



## Online safety information

Social media is here to stay. No one fully understands the consequences of the widespread use of social media on brain development, socialisation and self-esteem. Whether the compelling blend of instant communication, advertising, highly focused news and social networking is always going to be ideal for our children to use isn't yet clear. We won't know the true extent of the impact of social media on brain development for at least another decade or two, since the technology tends to develop faster than neuroscientists are able to reliably analyse it. However, we do know, for example, that regular social media users have a "Pavlovian" response to receiving a notification (even if it's simply their "friend" inviting them to play Candy Crush), leading not only to a rush of pleasure-giving endorphins, but also the desire to respond immediately.

All this goes some way to explaining why a survey by the BBC which found that a third of children feel actively guilty if they don't respond to text messages and other notifications immediately. We also know that in prolific social media users certain parts of the brain are enlarged – the parts which analyse social standing and how we compare with others, which of course has a catastrophic effect on self-esteem.

This is a medium emerging from a heady mist of fast growth, lack of regulation and diverse and colourful usage. There's a risk of getting sucked into a culture of 'post now and think later' which could prove the downfall of any individual child. Having a good knowledge of the risks and introducing appropriate guidance to our children is the key to creating a responsible social media climate for young people.

Below is a list of useful websites and information under these headings:

- Parent Zone
- Parentinfo.org
- Parents and Carers Website
- Think U Know
- Childnet.com
- Saferinternet.org
- Action for children
- EU Kids Online
- saferinternetday.org (including tips for online safety)
- Sharing sexually explicit images without consent
- Where to Report/Get Help?
  - The Internet Watch Foundation
  - Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)
  - CEOP's Think U Know website
  - NSPCC
  - ChildLine
  - Family Lives
  - True Vision

**'Parentzone'** - We have introduced a page on our website 'parentzone' through parentinfo.org, to help parents have more online safety information.

**ParentInfo.org** - is a news feed bringing the most up to date information to parents and carers on a range of parenting topics, including digital, health, wellbeing and sex and relationships.

The live parent link comes from CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command, which is a branch of the National Crime Agency). There will be articles and information from experts in their fields for you to read and signposts for further help.



Welcome to Parent Info | ParentInfo

[www.parentinfo.org](http://www.parentinfo.org)

91% of teens have taken a selfie and over a million are posed for each day. Should parents be worried or are they just harmless fun?

**Parents and Carers Website** - This new website supports parents and carers in protecting their children from abuse online. The site provides advice for parents who are concerned about their children, as well as those just looking to learn more about what they can do to keep their children safe.

**Thinkuknow**

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/)

**'Nude Selfies; What parents and carers need to know'** - what can you do to respond to 'sexting'? Have a look at the Nude Selfies series of four short animations. You can download the Guidance Pack (containing a session plan and further support) and films at: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/teachers/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/teachers/)

The films are also available on the thinkuknow [YouTube Channel](#).

### **Murder Games**

The BBC3 broadcast a docudrama about the murder of 14-year old Breck Bednar after he was groomed online. The programme sees Breck's family and friends recount how Breck was manipulated and isolated by Lewis Daynes, then aged 18, over the course of nine months. Breck was ultimately persuaded to meet Daynes in person at his Essex flat. Lewis Daynes was sentenced to life in prison and will serve a minimum of 25 years in custody.

What happened in this tragic case is very rare. However it is very important to have regular, open discussions with your child about what they are doing online, how to recognise risks and what to do if they are worried. If you wish to discuss the risks of online grooming, Thinkuknow.com have a lot of other resources available in their Thinkuknow

Resource Library:

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/resources/?subject=52&agegroup=39>

There is a wealth of information on the Thinkuknow 11-18 site which gets young people thinking about who they are really talking to online. It has no-nonsense guides, highlighting warning signs, tips for safe chat and where to get help if things go wrong.

[https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11\\_18/](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_18/)

More information is available on parental controls on the parents' site:

[https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwof6WBhD4ARIsAOi65aib6nJ2oPx5cVgm8iqQJmecoZDd6w7sTy-d3cnva8hU\\_sN0tCaNX8oaArDkEALw\\_wcB](https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/?gclid=Cj0KCQjwof6WBhD4ARIsAOi65aib6nJ2oPx5cVgm8iqQJmecoZDd6w7sTy-d3cnva8hU_sN0tCaNX8oaArDkEALw_wcB)

### **Childnet.com**

[www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com) provides guidance for young people and support a good opportunity to reinforce these messages both at school and at home.

In addition, ChildNet created a Family Agreement as a great way to start a conversation with the whole family about use of the internet and discuss together how to behave in a positive way when online at home, at school or at their friends' homes. The advice and agreement templates can be found here: [www.childnet.com/blog/family-agreement](http://www.childnet.com/blog/family-agreement)

### **Saferinternet.org**

A Parents' Guide to Technology - The UK Safer Internet Centre has created this guide to answer commonly asked questions and introduce some of the most popular devices used by children, highlighting the safety tools available and empowering parents with the knowledge they need to support their children to use these technologies safely and responsibly. [www.saferinternet.org.uk/parent-tech](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/parent-tech) There is also a wealth of relevant resources you can discuss with your daughter.

The four big internet providers - BT, Sky, Talk Talk and Virgin Media - provide their customers with free parental controls that can be activated at any time. Video tutorials on how to download and use these controls are available on the UK Safer Internet Centre website. [www.saferinternet.org.uk/parental-controls](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/parental-controls)

### **Action for children**

One of the things that we know many parents are having difficulty with is placing limits on their children's screen time. This research is well worth a read if this is something you are grappling with:

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/stages-development/social-emotional-development/social-skills-screen-time/>

see also:

<https://services.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/1325730/fleet-parent-support-advisor-screen-time-leaflet.pdf>

## EU Kids Online

In terms of being aware of the latest trends in children's internet use, the LSE have been following children's internet use for several years now as part of the EU Kids Online project. Their latest report looks at:

- *Trend 1: YouTube and new celebrities*
- *Trend 2: Sponsored content and its reliability*
- *Trend 3: In-app purchasing*

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Home.aspx>

And there is useful further information here [www.what parents need to know: Latest trends in children's internet use](http://www.whatparentsneedtoknow.org/latest-trends-in-childrens-internet-use)

## saferinternetday.org

Here you will find articles and resources including how to keep children safe online

<https://www.saferinternetday.org/web/sid/resources/gallery>

Having up-to-date internet security software installed on your computer or phone is the first step to protecting your children from inappropriate content, but there are plenty of other steps you can take. Here are eight useful tips:

### 1. Don't be embarrassed to talk about it with your children

"Parents feel more awkward talking about what you might see online than they do about the birds and the bees. When you start talking about inappropriate content and what you might see online, it's a super-hard topic for parents to talk about and they feel very uncomfortable having that conversation.

### 2. Teach good passcode management

Ensure your children learn the right things. Teach them that different passcodes should be used for different accounts, and that phrases are more secure than words alone.

### 3. Use two-factor authentication where you can

While it can be slightly off-putting in its current form, two-factor authentication is worth making use of wherever possible. Security is worth sacrificing a little convenience for.

### 4. Set usage limits

Whether these are time or device constraints, there is such a thing as too much technology. A lot of devices feature parental controls – exercise them.

### 5. Set up a Google Alert about your child

This will highlight everything about your child that's in the public domain. You'll be emailed every time your child posts something on social media, or if a friend posts something about them, that's in the public domain. It's a great way to spot potential problems before they get out of control and it's useful way of seeing if you're children are accidentally posting information publicly they mean to keep private.

Creating a Google Alert is really easy too. Simply head to the [Google Alerts website](https://www.google.com/alerts) and enter the words you want to get alerts on in the 'Create an alert about' box. You'll also be

able to determine how often you receive alerts and the types of websites you want to get them from.

#### **6. Actually read app permissions**

Whenever your child downloads an app, read up on the information each piece of software requires access to. Lots of third-party torch apps have been exposed for requesting contact information and the ability to read your messages – think about why they might want that data. It's best to look for a separate app that does the same thing but requires less permissions.

There are no shortcuts yet – you have to do the long reading. Some apps frequently change their permissions too, so try not to get caught out. Companies are guilty of over-complicating matters to put you off reading into their policies, but it's worth taking a look.

#### **7. Run the apps your children run**

Ask them what they're playing with, run the same apps yourself and see what they do. It's a simple step that could help you spot a malicious app that looks innocent.

#### **8. Look for tell-tale signs of cyber-bullying**

Whether that's more reserved behaviour than usual or unusually secretive use of devices, understand your children's behaviour. As always, talk to them about it first and then take any issues to the school, if appropriate. There are a number of excellent charities out there to help parents deal with this type of situation, such as Childnet and ChildLine. What's more, if you see evidence of bullying, take screengrabs.

### **Sharing sexually explicit images without consent**

It is both a gross violation and a very serious offence to take or share sexual images of another, without their consent. Depending on the circumstances, sharing such images can be an offence under various different pieces of legislation including the Sexual Offences Act (2003), Malicious Communications Act (1988), Obscene Publications Act (1959) and the Protection of Children Act (1978). If the victim is under 18, it could also lead to the perpetrator being subject to the notification requirements under Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, commonly referred to as the Sex Offender Register.

Children should also learn that it is illegal to produce, possess or distribute an indecent image of a person under the age of 18 – even if it's a picture of themselves. These laws have been created to protect children and young people. It is therefore unlikely that the police would prosecute a young person for taking or sharing pictures of themselves, unless they were concerned that images were being used to harass or coerce, or shared with intent to harm.

For further information see advice from the Association of Chief Police Officers.

<https://library.college.police.uk/docs/ACPO/safe-use-of-the-Internet-Feb-2013.pdf>

## **Where to Report/Get Help?**

It is important that you seek support if you are concerned that your daughter might be being groomed. You can contact your local police, children's social care department or

report directly to [CEOP](#). Concerns can also be discussed with someone directly via the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

If you believe your child is at immediate risk you should call 999.

Information about what to do if a child comes to you for help and advice about how to report online concerns such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content or illegal behaviour.

[www.saferinternet.org.uk/need-help](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/need-help)

**The Internet Watch Foundation** is the UK's hotline for reporting illegal content found on the internet. It deals specifically with child abuse and criminally obscene images hosted in the UK and internationally. The IWF works in partnership with the online industry, law enforcement, government, and international partners. It is a charity and a self-regulatory body with over 100 Members from the online industry. [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)

**Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP):** A police agency tackling child abuse on the internet. This website includes a unique facility that enables parents and young people to make reports of actual or attempted abuse online. [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)  
CEOP's Think U Know website contains information for children and parents, as well as a link for children to report abuse online. [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

**NSPCC:** If you have concerns about the safety of a child then contact the NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000 or email them via this link <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/our-services/nspcc-helpline/>

Children can talk to someone for advice and support at any time by contacting ChildLine on 0800 1111 or chatting to a counsellor online at [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**Family Lives:** A national family support charity providing help and support in all aspects of family life. Useful advice and information is available online at [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk) and they provide a free confidential helpline on 0808 800 2222.

**True Vision:** Online content which incites hatred on the grounds of race, religion and sexual orientation can be reported to True Vision; a UK website set up to tackle all forms of hate crime, including those on the grounds of disability and transgender identity. [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)

**See below Childnet support for parents:**

# Online resources for parents & carers

Childnet have a dedicated area to support parents and carers with information on key online safety topics, advice and activities to share with your child.

[www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers](http://www.childnet.com/parents-and-carers)

## 1. Key advice from us

### Hot Topics

Information on key online safety topics including advice and conversation starters for children of different ages.

[childnet.com/parents-hot-topics](http://childnet.com/parents-hot-topics)

### Need Help?

Support and information on what to do if you think your child is at risk online.

[childnet.com/parents-help](http://childnet.com/parents-help)

### How to make a report

Advice for adults and young people on the reporting tools for popular games, apps and social media platforms.

[childnet.com/how-to-make-a-report](http://childnet.com/how-to-make-a-report)

## 2. Reviews and tools

### Net Aware

Online guide with up-to-date advice and parents' views on popular apps, games and online platforms.

[net-aware.org.uk](http://net-aware.org.uk)



Expert reviews, advice and age appropriate recommendations on games, apps, films and more.

[commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org)

### Internet matters.org

Step-by-step guides for using parental controls and privacy settings alongside support on a range of online safety topics.

[internetmatters.org](http://internetmatters.org)



### Advice centre

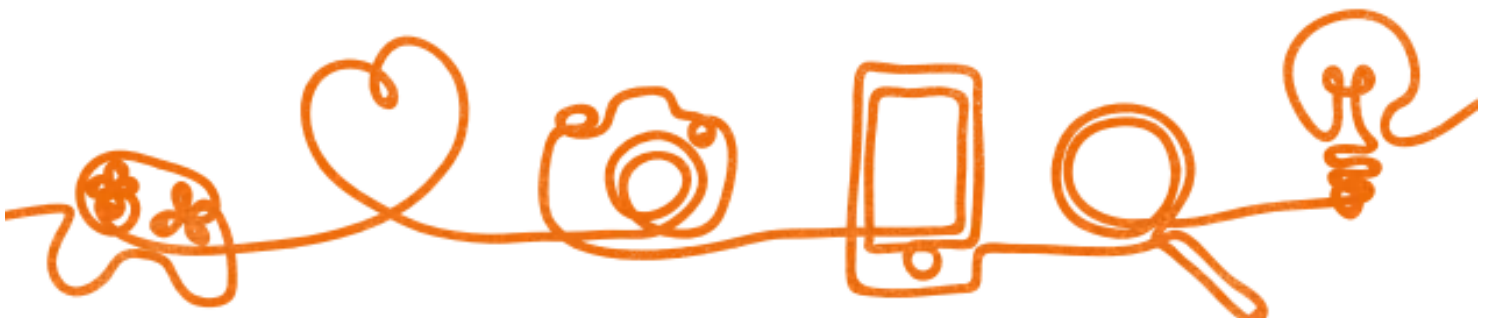
Advice centre with tips, guides and resources for parents and carers, adoptive parents, foster carers, health care professionals and more.

[saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre](http://saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre)

### Safety tools on social networks & other online services

A set of guides highlighting safety features on popular social media services and messaging apps.

[saferinternet.org.uk/safety-tools](http://saferinternet.org.uk/safety-tools)



### 3. Get help and support

For parents / carers

#### NSPCC

Free support and advice for adults concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a child.  
0808 800 5000  
nspcc.org.uk

#### O<sub>2</sub> | NSPCC

Free online safety support and tech advice.  
0808 800 5002  
nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety

#### family lives

Free, professional, non-judgmental support and advice.  
0808 800 2222  
familylives.org.uk

#### YOUNGMINDS

fighting for young people's mental health

Free, confidential, expert advice on how to support young people's mental health & wellbeing.  
0808 802 5544  
youngminds.org.uk

For children

#### childline

Providing help and support for under 18s.  
0800 11 11  
childline.org.uk

#### THE MIX

Essential support for under 25s  
Providing help and support for 13–25 year olds.  
0808 808 4994  
themix.org.uk



### 4. Get specific advice

#### Childnet

From screen time and cyberbullying to gaming, we have practical advice on key topics.  
[childnet.com/parents-hot-topics](http://childnet.com/parents-hot-topics)

#### Digital Parenting

Free online magazine, resources and articles on online issues.  
[vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting](http://vodafone.co.uk/digitalparenting)

#### Ask About Games

Advice and online guides about gaming and PEGI age ratings.  
[askaboutgames.com](http://askaboutgames.com)

#### Phone Brain

Information about paid for services such as premium rate numbers and in-app purchases.  
[phonebrain.org.uk](http://phonebrain.org.uk)

#### Get It Right From A Genuine Site

Find out which sites are legal for streaming and downloading films, music & games.  
[getitrightfromagenuinesite.org](http://getitrightfromagenuinesite.org)

### 5. Make a report

#### Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP)

A police agency tackling child sexual abuse and online grooming. Their two websites include an online reporting tool and advice and activities for parents and children.

To make a report:  
[ceop.police.uk](http://ceop.police.uk)

For advice & activities:  
[thinkuknow.co.uk](http://thinkuknow.co.uk)

#### Internet Watch Foundation

(Part of UK Safer Internet Centre)

The IWF work to remove online images and videos of child sexual abuse. Their online reporting tool can be used to anonymously report criminal content of this kind.  
[iwf.org.uk](http://iwf.org.uk)

#### Report Harmful Content Online

(Part of UK Safer Internet Centre)

Advice on how to respond to harmful content online, this tool also allows visitors to query inadequate reporting responses from other services.  
[repharmfulcontent.com](http://repharmfulcontent.com)

#### True Vision

Information about hate crime and incidents and advice on how to report it in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.  
[report-it.org.uk](http://report-it.org.uk)

#### Action Fraud

National reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.  
[actionfraud.police.uk](http://actionfraud.police.uk)



Want to stay up to date?  
Sign up to our newsletter at [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)

[@childnetinternational](https://www.facebook.com/childnetinternational)  
[@childnet](https://twitter.com/childnet)



# What can I do if my child has seen something upsetting online?

Here are our top tips for supporting your child:

## 1. Don't get mad, get curious

Remaining calm and asking questions like 'how did you get to that?' or 'what did you click on?' will help you to understand how the content has appeared in the first place. Children will often remember the immediate response from an adult and remaining calm and open will show them that you are someone they can turn to for help.

## 2. Try not to place blame

It may be that your child has clicked on something by mistake or even gone looking for the content on purpose but it is still important to remain calm and be supportive. Children are curious and may hear about things from others that they later search for without realising what they will be exposed to.

## 3. Know where to go for more information

Going online does come with its risks and some of these can often feel like daunting topics to cover with children but there is a wealth of information to support you. Visit the [UK Safer Internet Centre's Parents and Carers page](#) for tips, advice, guides and resources to help keep your child safe online. [The NSPCC](#) also provide advice on their website for talking about difficult topics. Netsafe also have a great [guide to helping young people who have been exposed to upsetting content online](#).

If you want advice on a specific situation then you can always contact a parents helpline:

- NSPCC – [The NSPCC helpline](#) is for anyone who is worried about the safety of a child 0808 800 5000 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk).
- YoungMinds – [YoungMinds](#) is a UK charity who focus on the wellbeing and mental health of young people 0808 802 5544.
- Family Lives - [Family Lives](#) is a national family support charity providing help and support in all aspects of family life 0808 800 2222.

## 4. Know who your child can go to for help

There are lots of ways your child can get support if they see something upsetting online and it's important to make them aware of the different avenues of support. In addition to family and school support, children can contact helplines for advice:

- Childline – **Childline** is a confidential service offering support to children under the age of 19 with any issue they are concerned about either online or by the phone 0800 1111.
- The Mix – **The Mix** offer advice and support for anyone under the age of 25 either online or by the phone 0808 808 4994.
- Papyrus – **Papyrus** is a charity which seeks to support young people who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts 0800 068 4141.

**If you work with children and have an online safety concern you can contact the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) or 03443 814 772.**