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The Evolution API settings that matter

WhatsApp & APIs

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The Evolution API settings that matter

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Evolution API has a lot of settings, but only a handful decide whether the service is secure, whether it keeps its sessions and whether it accepts connections. This article says **which ones and why**. The exact names and allowed values change from version to version, so always check them against the example file and the project's **official documentation**, and do not copy them from an old guide.

The ones you cannot leave undecided

Setting	Why it matters
The API key (`AUTHENTICATION_API_KEY`)	It protects every request. Whoever has it sends messages from your number. Make it random and keep it in a password manager.
The database (PostgreSQL or MySQL)	Where instances and messages are kept. You pick the provider and give the connection address, user and password. They must match the database service in the compose file.
Redis	Many guides use it. If the example file includes it, the service must be able to reach it; if you drop it, switch it off in the same place and do not leave it half done.
The integration and its credentials	Baileys (QR) or the Cloud API. With the Cloud API the token and the rest of your Meta app details come in too, and they are secrets like the key.
The image version	Pick a specific version instead of always following the latest. That way you know what is running and can go back.
The volumes (in the compose file)	Not a setting, but they decide everything: without a persistent volume for the instances and the database, a restart wipes the sessions.

Working with the settings file

1. **Start from the example for the version you will use.** The project's example file lists the settings that version recognises. A setting from an old guide may no longer exist.

2. **Change one thing at a time.** If you change ten and the service stops starting, you cannot tell which one did it.

3. **Restart the service to apply them.** With Docker Compose, `docker compose up -d` recreates the containers that changed. Then `docker compose logs -f` to confirm it read what you wrote.

4. **Keep a copy of the file off the server**, somewhere private. Without it you cannot recreate the service, and with the key inside it cannot go in a public repository.

> **The settings file holds secrets.**
> Never put it in a public repository, a screenshot or a support message. If the API key leaks, change it in the file, restart and update everything that uses it (n8n, your website, your scripts).

Typical mistakes

Mistake	Consequence
Leaving the example key in place	Anyone who reads the public documentation knows it.
Database password the same as the API key	One leak opens both doors.
No persistent volume	Sessions vanish at the first restart.
Always following the latest image	An automatic update can bring a Baileys version that will not connect. Pin the version and update when you decide to.

For what to change once the service is up, see **securing Evolution API** and **Evolution API with PostgreSQL and Redis**. If you need environment variables for your own application, see **environment variables and secrets**.

RECOMMENDED

Running Evolution API on a VPS and want more room for it? Have a look at the plans.

See VPS servers →

SEE ALSO

- Installing Evolution API with Docker Compose →
- Securing Evolution API →
- Support Policy →

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