



# Staying safe online

## Online Conduct

When it comes to the online world, it is probably fair to say that a child will have a much larger circle of friends online than in reality. Their list of friends is likely to include 'friends of friends' and much more worryingly, may even include complete strangers. This obviously poses a huge risk to children's safety online, not only because of who has access to what they share and post online but also in regard to who can communicate with them online.

Due to the anonymity of the online world, it makes it very easy for individuals to hide their true identity or behave in a way they wouldn't necessarily behave in the real world. This can obviously lead to issues such as causing offence, online bullying or harassment. It is therefore important to remind children to remain kind and courteous and to consider how they act and behave when online.

Children may also be at risk because of their own behaviour, for example, by sharing too much information about themselves online. Children need to be mindful of the effect that their online activity can have on both themselves and others. Everything they do online creates a 'digital footprint' that has the potential to be viewed by anyone on the internet. It's good for children to think about who is able to see and share anything they have posted. Remind children to keep personal information safe and not share it with strangers online. Have conversations with children and make sure they are aware how to report inappropriate conversations, messages or images.

For further advice on how and where to report, visit [Safer Internet](#) or [Internet Matters](#).

