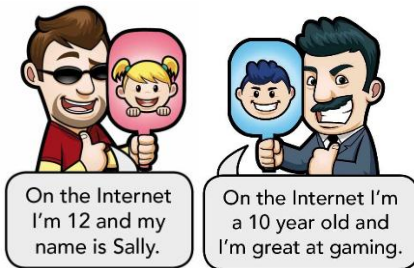


Online Safety Parent Forum

A Parent's Guide to Social Media



With social media you can send messages, share pictures, videos and chat with people all over the world.



... but who are you connecting with?

Anyone can use the Internet. Not everyone is who they say they are and some people are not nice.

	Snapchat	13 years old
	Instagram	13 years old
	TikTok	13 years old
	YouTube	13 years old
	Facebook	13 years old
	WhatsApp	16 years old

Age ratings will help to keep you safe

Most social media platforms require users to be of a minimum age to use their services. Lying about age and providing false information is very common among children. Unfortunately many parents are aware this is happening.



Why is it important to use your real age?

Children will have access to better safety settings when talking to people who are the same age and share similar interests/hobbies.

They will see content appropriate for their age.

If they lied and used an older age, they will be exposed to content, language and advertising that is not appropriate and safety settings will fail. **The dangers of having a social media account when under age – the risks are very real.**



Example: If a child is 7 but says they are 14 when they sign up for an account.

Potential Dangers Now:

- They get used to lying when signing up to other apps and websites.
- They may get friend requests from older children.

However, in 4 years time when the child becomes 11, the social media computer will believe that they are 18, an adult.

Potential Dangers:

- They will get friend requests from adults.
- They will see adverts targeted at adults.
- They will see content for 18+
- Children safety settings will not work.

What you can do to help keep your child safe online

- Do not allow your child to sign up to any social media accounts for which they are under age. Your child will be much safer online and is much less likely to see any inappropriate content.
- If your child has a social media account, if you follow them, you will be able to see the content they put out and engage with. You will also be better equipped in helping to guide them.
- Discuss the positive and negative elements of social media and always remind them to think before they share.
- Regularly discuss with your child the importance of letting you know who they are connecting with and not to purchase anything online without gaining your permission first.
- Regularly remind your child they should only connect online with friends and family they know in the physical world and not to accept 'friend play request' from strangers.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.

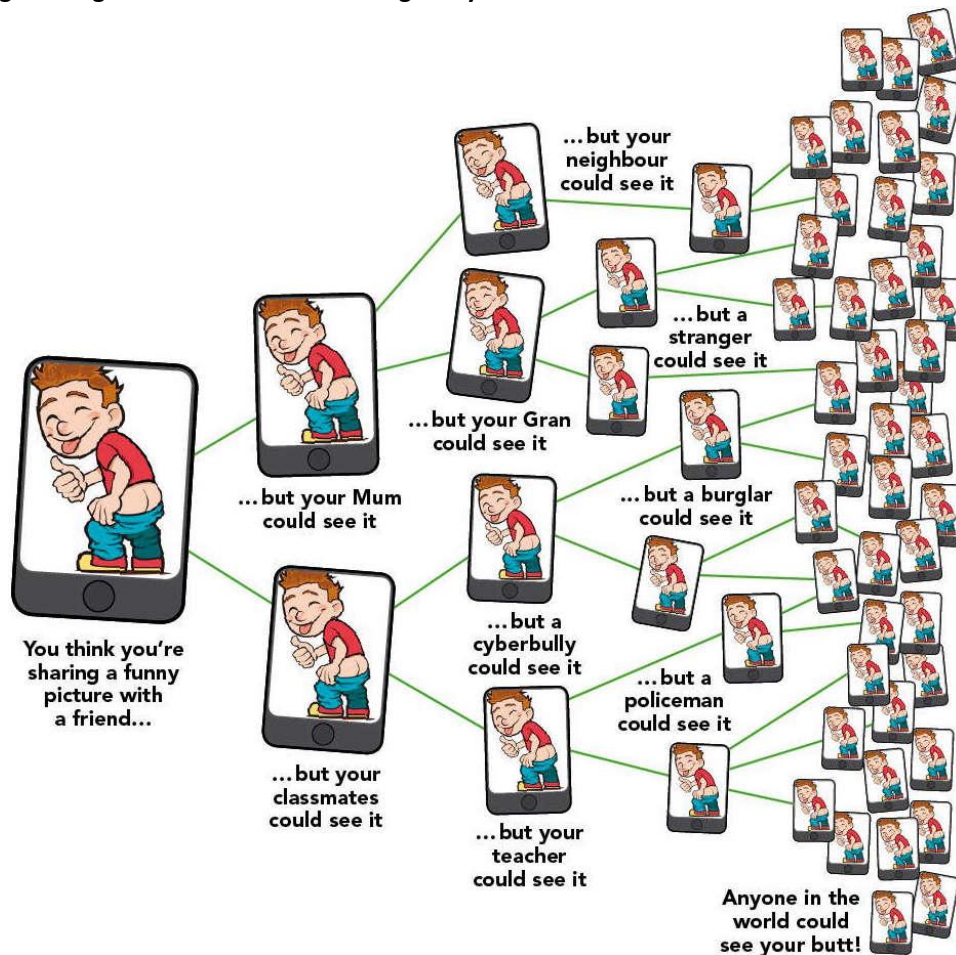
A Parent's Guide to Sharing Pictures



Think before you share

Using social media, videos, web cam, live streaming and texting, young people are sharing more and more images of themselves, from an early age.

Sending an image means it can be shared again by



others.



Did you know there are rules for sharing images?

- You need consent to take and share images/videos of others.
- People also need your consent to take and share your image.



What is sexting?

Sexting is sending an indecent image. It can lead to online bullying, grooming or emotional stress.



It is a criminal offence

If your child is over 10 and has or sends an indecent image of someone under the age of 18, it is a criminal offence.

- The police can get involved.
- Your child could receive a criminal record and be placed on the Sex Offenders Register.

This could harm their future.

What you can do to help keep your child safe online

- Discuss regularly with your child what they like to take pictures or videos of? Who do they share them with?
- Regularly remind them to think before they share. Any image they send of themselves can also be shared again by others.
- If you see an indecent image you should report it. The quicker an image is reported, the easier it is for Internet platforms and the police to take the image offline and stop it being shared. Platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Google can remove images and prevent them spreading further.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.

A Parent's Guide to Gaming



Gaming can be real fun and help develop some great skills. They are designed by the best minds to hook in children and become addictive. But for many parents, it seems like a foreign world.



Each game has an age rating (PEGI)

The rating indicates if the game is suitable for your child's age and they also reflect the main reason why a game is rated.



Think before you chat!

Age ratings do not apply to the chat part of an online game. Most online games allow children to talk and message others directly whilst playing. Age ratings will not restrict the type of conversation or language used.



Strangers play online gaming



There are many people playing online and not everyone is who they say they are. Some people are not nice and play online games as a way to talk to children. They use voice changer headsets so they can trick and sound like a child.



Not everyone is a winner

Some games are good at encouraging young people to buy extra features and in-game rewards. This is simply a trick to get parents to spend real money in return for imaginary prizes in an imaginary world.

What you can do to help keep your child safe online

- Do not allow your child to play an inappropriate age related game. These games will expose their minds to content that they are not yet ready for and can influence negatively their behaviour from an early age.
- Regularly discuss with your child the importance of letting you know who they are playing with and not to purchase anything online without gaining your permission first.
- Regularly talk with your child that they should only play games online with friends and family they know in the physical world and not to accept 'play request' from strangers.
- Try and play some of the games together.
- If your child uses a headset, sometimes ask them to remove it so you can monitor any conversations they may be having online.
- Constantly monitor the number of online friends they have.
- Ask your child to always speak nicely online and that if anyone is unkind or asks to have a private chat or meet, they should let you know straight away.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.

A Parent's Guide to Live Streaming



What is live streaming?

Live streaming is the broadcasting of real-time, live video to an audience over the Internet. It is highly popular with young people as it presents the chance for them to be a creator, a presenter and to be seen by a potentially huge audience.



Who can live stream?

Anyone can live stream. All you need to be able to live stream, is an Internet enabled device, like a smart phone or tablet, and an account to a social media platform to broadcast on.

You can broadcast anything you are doing at any given time, across the world without delay or edit. As its live, the content is not moderated or censored and strangers can easily talk directly to children. This is understandably worrying for parents.



What are the risks?

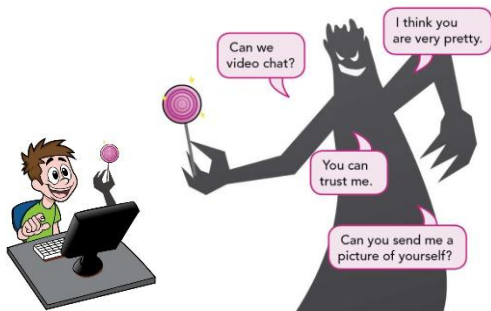
As with any form of social media, there are risks. These include receiving negative comments, exposing more personal information than intended and contact from strangers.

There is also the risk of possible exposure to sexualised content, both visually and through chat, and the loss of control of a streamed video once online as there is nothing to stop it being recorded, shared and used to threaten or blackmail.

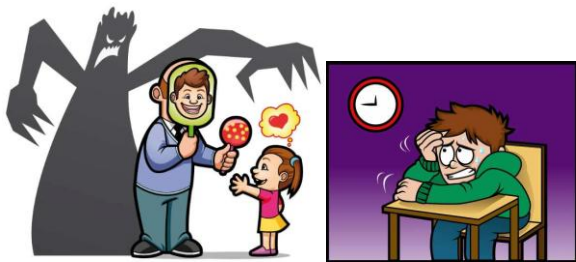
What you can do to help keep your child safe online

- It is important to have regular conversations with your child about their Internet habits and how they communicate online.
- Ask your child about live streaming, their views on it and if it's something that they currently do, or have thought of taking part in.
- If your child has or follows any streaming channels online, then if you subscribe to them, you will be able receive the content as well and be better prepared in helping to advise your child.
- Always let your child know that they should never purchase anything online without gaining your permission first.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.

A Parent's Guide to Online Grooming



Some people try to use the Internet, social media and gaming to groom children and young people.



What is online grooming?

Grooming is about building a relationship using lies and nice words to gain a person's trust. This trust is then used to trick the person into doing the wrong things, make bad choices and to hurt them.

The groomer then makes the victim feel scared by threatening to tell others if they do not continue to do what they want them to do. This is called 'blackmail'.

Grooming and blackmail can be far easier online.



Where does this happen?

People who want to groom children will use any sites and services which are popular with young people. This includes , gaming, social media and live streaming channels

They can find out a lot about individuals before they make contact by looking for things posted online.



How does this happen?

In games and chatrooms groomers try to start conversations and build trust. They can create multiple online identities and even pretend to be a young person. They trick children into chatting and sharing images through private chats using social media, mobile chat apps and webcams.

They can send out multiple 'friend requests' at random in the hope that young people will accept them.

This doesn't mean you should panic or not let your child go online, simply that they should be aware that there can be risks on **any** platform they are using.

What you can do to help keep your child safe online

- You should assume that if a site or app is popular with young people then groomers with an interest in children will try to use it to communicate with them.
- Always discuss regularly with your child what they do online and who with. They should be wary of people they talk to online, not share too much personal information and be aware of how they appear in their online profiles.

Things to look out for:

- Has your child suddenly become very secretive?
- Are they sad or withdrawn but won't say why? Let them know you're there to listen.
- Do they seem distracted?
- Do they have sudden mood swings? Mood swings are not uncommon but they can be a sign that someone has built a relationship with your child which is affecting their moods.
- Are they unable to switch off from their phone or social media? This can be a sign someone is controlling them.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.

A Parent's Guide to Online Influencers



What is an online influencer?

It is a person who has a large number of people following them online through gaming and social media. You may hear an online influencer commonly referred to as either a YouTuber, social influencer, streamer or gamer. Subscribe, follow, share, like are just some of the ways online influencers build their fan base.



Follow me!
Give me a 'like'!
Share my video!
Subscribe to my channel!

They can influence their audiences behaviour by being entertaining, offering advice and guidance.

The more views they get, the more popular they become.



However...

Online influencers are not regulated and for many, their aim is to grow an audience that they can then sell products to and make money from.

Brands will pay online influencers to promote, advertise and recommend their products.

Children can easily be convinced and persuaded by friendly engaging content to give money or subscribe to join a communities for a fee.

Looking good!

Enter a competition to win skins!

Loot box win every time!

Free points to build your team!



Some influencers can be poor role models who show children negative behaviours such as drugs, alcohol, bad language, fake news, violence and dangerous pranks.



It can be very easy to brainwash children and fill their minds to get them to act differently. We need to be mindful, whilst young people spend much more time online, they are very likely to come across many different types of influencers.

Would you like to join our gang?

I HATE YOU

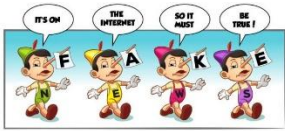
Can you help us?

Check out these real videos on our page

What you can do to help keep your child safe online

- Always discuss regularly with your child what they watch and follow online.
- If your child follows an online influencer, then if you do the same, you will be able receive the content as well and be better prepared in helping to advise your child.
- Discuss regularly the positive and negative elements of online influencers.
- Always let your child know that they should never purchase anything online without gaining your permission first.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.

A Parent's Guide to Fake News



What is Fake News?

“Fake news” is made up news. The information is false, an invention, a lie. It takes the appearance of real news to trick people into thinking it is true. Fake news can be used to profit from by tricking, influencing and brainwashing viewers.



Fake News can be spectacular

Sometimes fake news is shared because it is sensational. Like this item about a car accident supposedly caused by playing Pokemon Go. In this case, the authors used a real photo, but they gave it a title that had nothing to do with reality.

This is a trick often used by those who invent fake news. This item was shared and liked hundreds of thousands of times online. The authors made money from paid adverts.



Fake News can involve a celebrity

Celebrities attract attention. A common invention is having a celebrity claim where they shop and eat. News items like this share very quickly, even though they are totally false.



Fake News that tries to sell something

Too good to be true stories which are obviously 100% false, flood the Internet. Young people are often the preferred targets: miracle looks in just one week, become a better athlete, do well on your exams, etc. You must remember, just because something has been shared by friends and thousands of times, it doesn't make it true.



Fake News can promote fear and glorify gangs, violence, hate and radicalisation

We need to be mindful that as young people spend much more time online, they are very likely to come across many different types of fake news. If we do not engage with their online activities and support with careful guidance, there is a real risk children will start to believe everything they see and read.

What you can do to help keep your child safe online

- Always discuss regularly with your child what they watch, follow and read online. Ask them why they find it interesting.
- If your child follows an online influencer or group, then you should do the same too. This way you will be able to keep an eye on the content they are receiving.
- Regularly discuss current types of news. What is fake news and what is not.
- Always discuss with your child the importance of gaining your permission if they are thinking about making a purchase or subscribing to something online.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.

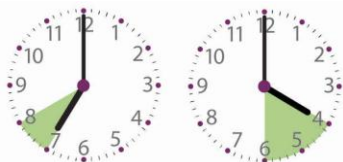
A Parent's Guide to Privacy Settings



Parental Controls and Privacy Settings

Your Internet provider will provide parental controls to allow you to restrict access to the Internet on your home wi-fi network.

They can be very effective tools to help reduce the risks your children may face. However they are not 100% effective, so they shouldn't replace the need for you to support and advise your child using the Internet.



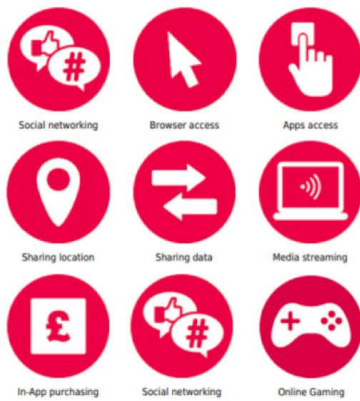
You can add timing restrictions allowing children to only use the Internet at certain times of the day.



Speak to your provider

They will give you all the help you need. They can talk you through the actions and setting of passwords or do it for you.

Tell them you have a young child and concerned about them being exposed to content, language and advertising that is not appropriate.



Mobile phones and tablet devices

Phones and tablets also have settings so you can stop your children by blocking access to sites, limit access to the camera and sharing of photos.

Speak to your provider and ask them to set it for you, if you are unsure how to do it yourself. You can even take your device to your child's school so they can help out with the settings.

Doing something is better than doing nothing – it is your responsibility

- Speak to your internet provider if you are unsure. For detailed guidance on the different types of control, you can use this [online tool from Internet Matters](#).
- Do not allow any devices in bedrooms – as parents go to sleep, children have a skill at re-awaking.
- Create rules around what's OK and what's not.
- Monitor websites and games before allowing children to surf and play freely.
- Ask them to take off headphones so you can listen in.
- Reduce screen time – encourage playing outdoors, sports and develop other interests.
- Talk to your child's school, make sure academic work is up to date, look at their sleep habits.
- Always let your child know that they should always say if they see or hear anything online that makes them feel scared or uncomfortable and to never arrange to meet someone who they have met online.
- Let them know that they do not have to feel as though they have done something wrong, nobody is going to get cross and it is not their fault.
- If you are concerned with anything you or your child has seen or asked to do, please call Childline or tell your child's school.