



Don't face it alone

#SpeakOutAboutBullying

Communicating with your child about online safety

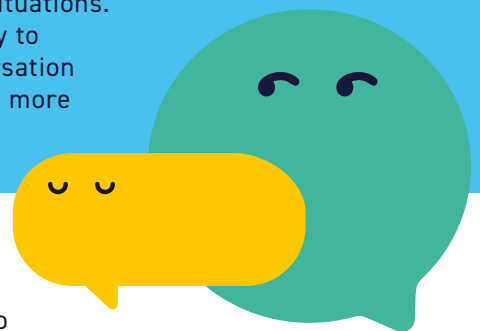
As a parent/carer of a young person, it can be challenging to keep up to date with the apps, social media and games that are popular amongst young people, but we mustn't shy away from their experience of the online world.

Discussing and learning together is the only way to keep everyone safe and informed. Here are our top tips for effective dialogue with your child:

Encourage open dialogue

Young people are the experts on what apps, social media and games are popular. It is likely that they know more than parents/carers and teachers about the ever-changing, often perplexing, online world. It is therefore important to check in with them regularly to ask about what apps they're using, what the main features are and the online safety tools available.

It is common for us to influence their experiences of technology with our own, which may be negative and very different from the current reality. Sometimes this is needed as we try to protect our young people from being exposed to uncomfortable or dangerous situations. However, honest and open discussions are key to building trust. Try to understand how they feel and what they know, and keep the conversation going, being curious, calm and non-judgemental. This way, they are more likely to come to you if they do have any worries.



Do your research

Aim to keep up to date with the online world yourself. Download the apps, research the privacy settings, find out if there are any features they should disable, and talk to other parents about their experiences. Your child's school can also be a great source of information, particularly the class teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

For example, they should know never to share personal details such as their full name or address online. They should understand that once you post something, you lose control of it, especially if someone else screenshots or shares it.

Share the principles of online safety

Across apps, many principles of online safety are the same so you can make sure that your child has a good awareness of these principles to support their safety on any app or social media they use.

Why not create an online safety family agreement? Remember you should also be a good digital role model by following the advice that you give them.



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See it. Speak out. Support them.

Give them options

Make sure to let them know that there are plenty of places to seek support if they're worried about something that's happened online. We want all young people to know: don't face it alone. It is important to give young people options as they may not always want to open up with a parent/carer, despite our best efforts. Make sure they know that they can speak to:

1. Another adult family member, e.g. auntie, older cousin etc.

2. A teacher or member of the pastoral team in school

3. Childline on 0800 1111 or visiting the Childline website.

Why not add these options to your online safety family agreement?

Online safety conversation starters

Often, it's good to consider a subtle approach instead of a head-on approach. For example, you could ask if online safety is discussed at school and what they learn about it, or it could be something that has been on the TV or you heard about it on the radio.

Here are some other great questions to use with your child:

- What would you do if you/someone you know is being bullied online?
- How do you treat people online compared to in person?
- Would you come to me for help if you were involved in a bullying incident online? Why/why not?
Is there anyone else you would go to for help?
- Do you know what privacy settings are available on the apps you're using?
- Do you think you have the tools and support you need to protect yourself on social media?

For more help and resources visit

DontFaceItAlone.com

For support, students can
Text SHOUT to 85258 or
contact Childline on **0800
111 childline.org.uk**



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