<token>`.
- `#room` is reserved for rooms/channels; group chats use `g-<slug>` (lowercase, spaces → `-`, keep `#@+._-`).

Group policy

Control how group/room messages are handled per channel:

```
channels: {
  whatsapp: {
    groupPolicy: "disabled", // "open" | "disabled" | "allowlist"
    groupAllowFrom: ["+15551234567"],
  },
  telegram: {
    groupPolicy: "disabled",
    groupAllowFrom: ["123456789"], // numeric Telegram user id (wizard can reso
  },
  signal: {
    groupPolicy: "disabled",
    groupAllowFrom: ["+15551234567"],
  },
  imessage: {
    groupPolicy: "disabled",
    groupAllowFrom: ["chat_id:123"],
  },
  msteams: {
    groupPolicy: "disabled",
    groupAllowFrom: ["user@org.com"],
  },
  discord: {
    groupPolicy: "allowlist",
    guilds: {
      GUILD_ID: { channels: { help: { allow: true } } },
    },
  },
  slack: {
    groupPolicy: "allowlist",
    channels: { "#general": { allow: true } },
  },
  matrix: {
    groupPolicy: "allowlist",
    groupAllowFrom: ["@owner:example.org"],
    groups: {
      "!roomId:example.org": { allow: true },
      "#alias:example.org": { allow: true },
    },
  },
```

```
  },
```

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Policy	Behavior
`"open"`	Groups bypass allowlists; mention-gating still applies.
`"disabled"`	Block all group messages entirely.
`"allowlist"`	Only allow groups/rooms that match the configured allowlist.

Notes:

- `groupPolicy` is separate from mention-gating (which requires @mentions).
- WhatsApp/Telegram/Signal/iMessage/Microsoft Teams: use `groupAllowFrom` (fallback: explicit `allowFrom`).
- Discord: allowlist uses `channels.discord.guilds.<id>.channels`.
- Slack: allowlist uses `channels.slack.channels`.
- Matrix: allowlist uses `channels.matrix.groups` (room IDs, aliases, or names). Use `channels.matrix.groupAllowFrom` to restrict senders; per-room `users` allowlists are also supported.
- Group DMs are controlled separately (`channels.discord.dm.*`, `channels.slack.dm.*`).
- Telegram allowlist can match user IDs (`"123456789"`, `"telegram:123456789"`, `"tg:123456789"`) or usernames (`"@alice"` or `"alice"`); prefixes are case-insensitive.
- Default is `groupPolicy: "allowlist"`; if your group allowlist is empty, group messages are blocked.

Quick mental model (evaluation order for group messages):

1. `groupPolicy` (open/disabled/allowlist)

2. group allowlists (`*.groups` , `*.groupAllowFrom` , channel-specific allowlist)
3. mention gating (`requireMention` , `/activation`)

Mention gating (default)

Group messages require a mention unless overridden per group. Defaults live per subsystem under `*.groups."*"` .

Replying to a bot message counts as an implicit mention (when the channel supports reply metadata). This applies to Telegram, WhatsApp, Slack, Discord, and Microsoft Teams.

```
{
  channels: {
    whatsapp: {
      groups: {
        "*": { requireMention: true },
        "123@g.us": { requireMention: false },
      },
    },
    telegram: {
      groups: {
        "*": { requireMention: true },
        "123456789": { requireMention: false },
      },
    },
    imessage: {
      groups: {
        "*": { requireMention: true },
        "123": { requireMention: false },
      },
    },
  },
  agents: {
    list: [
      {
        id: "main",
        groupChat: {
          mentionPatterns: ["@openclaw", "openclaw", "\\+15555550123"],
          historyLimit: 50,
        },
      },
    ],
  },
}
```

Notes:

- `mentionPatterns` are case-insensitive regexes.

Surfaces that provide explicit mentions still pass; patterns are a fallback.

Per-agent override: `agents.list[].groupChat.mentionPatterns` (useful when multiple agents share a group).

Mention gating is only enforced when mention detection is possible (native mentions or `mentionPatterns` are configured).

Discord defaults live in `channels.discord.guilds."*"` (overridable per guild/channel).

Group history context is wrapped uniformly across channels and is **pending-only** (messages skipped due to mention gating); use `messages.groupChat.historyLimit` for the global default and `channels.<channel>.historyLimit` (or `channels.<channel>.accounts.*.historyLimit`) for overrides. Set `0` to disable.

Group/channel tool restrictions (optional)

Some channel configs support restricting which tools are available **inside a specific group/room/channel**.

`tools`: allow/deny tools for the whole group.

`toolsBySender`: per-sender overrides within the group (keys are sender IDs/usernames/emails/phone numbers depending on the channel). Use `"*"` as a wildcard.

Resolution order (most specific wins):

1. group/channel `toolsBySender` match
2. group/channel `tools`
3. default (`"*"`) `toolsBySender` match
4. default (`"*"`) `tools`

Example (Telegram):

```
{
  channels: {
    telegram: {
      groups: {
        "*": { tools: { deny: ["exec"] } },
        "-1001234567890": {
          tools: { deny: ["exec", "read", "write"] },
          toolsBySender: {
            "123456789": { alsoAllow: ["exec"] },
          },
        },
      },
    },
  },
}
```

Notes:

- Group/channel tool restrictions are applied in addition to global/agent tool policy (deny still wins).
- Some channels use different nesting for rooms/channels (e.g., Discord `guilds.*.channels.*`, Slack `channels.*`, MS Teams `teams.*.channels.*`).

Group allowlists

When `channels.whatsapp.groups`, `channels.telegram.groups`, or `channels.imessage.groups` is configured, the keys act as a group allowlist. Use `"*"` to allow all groups while still setting default mention behavior.

Common intents (copy/paste):

1. Disable all group replies

```
{
  channels: { whatsapp: { groupPolicy: "disabled" } },
}
```

2. Allow only specific groups (WhatsApp)

```
{
  channels: {
    whatsapp: {
      groups: {
        "123@g.us": { requireMention: true },
        "456@g.us": { requireMention: false },
      },
    },
  },
}
```

3. Allow all groups but require mention (explicit)

```
{
  channels: {
    whatsapp: {
      groups: { "*": { requireMention: true } },
    },
  },
}
```

4. Only the owner can trigger in groups (WhatsApp)

```
{
  channels: {
    whatsapp: {
      groupPolicy: "allowlist",
      groupAllowFrom: ["+15551234567"],
      groups: { "*": { requireMention: true } },
    },
  },
}
```

Activation (owner-only)

Group owners can toggle per-group activation:

`/activation mention`

`/activation always`

Owner is determined by `channels.whatsapp.allowFrom` (or the bot's self E.164 when unset). Send the command as a standalone message. Other surfaces currently ignore `/activation`.

Context fields

Group inbound payloads set:

`ChatType=group`

`GroupSubject` (if known)

`GroupMembers` (if known)

`WasMentioned` (mention gating result)

Telegram forum topics also include `MessageThreadId` and `IsForum`.

The agent system prompt includes a group intro on the first turn of a new group session. It reminds the model to respond like a human, avoid Markdown tables, and avoid typing literal `\n` sequences.

iMessage specifics

- Prefer `chat_id:<id>` when routing or allowlisting.
- List chats: `imsg chats --limit 20`.
- Group replies always go back to the same `chat_id`.

WhatsApp specifics

See **Group messages** for WhatsApp-only behavior (history injection, mention handling details).

‹ Group Messages Broadcast Groups ›