



Staying safe online

Child online safety: Ensuring positive online interactions

The online world opens up many fun and exciting opportunities for young people, it's a place for them to learn, be creative and communicate. However, it also provides an easy route for groomers to gain access to vulnerable children with the aim of exploiting them or leading to harmful discussions online.

It is therefore vitally important for children to understand how to establish a safe environment for themselves online and how to positively interact with others. Online interaction includes activities such as: direct messaging, voice or video calls, commenting, reacting or 'liking', tagging and playing games. Young people should consider their own conduct online and be able to interact with others in a way that is respectful and inclusive, and free from abuse, bullying and harassment.

Children should be reminded:

- What is considered to be acceptable behaviour online and also remind them of what is considered to be bullying, harassment or abuse.
- How to delete, block and report other users.
- To limit the information that they share about themselves and control their interactions with others. This includes limiting the content that others are able to share about them through features such as tagging.
- That defaults are usually set to public on games and social media, it is therefore important that they change their privacy settings to 'private' or 'friends only'.
- About stranger danger and that not everyone online is who they say they are. It is very easy for an individual to hide their true identity behind a screen. Remind children to only talk to and accept 'friend' requests from people they know.

Here are some links dedicated to children's safety online, which have further guidance and specialist resources for children, parents and professionals, which you may find helpful.

- [Childnet International](#) works directly with young people to understand their experiences online and share safety advice.
- [Internet Matters](#) empowers parents, carers and professionals to help children enjoy connected technology safely. They provide age-appropriate advice on online platforms, apps, games, and live streaming services, covering everything from setting up safely to talking to teenagers about all things digital.
- [CEOP](#) - is a law enforcement agency and is here to help keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online.

