



Safer Internet Day 2023 will take place on the 7th of February 2023, with celebrations and learning based around the theme **'Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online'**.

In the UK, we are celebrating by putting **children and young people's voices** at the heart of the day and encouraging them to shape the online safety support that they receive.

That is why we are asking parents, carers, teachers, government, policymakers, and the wider online safety industry to take time to listen to children and young people and make positive change together.

This year we are hoping to answer the following questions:

- What issues really matter to children and young people?
- What changes do they want to see?
- How can we all work together to advocate for them moving forward?

With your help, Safer Internet Day 2023 can be a springboard for conversations that shape how we talk about and respond to online issues, not just for one day, but throughout the whole year.

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What do I do if something goes wrong?

Although we want the internet to be a fun, supportive and great space for children and young people, we acknowledge that things don't always go the way we want them to. If something goes wrong online it is important that you as a parent or carer have the right tools at hand to help support your child, whatever problem they may be facing.

Signs that something may have gone wrong include, but are not limited to:

- Changes in behaviour
- Changes in time spent online
- Reluctancy to go to school or spend time with friends
- Hiding their devices
- Being less willing to talk

There are some initial steps you can take if you think something has gone wrong for your child online.

■ Start a conversation

An open and honest conversation is often the first step in keeping your child safe online, it also plays an important role in supporting them if something has gone wrong.

Talk to your child about what has happened, how they feel about it, and what the next steps are for you to take as a family. Keeping your child in the loop about what you are going to do to resolve the situation can help them to feel in control of it, and can help them to feel like they can come to you with any future problems.

▲ Be curious, not furious

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 – remaining calm and open will show them that you are someone they can turn to for help.

● 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, either way, 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.

■ Know where to go to for help

Reporting content on the site where it is hosted is often the best step to take, however, sometimes as a parent or carer you may need to take additional measures. These may include:

- Escalating the report – if you feel like action has not been taken by the service or app you have made a report on, you may wish to escalate the report to

www.reportharmfulcontent.com You can also get advice about reporting the most common types of online harm through this website.

- Talking to your child's school – The designated safeguarding lead may be a good

person to talk to about issues your child is facing, even if the situation does not include other children or young people from your child's school. This will allow your child to gain extra support when not at home.

- Talking to your local police force – If what has happened online has led to harm, or if it includes illegal activity or actions from an adult towards your child, it is important to talk to your local police force for help and support.

▲ Get further help or support for your child

It's important to make your child aware of the different ways they can receive support if they experience something upsetting online. In addition to family and school support, children and young people can contact the following 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 phoning 0800 1111.
- The Mix – [The Mix](#) offer advice and support for anyone under the age of 25 either online or by phoning 0808 808 4994.
- Papyrus – [Papyrus](#) is a charity which seeks to support young people who may be struggling with suicidal thoughts 0800 068 4141.

Practical tips for starting a conversation about life online



The internet plays a significant role in the lives of children and young people; becoming integral to their social development as they get older. Talking to young people about their life online and encouraging them to share their experiences with you, is a key part of helping to safeguard your family.

Whatever your level of knowledge or confidence, these five tips will help you start, manage and maintain an open dialogue with your children about life online, and help you support them to use technology safely and positively.

■ Be positive and open minded about the internet

It's important to recognise the exciting opportunities that going online can offer children and young people. Although your children may use the internet differently to you, their experiences are still significant.

If your child mentions something you haven't heard of, ask them to show you, or explain in more detail, or you may need to do your own research. Try to keep conversations broad, and value their opinions when they're talking about what they enjoy doing, to show that you are interested in all aspects of their online world.

▲ Talk early and often

The most effective way to deal with any online issue is to make conversations about the internet a part of your everyday routine.

Talking openly about life online from an early age, can be a helpful bridge to sharing safety messages and addressing more difficult conversations at a later date; it also shows your child that you are someone who knows about the internet and can help them.

● Create a safe space for conversations

Look for opportunities to talk together. Sometimes, talking face-to-face can feel difficult, so talking alongside each other when out for a walk, or travelling in the car for example, are options that might make it easier.

The environment needs to be right; free from distractions, so that your child has your undivided attention. Remind them often that they can talk to you about anything, no matter how difficult, and that they will not be judged or blamed.

Your child might not be ready to talk about something straight away, so show them that you are there to listen whenever they are ready.

◆ Keep it relevant

As they get older, your children will use technology differently from when they first went online. Their knowledge and understanding will grow too, as will the challenges they may face on the internet.

To get a sense of how much they know and what support they still need, ask open-ended questions to let your child lead the conversations you have.

There are appropriate ways to approach all online safety topics with different ages. For example, with a teenager, nude images can be spoken about in wider conversations around consent and healthy relationships. For younger children, you could discuss what types of images are okay to share online, and what areas of our bodies are private.

✦ Be proactive

Working together to create an agreement, outlining how the internet and technology will be used within the family, is a useful way to set clear expectations and boundaries for your children.

You might include time spent online; who your children can communicate with; appropriate apps and games; and why safety tools are helpful to block and report inappropriate content.

Ask your child what they would do if something went wrong online and they needed help, and reinforce the importance of telling an adult as soon as anything happens that makes them feel upset, worried, or uncomfortable in any way.

How to talk about difficult topics

As your children get older, wanting more freedom online is natural. There will soon come a time when they're using the internet independently on a daily basis, for example when it comes to researching homework or for interacting with friends. Children and young people may also use the internet to seek answers to questions that they're not comfortable talking about with an adult, and this can raise the need to have conversations about some difficult topics.

Often these conversations can be planned for, but with online content being so accessible, occasionally they may be needed earlier than anticipated. Talking about serious issues can be a daunting prospect, but it's important to remember that as parents and carers you are the best people for your children to talk to.

If you need to talk about something difficult with your child, try to:

- **Plan what you want to say in advance, and seek support and information if needed so that you feel prepared.**
- ▲ **Choose a moment when there are no other distractions and you are not rushed for time, but acknowledge that they might not feel ready to speak straight away.**
- **Consider the best approach to anticipate how your child might react. You might want to directly explain the concerns that led to the conversation, or feel that asking some broader questions might be more suitable in the first instance.**
- ◆ **Give your child time to process what you are saying and share their thoughts, without interruption or blame. Listen carefully to any confusion or concerns.**
- ✱ **Share your own experiences if you can. Were you ever in a similar situation and how was it resolved?**
- **Reassure them you are always there to help and even if you don't know the answers, you can find these out together.**
- ▲ **Get support quickly if they need it. This might be from family, friends, your child's school or other agencies.**

My child has said something worrying – what do I do?



If your child comes to you with a concern, the most important thing is to remain calm and reassure them that they've done the right thing by talking to you. If you suspect, or find out from someone else that your child is dealing with a worrying situation online, let them know that sharing it with you is the first step to resolving the issue.

When dealing with an online concern raised by your child, try to:

■ **Let them explain in their own words what has happened.**

▲ **Remain composed.**

If you are feeling shocked, angry or worried, it's likely that your child is feeling worse, but reacting that way may close down the conversation and lead your child to believe that they are to blame.

● **Acknowledge the challenges they have overcome, and let them know that they've done the right thing by telling you.**

◆ **Be honest.**

It's okay if you are unsure what to do next, the important thing is to let your child know you are there for them. There is a lot of further support out there to help you decide on your next steps.

✱ **Save the evidence wherever possible.**

You may be able to report what has happened to the online service being used when the incident occurred. Evidence may include screen shots taken on a laptop or mobile device, emails, texts or online conversation histories.

▲ **Make a report as soon as possible.**

Knowing who to report to is a really useful step to resolving many issues, so try to familiarise yourself with the reporting, blocking or moderating settings available on the services your child is using. Depending on what has happened, it might be necessary to let your child's school know too, or other agencies such as the police.

I want to talk my child about a specific issue – where can I find out more?



This Safer Internet Day, we are celebrating by putting children and young people's voices at the heart of the day, and we know that parents and carers play a key part in their children's online lives. Often, when your child is spending time on new apps or services, or if something goes wrong, we know there are specific issues that you will want to discuss with them.

The following list of resources and support networks aims to provide you with an array of information so that you feel confident in starting a conversation with your child, whatever part of online life that may be about.

UK Safer Internet Centre Help & Advice

Online issues

Parents and carers will find the "Online issues" library on our website helpful in learning about and supporting their child with a particular issue. The issues covered on these pages include pornography, online challenges, gaming and many more.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/online-issues>

Guides and resources

Our guides and resources for parents and carers include information around using technology such as phones, laptops and games consoles as well as other useful links.

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/guides-and-resources/parents-and-carers>

Childnet Help & Advice

Online issues

Aimed solely for you as a parent or carer, there are a host of topics to read about, from livestreaming, to online bullying, to reliability online. *Issues you can find out more about include: How to make a report, Video chat and webcams, Sexting, Livestreaming, Privacy and data, Online bullying, Expiring content, Parental controls, Digital wellbeing, Reliability Online, Downloading*

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/help-and-advice/parents-and-carers>

DeShame

Childnet has produced guidance to help parents, carers and foster carers talk to their children about the important issue of online sexual harassment – specifically, when this is happening between children of a similar age.

Resources from other organisations

BBC Own It

You may be able to report what has happened to the online service being used when the incident occurred. Evidence may include screen shots taken on a laptop or mobile device, emails, texts or online conversation histories. BBC Own It is a hub for children and young people to own and be empowered by their online lives. We recommend you check out their webpage for parents and carers to learn more about a host of online safety topics. From celebrities giving top tips, to fun and engaging infographic videos, there's so much you can explore to support your child online. Issues you can find out more about include: Social media apps, multiple devices, online gaming fears, cyberbullying, processing scary news

<https://www.bbc.com/ownit/curations/parents>

Internet Matters

Internet Matters' website provides advice and practical support to help your child with a wide array of online issues. Issues you can find out more about include: *Cyberbullying, fake news, inappropriate content, online grooming, online pornography, radicalisation, screen time, and more.*

<https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/>

Common Sense Media

Common Sense Media is a website which reviews games, apps, services and more to help you decide if something is appropriate for your child. You can set the age of your child and the content will be tailored to what young people around that age are interested in.

<https://www.common sense media.org/>

Taming Gaming

Known as the "Family Gaming Database", Taming Gaming has over 2000 video games which have been researched and tested with families. You can see which games have been tried and tested by other families before you decide which games may be best for you.

<https://www.taminggaming.com>

How to make a report



It is important to know how to make a report, so that you know where to go and what to do if your child is upset or worried about something they have seen online. There are many places you can go to report and get help for yourself and your child, as well as receive ongoing support and reassurance from experts. Here are some [best practices for parents and carers](#), followed by a list of places to turn to:

■ Know when to report

If you or your child has seen something online that is illegal, upsetting or harmful, then it is always best to report it.

■ Report to the correct place

Depending on the content, reports need to go to specific places for the correct support. See below for a list.

■ Understand community guidelines

Many online platforms will have their own [community guidelines](#) when it comes to harmful online content.

Make sure you are familiarised with the platform so you when the community guidelines are violated you know when to make a report.

If you have made an unsuccessful report but still feel it violates community standards, you can then visit [Report Harmful Content](#) for further escalation and review.

■ Encourage reporting

Ignoring a piece of harmful online content can lead towards others experiencing this type of harm.

Encourage discussion around the importance of children and young people reporting upsetting content to a parent, carer, or trusted adult.

Where you can report to...



[Report Harmful Content](#)

You can go to Report Harmful Content to find out how to report across some of the most well-known social media sites and other popular online platforms. If you have found that a platform's community guidelines have been violated but your report was rejected, you can head to Report Harmful Content for further escalation and review.

<https://reportharmfulcontent.com/report/>



[Social Media Checklists](#)

We have created a range of checklists which cover the privacy and security settings for some of the most popular online platforms.

<https://swgfl.org.uk/resources/checklists/>



[Report Remove](#)

A tool from the Internet Watch Foundation and Childline to support under 18s report a nude image online that has been shared.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/online-mobile-safety/remove-nude-image-shared-online/>



[Whisper](#)

An anonymous communication tool by SWGfL, giving students confidence to report issues and concerns.

<https://swgfl.org.uk/products/whisper/>



[ACT \(Action Counters Terrorism\)](#)

If you have come across terrorist content, head to ACT and report in confidence on their website.

<https://act.campaign.gov.uk/>

How can I get my child involved with online safety?



With technology becoming increasingly relevant to children and young people – whether through education, socialising, or gaming – knowing how to stay safe online is a key skill for them to learn.

Activities for use as a family

There are many resources which you can use to introduce online safety to your child, whatever their age may be. These include activities to do as a whole family. Take a look below at some of the activities you can get involved with right now:

■ COMING SOON: Safer Internet Day Quizzes

Whilst our quizzes for the next chapter of Safer Internet Day are yet to become live on the website, you can still head to the homepages of previous Safer Internet Day installments and test your online safety knowledge together with your child.

Simply hover over the Safer Internet Day tab at the top of the website, select the year, then click on the quiz specific to your child's age group!

Make a Family Agreement

Childnet's Family Agreement is a great way to start a conversation with your whole family about how you all use the internet. It's also great to start discussions together around how to behave in a positive way when online, whether this is at home, at school or at a friend's.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/family-agreement/>

Moving on Up

Childnet's Moving on Up toolkit is mostly tailored towards young people transitioning from primary to secondary school. This is a fantastic opportunity to introduce online safety learning, as technology may be becoming more prominent in new ways within their lives. There are resources for parents and carers to use to facilitate the online aspects of the transition in your child's education. It includes the first phone checklist, which is not specific to any age – instead, it's there for when you decide it is the right

time for your child to own their first smartphone, whilst helping you with any considerations and thoughts that you may want some advice about.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/moving-on-up/>

Activities for under 11s

Whilst children aged under 11 will be spending more time using the internet and devices on platforms and games appropriate for their age group, there are still resources out there for parents and carers to use to introduce online safety.

Hanni and the Magic Window

For ages: 3-7 Written for children aged 3 and up, this rhyming story is about speaking out and getting help. This story can be viewed as an eBook or is available to download in English and Welsh.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/hanni-and-the-magic-window/>

Digiduck series

For ages: 3-7 There are five stories in the Digiduck series to introduce the basics of online safety to children aged 3-7. These books cover topics such as being a good friend online; the reliability of information; online gaming and positive uses of the internet.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/digiduck-stories/>

Learning to read book

For ages: 4 and above On the internet is a learning-to-read book for children aged 4 and above. There are also puzzles at the end of the story to make the experience as interactive as possible!

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/a-learning-to-read-book/>

The Adventures of Kara, Winston and the SMART Crew

For ages: 7-11 Childnet's SMART resources are there to provide families, professionals and young people with a memorable strategy to learn and revise five key pillars of online safety. To aid with the learning of the SMART rules, Childnet have five amazing cartoons for 7-11 year olds. Follow the Adventures of Kara, Winston and the SMART Crew as they make safe online decisions! In addition, our SMART video lessons are for families to use at home, and can even be adapted for educators and professionals.

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/the-adventures-of-kara-winston-and-the-smart-crew/>