



**Novel Strategies to Fight Child Sexual Exploitation and
Human Trafficking Crimes and Protect their Victims**

H2020 – 101021801

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**D5.10 Design an online THB and
CSA/CSE prevention programs and
provide stakeholders with resources for
prevention and response to neglect,
CSA/CSE signals in child – V2**

Authors: Zoé Colpaert (ICMEC), Esther Musachi (ICMEC)

Contributors: N/A.

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Responsible partner	Name	Zoé Colpaert	E-mail	zcolpaert@icmec.org
	Partner	ICMEC	Phone	+44 7455 219282
Contributing partners	N/A			
Reviewers	Pr Amparo Lasén, Dr Paula Martín, PDr. Elena Casado, PDr Antonio Agustin Garcia, Dr Georgiana Livia Cruceanu (UCM); Pr Ishrat Shamim (CWCS)			
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Abstract (for dissemination)

This task aims to create an educational Guide to support prevention for CSA / CSE online, focused on the general public, law enforcement, parents and educators. This Guide will build capacity of key stakeholders to better detect and prevent online crimes against children and educate on the appropriate terminology for each type of conduct related to these crimes. This second deliverable (of three) updates on the progress done thus far and presents the finished Guide and social media visuals that will be publicly shared after review from the European Commission.

Keywords	Awareness Raising, Prevention, Education, Internet Crimes Against Children, Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Terminology
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Executive summary

Trafficking of human beings (THB) and child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSA/CSE) are two major problems to which many vulnerable individuals, including children, fall prey. These victimising and traumatising occurrences may start online and involve many types of crimes against children on the Internet such as grooming, sextortion, online solicitation, online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), and others. Nevertheless, these issues can be prevented in most cases through raising awareness amongst key stakeholders.

The purpose of this task is to create materials through an educational Guide to support prevention for CSA/CSE online, focused on the general public, law enforcement, parents/carers and educators. This Guide will build capacity of these key stakeholders to better detect and prevent crimes against children on the Internet, as well as educate on the appropriate terminology for each type of conduct related to these crimes, with a particular focus on their online component.

This Guide focuses on adults who usually engage with children in a professional or personal capacity, such as law enforcement, policymakers and government bodies, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, child advocates, NGOs, physical and mental health professionals, schoolteachers and educators, parents and guardians/carers, and others. Indeed, this large stakeholder group represents key custodians of the safety of children who are adequately placed to ensure the online safety of children, and to detect and prevent any type of abuse that children may be at risk of online. The Guide will strengthen their awareness of the risks children face online, of the signs indicating that something is wrong, and support them in understanding and using the appropriate terminology and ways to communicate with Children and Young People (CYP).

This Report explains the way the Guide has been developed, and presents the final version to gather feedback before public dissemination. Given the ambitious goals of the Guide, which needs to be adequate for an international audience comprising of more than 11 stakeholder groups, ICMEC has called upon the expertise of the Consortium for feedback on different steps of the Guide's development. During Year 1 of the HEROES project, we focused on developing the outline of the specific content for non-specialised audiences and the general public, and planned the construction of an attractive yet accessible Guide. Year 2 of the HEROES project saw finalisation of the Guide's written content, the final design of the Guide and the finalisation of social media messages and visuals to disseminate the Guide publicly.

This Guide tackles difficult topics but aims to be engaging and easy to follow while respecting the seriousness of the subject. Indeed, talking about violence against children, especially sexual such as CSA / CSE and other crimes against children whether offline or on the Internet must be done following a careful and sensitive approach. Moreover, the Guide has an international scope in mind, and every country is different and has its specificities. We aimed to ensure with this final proposal that the materials are accessible, representative, inclusive, non-sexist and culturally appropriate for a global audience.

Lastly, this Report explains how we plan to disseminate the Guide. The Guide is currently developed as a PDF document to be sent to relevant organisations and agencies, such as NGOs, Law Enforcement Units, social services centre, schools, etc., targeting, as a first stage, stakeholders in countries included in the HEROES Project. In the final year of HEROES, the Guide will be hosted on an interactive microsite to enable an easy and smooth browsing experience. The Guide will also be translated in French, Portuguese and Spanish, and we hope to translate it in more languages as the project progresses.

Abbreviations

CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSE/A	Child Sexual Exploitation and/or Abuse
CSAM	Child Sexual Abuse Material
CSEM	Child Sexual Exploitation Material
CWCS	Centre for Women and Children Studies
CYP	Children and Young People
HEROES	Novel Strategies to FigHt Child Sexual Exploitation and Human TRafficking Crimes and PrOtect thEir VictimS
ICMEC	International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children
ICMEC CH	International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, Switzerland office (Official HEROES partner)
KPIs	Key performance indicators
NCMEC	National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children (in the United Stated)
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
OCSEA	Online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings

Definitions

CSA: As per the EU Directive 2011/93, Article 3 defines offences regarding sexual abuse, and includes aspects such as a child witnessing sexual activities or sexual abuse, engaging in sexual activities with a child, and coercing, forcing, or threatening a child into sexual activities with a third party.[1] CSA, the acronym for Child Sexual Abuse, can be defined as any sexual activity between a child and closely related family member (incest) or between a child and an adult or older child from outside the family. It involves either explicit force or coercion or, in cases where consent cannot be given by the victim because of his or her young age, implied force.[2]

CSAM: United States federal law defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct involving a minor (a person who is 17 years or younger).[3] Outside of the legal system, NCMEC (in the USA) refers to these images as child sexual abuse material (CSAM) to reflect most accurately what is depicted – the sexual abuse and exploitation of a child or children. Not only do these images and videos document victims' exploitation and abuse, but when these files are shared across the internet, the child or children depicted on these suffer revictimization each time the image of their sexual abuse is viewed.[4]

CSE: According to the EU Directive 2011/93, CSE or Child Sexual Exploitation is defined as offences concerning sexual exploitation in Article 4 and includes acts such as making a child participate in pornographic performances, knowingly attending pornographic performances that include children, making a child participate in child prostitution, and engaging in sexual activities with a child where recourse is made to prostitution. What distinguishes the concept of child sexual exploitation from other forms of child sexual abuse is the underlying notion of exchange present in exploitation. It is important to separate the two phenomena, while acknowledging that there is considerable overlap between them.[1]

Grooming (also referred to as Online Solicitation): In the context of child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, “grooming” is the short name for the solicitation of children for sexual purposes. “Grooming/online grooming” refers to the process of establishing/building a relationship with a child either in person or through the use of the Internet or other digital technologies to facilitate either online or offline sexual contact with that person. Grooming is defined by major dictionaries as the act of “prepar[ing] or train[ing] (someone) for a particular purpose or activity”, and in the specific context of child sexual exploitation and abuse as “(of a paedophile) prepare (a child) for a meeting, especially via an Internet chat room, with the intention of committing a sexual offence” or “the criminal activity of becoming friends with a child, especially over the internet, in order to try to persuade the child to have a sexual relationship”. [1]

THB: Trafficking in Human Beings refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.[5]

Sextortion (or Sexual extortion): The blackmailing of a person with the help of self-generated images of that person in order to extort sexual favours, money, or other benefits from her/him under the threat of sharing the material beyond the consent of the depicted person (e.g., posting images on social media). Often, the influence and manipulation typical of groomers over longer periods of time [...] turns into a rapid escalation of threats, intimidation, and coercion once the person has been persuaded to send the first sexual images of her/himself.[1]

1. Introduction

1.1. Awareness raising as a key component in the fight against THB and CSA/CSE

1.1.1. The issue of THB and CSA/CSE through the lens of crimes against children on the Internet

Trafficking of human beings (THB) and child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSA/CSE) are two major problems for many people, including children. These victimising and traumatising occurrences may start online and involve many types of crimes against children on the Internet such as grooming, sextortion, online solicitation, online bullying, online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), and others. Nevertheless, these issues can be prevented in most cases through raising awareness amongst key stakeholders.

The purpose of this task is to do just that: create materials through an educational guide to support prevention for CSA/CSE online, focused on the general public, law enforcement, parents and educators. This Guide will build capacity of key stakeholders to better detect and prevent crimes against children on the Internet, as well as educating on the appropriate terminology for each type of conduct related to these crimes, providing interactive conversation starters, with a particular focus on their online component.

1.1.2. Key stakeholders: the Guide's audience

Adults who usually engage with children, whether in a professional or personal capacity, are key custodians of the safety of these children, and are adequately placed to ensure their online safety and to detect and prevent any type of abuse that children may be at risk of online. But they need to be aware of what these risks are, of the signs, and of the appropriate terminology and ways to communicate with Children and Young People (CYP) – thus the importance of a guide to support them navigating these conversations.

It is crucial to take into account the plurality of stakeholders who might have this duty of care towards children. These specific actors differ from country to country, but they usually are:

- Law Enforcement Agencies and specialised units,
- Policymakers and government bodies,
- Prosecutors, judges, lawyers, child advocates,
- NGOs related to children's and victims/survivors' rights, support and wellbeing,
- Medical professionals, for both physical and mental health,
- School teachers and educators,
- Social workers,
- Parents and guardians/carers, as well as any adult relatives,
- The communication and technology industry, especially related to social media, gaming, banking, e-learning, among others,
- The travel and tourism industry, including hotels and accommodations providers, transport, entertainment such as bars and clubs, etc.,
- Any adult with a duty of care towards children, including sport coaches, religious and community leaders, and all those in a position of power and trust.

All these categories of stakeholders have the possibility to act to protect children and prevent them from being victimised offline and online. The Guide aims to empower them to recognise risks, avert victimisation, or if needed, take the necessary actions if a crime has been committed.

1.2. The Guide's development

1.2.1. Identification of gaps and opportunities

The first step in developing a relevant, attractive and helpful Guide for a wide range of stakeholders was to understand what is being done internationally. Many educational guides and resources are available on the Internet but they are usually either basic and uninspiring, or feel childish and not very attractive to adults. Moreover, each guide feels very nationally centred, which means that they are very relevant and detailed for stakeholders of one country, but cannot be used in another.[6]

These gaps open a great opportunity for ICMEC and the HEROES Project: create a Guide that is both relevant and appropriate for all adults who engage with children professionally or personally, wherever they are in the world. Our Guide is directed at an international audience of adults who are looking for find tips and resources on how to keep their children safe online, and shared and promoted accordingly.

1.2.2. Key aspects to keep in mind when developing the Guide

This Guide tackles difficult topics but aims to be engaging and easy to follow while respecting the seriousness of the subject. Indeed, talking about violence against children, especially sexual such as CSA/CSE and other crimes against children whether offline or on the Internet must be approached carefully and sensitively. Moreover, the Guide has an international scope in mind, and every country is different and has its specificities. The Guide uses an accessible, inclusive and non-sexist language, and the same care has been given when choosing illustrations and creatives. We ensured that the materials are accessible, representative, and culturally appropriate for a global audience.

ICMEC, focusing on matters of violence and crimes against children (CSA/CSE, THB and children going missing) every day, and all partners working on and supporting the development of the Guide, are experts on the topic and on treating sensitive subjects. Moreover, key steps in the copy-writing and creative process have been reviewed by the HEROES Consortium at large. We have taken every precaution – and will continue to do so in the next steps of this activity – to ensure that victims and survivors are represented in a sensitive and empowered manner, and that the Guide is representative of every and any protected characteristics such as:

- Age (of the minors),
- Gender identity and gender reassignment,
- Sex,
- Sexual orientation (including LGTBQ identities)
- Relationship status,
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave,
- Disability,
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin,
- Class,
- Religion or belief.

Also, although this guide focuses on supporting adults to prevent and respond to online risks children face, it is important to note that not all adults who have a duty of care towards children are acting as such. Indeed, it is possible that some of the stakeholders mentioned above use their position of power and trust to abuse children, whether they are engaging with children professionally, or they are part of the child's family, family friends, and close circle of adults. This aspect has been kept in mind in the creation of the Guide.

1.3. Using accessible expertise to develop the best possible Guide

ICMEC's and the HEROES Consortium's expertise is wide-ranging and relevant to the task at hand, but the development of a guide which needs to be adequate for an international audience comprising of more than 11 stakeholder groups is a challenge. Given the ambitious Guide that we were hoping to develop, we saw the HEROES Project as an opportunity to go above and beyond what could be done through collaborating only with partners who are part of the consortium, by working with third-party agencies that have specific expertise in areas that are not necessarily represented within the consortium, namely: educational expertise to develop specific content for non-specialised audiences and the general public, and creative and marketing expertise to construct an attractive yet accessible Guide and develop a promotional strategy to reach the widest audience possible.

Given the wide scope of this Guide and the sensitive subject matter, and with the approval of the European Commission Point of Contact, for which we are grateful, we have worked with recognised experts to support us in developing this task. The expertise and knowledge of the two organisations that we worked with, namely the NGO Childnet International (<https://www.childnet.com>) for the content of the guide, and the creative agency Human After All (<https://humanafterall.studio>) for the design, both based in the UK, have been crucial in developing this Guide.

1.4. Our final proposal, and next steps

We aim to develop a PDF Guide to be sent to relevant organisations and agencies, such as NGOs, Law Enforcement Units, social services centre, schools, etc., targeting, as a first stage, stakeholders in countries included in the HEROES Project. In the final year of HEROES, the Guide will be hosted on an interactive microsite that offers readers the choice of either downloading the guide as a PDF or navigating through it directly on the microsite when wanting access to a specific topic of interest.

We are considering including national variations on the web version: because of the important legal and cultural differences regarding the topics covered by the guide, these particularities might need to be addressed in order for the guide to be as useful and relevant as we are hoping it to be. Potentially, the PDF Guide could have a common ground and structure, and then specific sections could be tailored for different cultural environments. For instance, the guide could include references to the different national legal frameworks of the countries in focus, which would explain what to do and how when confronting these situations of abuse and aggression, for instance regarding different legal definitions of "minor".

We are envisioning the Guide to be built around main axes/themes, such as the correct use of terminology, risks that children are facing online, how to talk to children about these risks and ensure ongoing communication, tips to parents, carers, educators and law enforcement on keeping children safe online, recognising signs of abuse, and ensuring communication and trust with helpful interactive conversation starters, etc (see section 2.1 "Outline of the Guide"). These axes will be the source of social media posts aimed at a wider audience, to raise awareness on the topic and encourage the browsing of the Guide.

Depending on budget, we are also aiming to deliver the Guide in different languages, at first based on the main languages of the HEROES project and the European Union (French, Portuguese and Spanish) and as a next step, to extend the translations to the rest of the UN and most of the HEROES Consortium languages (Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, Greek, Hindi and Russian), budget-dependent.

2. The Guide content

ICMEC has worked on the content of the Guide with the internationally-recognised NGO Childnet, which has years of experience in the UK and beyond on raising awareness on internet crimes against children and on how to stay safe online. The Guide content follows internationally recognised best practices regarding its educational resources and guidelines on raising awareness on violence against children, especially online. We have also gathered the constructive feedback from experienced HEROES partners on the drafted outline. During Year 1 of the HEROES project, this led to the development of the main axes and themes for the Guide, which has been submitted as part of the first deliverable to the European Commission in November 2022 (month 12 of the HEROES project). The full content of the Guide has now been written and comprises of the following sections (the full Guide PDF can be found in Annex 1).

Table 1: Outline of Guide and short summary of the content

	Pages
Contents	X
SECTION 1: Supporting children to be safe and happy online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Short introduction ● Setting up expectations 	1-2
SECTION 2: Starting with the positives <i>Before talking to children and young people about the risks of being online, it's important to recognise the positive role it can play.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What opportunities are there in positive internet use? ● Top tips to help you acknowledge the positives 	3-4
SECTION 3: Putting young people at the heart of online safety support <i>Giving young people agency and ensuring their voices are heard, in relation to the online world isn't just good practice - it's also their right.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Global children's rights ● Listening to children's voices ● Do you work in education? ● How the experiences of children and young people can inform your work ● Example 	5-7
Talking with young people about internet use <i>Talking regularly to young people about their technology use, and encouraging them to share their experiences, is a key part of helping to safeguard them.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tips and conversation starters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be positive and open minded about the internet ○ Talk early and often ○ Create a safe space for conversations ○ Keep it relevant ○ Be proactive 	8-12
SECTION 5 Definitions of key words and phrases related to online risk <i>When talking about online risks and harms, with children and young people or with other adults, it's important to use clearly defined language and terminology.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child / Children and Young People (CYP) ● Child sexual abuse 	13-15

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Child sexual abuse material (as opposed to child pornography) ● Child sexual exploitation (as opposed to child prostitution) ● Consent ● Coercion / Coercive Control ● Filtering ● Grooming ● Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) ● Image Based Abuse / Non-Consensual Image Sharing ● Online Harm ● Online Sexual Harassment ● Parental Controls ● Sexting ● Survivor ● Victim ● Victim Blaming 	
<p>SECTION 6: Finding the Words</p> <p><i>Talking about life online is great, but finding the right words can be challenging, especially when young people may have their own slang and terminology.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children and young people’s language ● Clear communication about online risks and harms ● Example ● Tips for finding the right words ● What to do in the case that a child or young person uses terminology that could be problematic 	16-19
<p>SECTION 7: Tackling challenging topics</p> <p><i>To ensure that children and young people are informed and prepared for risks they may experience, conversations about difficult topics are important.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What to do if you need to talk about something difficult with a child or young person 	20-21
<p>SECTION 8: Recognising the signs of abuse</p> <p><i>Identifying signs of abuse early, and taking action, is important in protecting children and young people.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Warning signs ● Effects of online and offline abuse 	22-24
<p>SECTION 9: Supporting a child who has disclosed online abuse to you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do’s and Don’ts ● Avoiding victim-blaming 	25-26
<p>SECTION 10: Reporting cases of online abuse</p> <p><i>If you are made aware of, or have concerns about, a potential case of online abuse, then working in partnership with the right agencies ensures that the appropriate support is quickly received.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For parents and carers ● For professionals ● Using correct terminology while reporting 	27-28

<p>SECTION 11: Key online safety messages to share with children</p> <p><i>Education and support are the best tools that a child can have when it comes to understanding and managing risk online.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creating and sharing content ● Online friendships and relationships ● Mental health ● Reporting content and asking for help 	29-36
<p>Where to go for help</p>	37
<p>Turning Insights into Action</p>	38

3. Guide design

As explained above, we have been working with the agency Human After All to develop an attractive and complete yet accessible Guide. Design is key in ensuring accessibility and ease of understanding, especially in a resource that tackles difficult and usually unfamiliar topics such as CSA/CSEA, CSAM, grooming, sextortion, and other online crimes against children.

3.1. Creative activities

ICMEC, in collaboration with the agency Human After All, has completed most of the designs of the different deliverables with which we believe will ensure the Guide to have a wide impact:

- A **PDF Guide** (finished in Year 2) to be sent to relevant organisations and agencies, such as NGOs, Law Enforcement Units, social services centres, schools, etc., targeting, as a first stage, stakeholders in countries included in the HEROES Project.
- The Guide will be hosted on an **interactive microsite** that offers readers the choice of either downloading the guide as a PDF or navigating through it directly on the microsite when wanting access to a specific topic of interest (to be finalised in early Year 3).
- To ensure international dissemination, social media posts (Facebook, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and Instagram) in **flyer/still image with short text/gifs and/or reel format** have been created for a wide audience, to raise awareness on the topic and encourage the browsing of the Guide. 19 creatives have been developed based on the number of axes/themes identified within the Guide. Some posts engaging with the public have also been created, such as polls, questions, etc.

Our goal has been to design a visually appealing and inclusive Guide that maintains a level of abstraction by using custom graphics, illustrations and infographics (as opposed to using photography), intentionally avoiding specific representations and considering sensitivity to the topic to ensure broad accessibility and understanding across diverse audiences to facilitate ease of consumption in its entirety and scan or reference.

3.2. Accessibility and ethical aspects to keep in mind

The development of any creative material needs to follow certain requirements to ensure appropriate accessibility, representation and sensitivity. We have – and will continue to – abide by the following:

- To explore design choices that balance a clear depiction of the subject matter with sensitivity towards the topic.
- To use hand-drawn illustrations and iconography as opposed to photographs to respect the subject and interest our readers.
- To ensure that the materials are accessible, representative, inclusive, non-sexist, and culturally appropriate for a global audience.
- To ensure that the Guide is representative of every and any audience, independent of their gender, sex, ethnicity, nationality, disability, class, etc.
- To ensure the creative materials will meet section 508 Compliance for visual impairment.[7]

4. Social media messaging and dissemination

This project also includes the development of social media messages and visuals to disseminate the Guide more widely, but also to provide some bite-sized pieces of information based on the Guide’s content to viewers. As explained above, social media posts on Facebook, Twitter/X, LinkedIn, and Instagram composed of an image with a sort text or an animated visual/gif/reel with a short text have been created for a wide audience, to raise awareness on the topic and encourage the browsing of the Guide.

ICMEC, in collaboration with the agency Human After All, has prepared a few social media visuals that can be shared as soon as the Guide is ready to be published publicly.

The social media messages follow the following axis (some examples can be found in Annex 2):

Table 2: Social media content and planning

	Topic	Type of post	Platform	Post copy	Character count	Type of image	Copy for image
1a	How to talk about the internet	Hero	Instagram	<p>Spending time speaking about the internet with the young people in your life sets a great foundation to discuss online safety in the future. Here are some tips to get the conversation started.</p> <p>You can find more advice about supporting children online in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.</p>		Static carousel images	<p>Image 1: Stay positive and open minded Try asking... "Can you show me how to play this game?"</p> <p>Image 2: Talk early and often Try asking... "What's your favourite way to speak to your friends online?"</p> <p>Image 3: Create a safe space for conversations Try asking... "If your friend needed help with something online, what would you do?"</p> <p>Image 4: Keep it relevant Try asking... "What would you change about the internet if you could change anything?"</p> <p>Image 5: Be proactive Try asking... "Can you show me how to block and report people on this app?"</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Talking about the internet]</p>
1b	How to talk about the internet	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>Speaking about the internet with the young people in your life sets a great foundation to discuss online safety in the future. Here are some tips to get the conversation started.</p>	254	Tip gif	<p>Stay positive and open minded Try asking... "Can you show me how to play this game?"</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Talking about the internet]</p>

				You can find more advice in our guide for supporting children online. LINK			
1c	How to talk about the internet	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	Our guide has lots of advice on how to talk to young people about the internet. To get you started, here's another tip. LINK	124	Tip static	Keep it relevant Try asking... "What would you change about the internet if you could change anything?" [Eyebrow for images: Talking about the internet]
2a	How to keep conversations about the internet going	Hero	Instagram	Once you've started talking about the internet, it's important to keep the conversation going. But that can be tricky, whether the young person you're speaking to is 5 or 15. Here are a few tips for how to ask questions and choose your words. You can find more advice about supporting children online in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.	359	Static carousel images	Image 1: Ask open-ended questions Think more "What do you think about parental controls?" than "Are parental controls good or bad?". Image 2: Keep up to date If a young person uses a term you don't recognise, ask them to explain what it is. Image 3: Be careful with your language Start to use more specific terms as children get older, but always explain what you mean. Image 4: Encourage using correct terms For some things, like genitalia, it's helpful to use proper terms from a young age to avoid confusion later. [Eyebrow for images: Keeping conversations going]
2b	How to keep conversations about the internet going	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	It can be tricky to keep conversations about the internet going, whether the person you're speaking to is 5 or 15. Here are a few tips for how to ask questions and choose your words. You can find more advice in our guide for supporting children online. LINK	258	Tip gif	Ask open-ended questions Think more "What do you think about parental controls?" than "Are parental controls good or bad?". [Eyebrow for images: Keeping conversations going]

2c	How to keep conversations about the internet going	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>Open questions are more likely to keep conversations about the internet flowing. Which question do you think would be more useful to ask a young person in your life?</p> <p>Download the guide to find more tips, as well as specific definitions and terms. LINK</p>	253	Poll	<p>Question: Which question would be more likely to keep an open conversation going?</p> <p>Answer option 1: What do you like and dislike about this app?</p> <p>Answer option 2: Is this app good or bad?</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Keeping conversations going]</p>
3a	What to talk about when you talk about the internet	Hero	Instagram	<p>There are lots of big topics to cover when you speak about the internet with young people. Here are a few ideas to get you started.</p> <p>You can find more advice about supporting children online in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.</p>	248	Static carousel images	<p>Image 1: Topic idea: Creating and sharing content Try asking... "Do you have permission from everyone to share that video?"</p> <p>Image 2: Topic idea: Online friendships and relationships Try asking... "What would you do if someone was pressuring you to do something you didn't want to do?"</p> <p>Image 3: Topic idea: Mental health Try asking... "What would you say to a friend if you thought their time online was hurting their mental health?"</p> <p>Image 4: Topic idea: Reporting content and asking for help Try asking... "Which adult would you get help from if you had a problem online?"</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Topics to talk about]</p>
3b	What to talk about when you talk about the internet	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>There are lots of big topics to cover when you speak about the internet with young people. Here are a few ideas to get you started. You can find more advice on all of these in our guide for supporting children online. LINK</p>	223	Tip gif	<p>Topic idea: Mental health Try asking... "What would you say to a friend if you thought their time online was hurting their mental health?"</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Topics to talk about]</p>
3c	What to talk about when	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>Take a look at our guide for more conversation starters</p>	122	Tip static	<p>Topic idea: Reporting content and asking for help</p>

	you talk about the internet			and topics to speak about with the young people in your life. LINK			Try asking... "Which adult would you get help from if you had a problem online?" [Eyebrow for images: Topics to talk about]
4a	How to make an internet agreement	Hero	Instagram	Do you have an internet agreement at home or school? Have you heard about them before? Here's a quick intro to what they are and what you could include in yours. You can find more advice about supporting children online in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.	279	Static carousel images	Image 1: An internet agreement sets out how your household or classroom all use the internet. It's a list you agree on together. Image 2: Idea 1: Include a point about... How long can you be online every day? Image 3: Include a point about... Who can you speak to online? Image 4: Include a point about... When should you block and report content? Image 5: Include a point about... Who should you speak to if anything makes you upset, confused, uncomfortable or worried? [Eyebrow for images: Internet agreements]
4b	How to make an internet agreement	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	An internet agreement sets out how your household or classroom all use the internet. It's a list you agree on together. Here are a few ideas for what you could put on yours. You can find more advice in our guide for supporting children online. LINK	249	Tip gif	How long can you be online? Who can you speak to online? When should you report and block content? Who should you speak to if anything makes you upset or worried? [Eyebrow for images: Internet agreements]
4c	How to make an internet agreement	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	Have you made an internet agreement for your home or classroom? You can find our advice on what to include in them, as well as lots of other tips, in our guide for supporting children online. LINK	197	Poll	Question: Have you made an internet agreement for your home or classroom? Answer option 1: Yes Answer option 2: No Answer option 3: We've started one, but haven't finished it yet Answer option 4: No, but we're going to

5a	Tips for helping younger children	Hero	Instagram	<p>How you might help a 6 year-old with online safety is very different to how you might help a 16 year-old, so here are a few ideas for how to help the younger children in your life.</p> <p>You can find more advice about supporting children online in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.</p>	297	Static carousel images	<p>Image 1: Make connections A conversation about which parts of the body are private could lead to speaking about what is and isn't okay to share online.</p> <p>Image 2: Start by talking around subjects For example, rather than talking about 'grooming', try talking about who we trust.</p> <p>Image 3: Learn about healthy friendships If small children know what positive, pressure-free friendships are, it can be easier to have more grown-up conversations about online relationships as they get older.</p> <p>Image 4: Discuss the negative effects of going online Young children will be able to identify signs like sore eyes from too much screen time, or feeling sad after seeing something upsetting.</p> <p>Image 5: Approve friend requests together Make it normal for you to be involved in approving friend requests from a young age, so it's an open conversation later on.</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Helping younger children]</p>
5b	Tips for helping younger children	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>Different age groups need different approaches when it comes to online safety. Here's a tip for how to help the younger children in your life.</p> <p>You can find more tips like this throughout our guide for supporting children online. LINK</p>	234	Tip gif	<p>Learn about healthy friendships If small children know what positive, pressure-free friendships are, it can be easier to have more grown-up conversations about online relationships as they get older.</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Helping younger children]</p>
5c	Tips for helping younger children	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>Download our guide for supporting children online for more tips on the differences between helping older</p>	199	Tip static	<p>Start by talking around subjects For example, rather than talking about 'grooming', try talking about who we</p>

				and younger children. Here's another tip for helping younger children to get you started. LINK			trust. [Eyebrow for images: Helping younger children]
6a	Tips for helping older children	Hero	Instagram	<p>It goes without saying that helping a teenager with online safety is very different to helping a younger child. Here are a few ideas for how to help them stay safe.</p> <p>You can find more advice about supporting children online in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.</p>	281	Static carousel images	<p>Image 1: Have wider conversations For example, sharing nude images could be spoken about in a wider conversation about consent and healthy relationships.</p> <p>Image 2: Let them know what to look out for If they're talking to people online, chat about what it's okay to share and what behaviour could be worth flagging to an adult.</p> <p>Image 3: Get to know specific terms together Take a look at the definitions in our guide to make sure you're speaking about the same things and understand them in the same ways.</p> <p>Image 4: Talk about how they feel about what they see Beyond directly harmful content, speak about how teenagers feel about edited images and the fact people only show their 'best selves' online.</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Helping older children]</p>
6b	Tips for helping older children	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>You can have more grown-up conversations about online safety with the teenagers in your life. Here's an idea for what you could talk about.</p> <p>You can find more tips like this throughout our guide for supporting children online. LINK</p>	231	Tip gif	<p>Have wider conversations For example, sharing nude images could be spoken about in a wider conversation about consent and healthy relationships.</p> <p>[Eyebrow for images: Helping older children]</p>
6c	Tips for helping older children	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>There are lots of terms when it comes to online safety that help you be more specific. If you're speaking to a teenager, you can learn the terms together.</p>	208	Tip static	<p>Get to know specific terms together Take a look at the definitions in our guide to make sure you're speaking about the same things and understand them in the same ways.</p>

				You can find lots of definitions in our guide. LINK			[Eyebrow for images: Helping older children]
7a	How to spot if abuse might be happening	Hero	Instagram	<p>It can be tricky to tell if a young person might be experiencing online abuse — especially if they don't feel able to discuss it yet or recognise it as abuse. But there are lots of warnings signs we can all be aware of. Here are a few.</p> <p>You can find more advice in our guide about supporting children online. Head to the link in our bio to download it</p>	351	Static carousel images	<p>Image 1: Look out for things you can't explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are they spending more of less time online? -Do they dislike things they liked before? -Do they have gifts or credits? <p>Image 2: Look out for changes in their behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Do they seem sad, distant or angry after being online? -Are they being more secretive? -Are they talking about more adult things? -Do they mention new friends and are vague about how they know them? <p>[Eyebrow: Warning signs]</p>
7b	How to spot if abuse might be happening	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>There are lots of warning signs that could let you know that a young person in your life might be experiencing abuse. Here are a few.</p> <p>You can find more signs and more advice in our guide. LINK</p>	193	Tip gif	<p>Look out for things you can't explain</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Are they spending more of less time online? -Do they dislike things they liked before? -Do they have gifts or credits? <p>[Eyebrow: Warning signs]</p>
7c	How to spot if abuse might be happening	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>Here are a few more warning signs to look out for. If a young person you know is acting differently, it might be a sign they're experiencing abuse.</p> <p>You can get advice on how to speak to them about abuse and other online safety topics in our guide. LINK</p>	253	Tip static	<p>Look out for changes in their behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Do they seem sad, distant or angry after being online? -Are they being more secretive? -Are they talking about more adult things? -Do they mention new friends and are vague about how they know them? <p>[Eyebrow: Warning signs]</p>
8a	How to speak with a child about abuse	Hero	Instagram	<p>If you think a child or young person is experiencing abuse, it's natural to feel sad or angry — or any combination of emotions. But, for the sake of them, it's important to keep a</p>	375	Static carousel images	<p>Image 1: Before you speak...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan what you want to say -Decide the approach best for them: should you start or should you ask some questions first? -Choose a time that won't

				<p>level head and approach a conversation about it carefully. Here are a few ideas for how to go about it.</p> <p>You can find more advice on this in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.</p>			<p>be interrupted or rushed</p> <p>Image 2: While you're speaking...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Acknowledge they might not want to talk right away -Recognise they might prefer to speak to another adult -Give the option to write down their thoughts, rather than say them -Avoid any judgement, blame or interruptions while they speak -Reassure them that you'll help and find the answers together -Avoid promises you can't keep, like not telling anyone else <p>Image 3: After you've spoken...</p> <p>Get support quickly if they need it. That might be from friends, school, family or other agencies.</p> <p>[Eyebrow: Speaking about abuse]</p>
8b	How to speak with a child about abuse	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>If you think a young person is experiencing abuse, it's important to keep a level head when you speak to them — even though it's distressing. Our guide has more details on what to do, but here are a few tips for how to get ready to speak. LINK</p>	242	Tip gif	<p>Before you speak...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Plan what you want to say -Decide the approach best for them: should you start or should you ask some questions first? -Choose a time that won't be interrupted or rushed <p>[Eyebrow: Speaking about abuse]</p>
8c	How to speak with a child about abuse	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>After you've had a conversation with a young person about abuse they've experienced, be ready to get support quickly if they need it.</p> <p>Take a look at our guide for more details on what to do in that conversation. LINK</p>	217	Tip static	<p>After you've spoken, get support from friends, school, family or other agencies.</p> <p>[Eyebrow: Speaking about abuse]</p>
9a	What to do if a child tells you about abuse	Hero	Instagram	<p>A child choosing to tell you about online abuse is a huge step. It's upsetting and emotional, but it's important we do and</p>	285	Static carousel images	<p>Image 1: Reassuring things to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Acknowledge the child is doing the right thing by telling you -Reassure them that only

			<p>say what we can to make sure they're taken care of quickly. Here's what to do.</p> <p>You can find more advice in our guide. Head to the link in our bio to download it.</p>			<p>the people who need to know will — you can't promise you won't tell anyone</p> <p>Image 2: Reassuring things to do -Listen calmly and objectively — don't lead, blame or judge them, react with shock or anger, or make it feel like an interview</p> <p>Image 3: Practical things to do -Listen to the child right away — don't wait for another adult to be there -Save evidence like screenshots of messages — but don't view or save any child sexual abuse material</p> <p>Image 4: Practical things to do -Take notes afterwards — keep to what they told you, not your interpretation -Report the abuse to the right authorities as soon as possible</p> <p>[Eyebrow: Hearing about abuse]</p>	
9b	What to do if a child tells you about abuse	Hero	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>A child telling you about online abuse is a huge step. It's emotional, but it's important we're reassuring and practical. Here are some reassuring things to do.</p> <p>You can find more advice for supporting children online in our guide. LINK</p>	236	Tip gif	<p>Reassuring things to do -Acknowledge the child is doing the right thing by telling you -Listen calmly and objectively — don't lead, blame or judge them, react with shock or anger, or make it feel like an interview</p> <p>[Eyebrow: Hearing about abuse]</p>
9c	What to do if a child tells you about abuse	Supporting	Twitter/X or Facebook	<p>If a child tells you about online abuse, there are things you can do to reassure them. But there are also lots of practical things to be aware of, so they can get the help they need.</p>	257	Tip static	<p>Practical things to do -Listen to the child right away — don't wait for another adult to be there -Save evidence like screenshots of messages — but don't view or save any child sexual abuse material</p>

				<p>You can find more advice on supporting children online in our guide. LINK</p>		<p>-Take notes afterwards — keep to what they told you, not your interpretation -Report the abuse to the right authorities as soon as possible</p> <p>[Eyebrow: Hearing about abuse]</p>
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19 creatives have been developed based on the number of axes/themes identified within the Guide.

5. Next steps: translations and dissemination activities

As explained, we aim for this Guide to reach an international audience of key stakeholders. We will disseminate the Guide, the microsite on which it is hosted, and its translation through different means, such as email campaigns, social media communication, in-person or online events, and ask HEROES partners and network to support these dissemination efforts.

5.1. Translations of the Guide

As explained above, the Guide aims to be international in reach, which raises the necessity of making it accessible to all, including in terms of language. We aim to deliver the Guide in different languages, with different levels of priority based on the budget. At first, the Guide will be translated in the main languages of the HEROES project and the European Union, which are French, Portuguese and Spanish. As a next step, and budget-permitting, we aim to extend the translations to the rest of the UN and most of the HEROES Consortium languages, including Arabic, Bangla, Chinese, Greek, Hindi and Russian.

Both the PDF Guide and the microsite will be accessible in the English and the translated versions.

5.2. Hosting the Guide on an interactive microsite

As noted above, the Guide is currently developed as a PDF document. Once the Guide has been approved by the European Commission for dissemination, it will be hosted on an interactive microsite to enable an easy and smooth browsing experience, whether the reader wants to go through the entire Guide or wants to access a specific topic of interest. The goal is to enable, from this page, the download of the full Guide in PDF, but also the online browsing of the different sections based on what the site visitor is looking for.

The microsite will be developed by ICMEC's Graphic and Web Designer and will be hosted on ICMEC's website, with easy access from the HEROES website. This hosting on ICMEC's website will enable us to push the dissemination as widely as possible while providing one unique link to the public and tracking the downloads, clicks and engagement with the microsite and its content.

5.3. Sharing the Guide (and microsite) to HEROES partners and beyond

The Guide will always be shared through the microsite, to enable tracking as mentioned above. This means that the PDF will not be shared as a single document, but interested stakeholders will be able to download it from the microsite.

While the final strategy will be developed closer to the dissemination period, the Guide will be shared in the following ways:

- ICMEC mailing list
- HEROES mailing list
- Other Consortium partners mailing list if acceptable to them, e.g.: through the Red Heart Campaign Network
- ICMEC social media platforms
- HEROES social media platforms
- Potentially, ALUNA social media platforms
- Other Consortium partners social media platforms
- Link and references on relevant HEROES and other publications (e.g.: journal articles, online courses and in-person training, other campaigns, etc.)

5.4. Dissemination events

The HEROES project will also lead to the organisation of or participation in different events, both in person and online, to disseminate activities and results such as training courses, webinars, roundtables, conferences, etc. Particularly, as part of Work Package 9, ICMEC will organise, with support from UCM and the entire Consortium, a conference towards the end of the HEROES project to share the project’s main research findings, activities and tools. This will be an opportunity to present this Guide to a wide range of professionals working in the field of CSEA and internet safety.

5.5. Key performance indicators (KPIs)

KPIs will mostly be gathered around three dissemination platforms, namely: the microsite, social media engagement, and events during which the Guide will be presented and discussed.

The following table shows the KPIs that will be gathered:

Table 3: KPIs to gather regarding the dissemination of the Guide

Dissemination Platform	Description	KPI
Microsite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clicks to the Microsite • Engagement with the Microsite • Download of the Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of clicks accessing the Microsite • Time spent on the Microsite • Number of clicks on the Microsite (to visit different sections) • Most attractive sections of the Microsite • Number of downloads of the Guide
Social Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clicks to the Microsite • Engagement with the posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clicks from the social media platforms to the Microsite • Number of “likes” on posts • Number of comments on posts • Number of reshare of posts • Number of post engagement • Number of replies on surveys / polls
Events during which the Guide will be presented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach of the event • Engagement with the content • Access to the Microsite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of attendees at the event • Number of questions / comments related to the Guide • Visit to the Microsite through the QR code shared on presentations

6. Conclusions

This Guide aims to be an important and internationally-relevant resource to read and get back to in order to strengthen efforts to prevent and respond to THB and CSE/CSA, especially initiated online. Focused on the general public, law enforcement, parents/carers and educators, it will build their capacity to better detect and prevent crimes against children on the Internet, as well as educate them on the appropriate terminology for each type of conduct related to these crimes and provide helpful interactive conversation starters.

This Report explains the way the Guide has been developed, and focuses on the progress since the start of the HEROES Project and on the next steps. This Guide tackles difficult topics but aims to be engaging and easy to follow while respecting the seriousness of the subject. Indeed, talking about violence against children, especially sexual such as CSA/CSE and other crimes against children whether offline or on the Internet must be done following a careful and sensitive approach. Moreover, the Guide has an international scope in mind, and every country is different and has its specificities. We aimed to create materials that are accessible, representative, and culturally appropriate for a global audience.

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Annex A The Guide

Connected kids: a comprehensive guide to ensuring online safety and well-being



International Centre™
FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

HEROES

About us

ICMEC

The International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (ICMEC) is an international NGO headquartered in the US, and we envision a world where every child can grow up safe from exploitation, sexual abuse, or risk of going missing. For over 25 years, we have been a leader in identifying gaps in the global community's ability to protect children from abduction, sexual abuse and exploitation, and expertly assembling the people, resources and tools needed to fill those gaps. Our mission is to safeguard vulnerable children by:

- Powering the global search for children who are missing.
- Defending children from sexual abuse by disrupting the economics and mechanics of exploitation.
- Training frontline professionals to prevent and respond to cases of child exploitation.

We conduct research and develop capacity-building activities such as training, technology and legal protocols to support international stakeholders (governments, law enforcement, policy-makers, educators, medical professionals, NGOs and many others), helping them to better protect children against child sexual abuse and exploitation and respond to missing children reports.

You can read more about ICMEC on our website: www.icmec.org



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About us

HEROES

Trafficking of human beings (THB) and child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSA/CSE) are two big problems in our society. Inadvertently, new information and communication technologies (ICTs) have provided a space for these problems to develop and take new forms, made worse by the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, technical and legal tools available to stakeholders that prevent, investigate and assist victims — such as law enforcement agencies (LEAs), prosecutors, judges and civil society organisations (CSOs) — fail to keep up with the pace at which criminals use new technologies to continue their abhorrent acts. Furthermore, assistance to victims of THB and CSA/CSE is often limited by the lack of coordination among these stakeholders. In this sense, there is a clear and vital need for joint work methodologies and the development of new strategies for approaching and assisting victims. In addition, due to the cross-border nature of these crimes, harmonisation of legal frameworks from each of the affected countries is necessary for creating bridges of communication and coordination among all those stakeholders to help victims and reduce the occurrence of these horrendous crimes.

To address these challenges, the HEROES project provides an ambitious, interdisciplinary, international and victim-centred approach. The HEROES project is structured as a comprehensive solution that encompasses three main components: Prevention, Investigation and Victim assistance. Through these components, our solution aims to establish a coordinated contribution with LEAs by developing an appropriate, victim-centred approach that is capable of addressing specific needs and providing protection. The HEROES project's main objective is to use technology to improve the way help and support can be provided to victims of THB and CSA/CSE. Moreover, the HEROES project will establish new innovative strategies that in the short, medium and long term will improve the way in which LEAs and CSOs carry out criminal investigations, assist rescued victims and prevent the occurrence of these crimes. You can read more about HEROES on our [website](#).

SECTION 1

Supporting children to be safe and happy online

This guide has been written to help adults who live, or work directly, with children and young people to support them to be safe and happy online.

TOPICS COVERED INCLUDE:

- The benefits of the internet.
- Putting children and young people at the heart of online safety support.
- Guidance on constructive conversations.
- Tackling challenging issues and responding to safety concerns.

Whether you are a parent or a carer, educator, social worker, medical or mental health practitioner, work in law enforcement, or are from any other professional background, you will know what a pivotal role the internet and technology play in the lives of children and young people. Through socialising, gaming, enjoying music and videos and completing schoolwork, use of the internet can be interwoven into every aspect of growing up.

Whilst the internet and technology, and all the amazing opportunities they offer, should be embraced as a positive, there are risks that children

and young people must be educated to identify, understand and manage.

Although age limits, verification, user terms and conditions and moderating and reporting services are all useful tools, online risk cannot be eliminated. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to support any child or young person online is through open and honest communication, and education about online risks and what to do to stay safe.

If children and young people are given opportunities to talk freely about the internet from an early age, with

adults who are interested, engaged and supportive in their responses, this can be a useful way to share different safety messages at age-appropriate stages and pave the way to having more difficult conversations in the future. The value of regular conversation is a theme that is reinforced throughout this resource.

Technology companies and private industry have a significant role to play in this process too. It's imperative that companies are aware of the age of users who are accessing their platforms and do all they can to safeguard children and young people to protect their rights and ensure that they do not encounter age-inappropriate, harmful or dangerous content and interactions.

SECTION 2

Starting with the positives

Before talking to children and young people about the risks of being online, it's important to recognise the positive role it can play.



What opportunities are there in positive internet use?

Children and young people often highlight the importance of their online lives, and the wonderful opportunities the internet and technology have to offer them.

More than ever before, the internet is integral to the social lives of children and young people. They are also going online to find and build communities, form connections with others and develop long and impactful friendships.

The internet can provide young people with a space to seek out and become their authentic selves in a way they may not feel able to in their offline lives. It also offers educational and entertainment opportunities, where children and young people can explore different perspectives, learn new skills or research topics that interest them.

Top tips to help you acknowledge the positives

- 1 By showing interest in your child's online activities, beyond talking about the risks and harms, they are likely to feel more comfortable sharing their online lives with you.
- 2 Making time and space for these conversations in your daily lives creates a safe space to talk about young people's positive and negative experiences, both online and offline.
- 3 Remember that children and young people use the internet differently to adults, and that their internet use can be influenced by factors like new online trends, their peers and their age and location.
- 4 Be open to the idea that their internet use will change over time and try to remain curious and non-judgemental about children's use of technology. The more regular conversations you have, the less confusing these changes may seem.
- 5 When talking to children and young people about their online interests, it is best to avoid dismissive responses or phrases that could be seen as judgemental of the apps/games/trends that young people are engaged in. For example, phrases like, *'I just don't understand all these new apps,'* could be taken to mean you aren't interested, or don't want to hear about the young person's experiences.

SECTION 3

Putting young people at the heart of online safety support

Giving young people agency and ensuring their voices are heard in relation to the online world isn't just good practice — it's also their right.

Global children's rights

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely signed treaty in history, having been signed by 195 countries. The convention lays out 54 articles that explain the rights of the child in all parts of their lives. In recent years, the UN has said publicly that all children's rights apply in the digital world. They have also asked that those working to reduce harms faced online need to balance this with the promotion of beneficial activities, and the prioritisation of children's voices.

Online and offline, all children have the right to protection from harm, discrimination, exploitation or abuse, including sexual exploitation and abuse. Anyone in a position close to children has a duty to uphold and protect these rights. Children also have the right to rest and play using services that are safe and appropriate for their age, and for those services to protect them from violence and abuse in all forms.

Listening to children's voices

'Children have the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously. Therefore, listening to the voices, ideas, experiences, and concerns of children and young people is essential.'
— **Article 12 of the UN Convention**

Honest conversations with children and young people about their experiences are extremely valuable in protecting them from potential harm or abuse, as

well as respecting their right to express their feelings and ideas. By listening to young people, we can create a safe space that encourages them to raise any concerns they might have.

Keeping up a regular and open dialogue with young people can also help to ensure that your online safety support is relevant to their needs and interests and remains as up to date as possible.

Do you work in education?

If your setting is providing online safety education for children and young people, try to ensure that the sessions are interactive and engaging and allow opportunities for children to use their voices and express their ideas. It is also useful to offer children opportunities to provide feedback on what they were taught, and how useful, relevant and engaging they found it.

Using young people's ideas and feedback to inform your future activities, and making it clear how you have done so, can help children feel that their voices are valued and their ideas and views have direct impact. This also helps ensure that lessons are consistently useful and relevant and can help create a safe and supportive environment for communication. This, in turn, can help give young people increased confidence to come forward and share any concerns they may have about their online experiences.



How the experiences of children and young people can inform your work

Whatever your role, youth voice can be utilised in a wide range of ways to inform your work and heighten its impact and quality. In schools, many choose to elect children and young people as school counsellors, prefects or other student leaders. These roles are a great starting point for anyone looking to use children and young people's voices to inform their practice.

FOR EXAMPLE

Before developing and launching a unit of work on online safety, one school chose to have pupil counsellors run discussions in their classes. These discussions gave children and young people a space to voice their concerns about online safety, as well as their ideas about what would engage them in the lessons. Each pupil counsellor was given an opportunity to feed the key ideas back to staff, who were then given time to incorporate them into their planning. This process was then repeated at the end of the unit of work, with the goal of exploring how impactful and engaging the lessons were.

SECTION 4

Talking with young people about internet use

Talking regularly to young people about their technology use, and encouraging them to share their experiences, is a key part of helping to safeguard them.

The internet plays a significant role in the lives of children and young people and is integral to their social development as they get older. It no longer makes sense to distinguish between 'life online' and 'real life,' because a child's introduction to the internet often starts from the moment they are old enough to hold a connected device.

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

Can you show me how to...?

I'd love to hear what things you enjoy doing online and why!

1. 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 the children you care for, or work with, may use the internet differently from you their experiences are still significant. If a child mentions something you haven't heard of, ask them to show you, or explain in more detail — or you may do your own research. Try to keep conversations about the internet broad, and value children's opinions when they're talking about what they enjoy doing to show that you are interested in all aspects of their online world.

Can I play this game with you?

Who can you talk to in this game?

2. TALK EARLY AND OFTEN

The most effective way to deal with any online issue is to make conversations about the internet a part of 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 later. It also shows your child that you are someone who knows about the internet and can help them.

Before you use the tablet today, can you remind me what we agreed about where you could go for help?

What's your favourite way to communicate with friends online?

Have any of your friends ever experienced _____ online?

I'd like to talk about ____ with you, but first, what are your thoughts on it?

If someone you know needs help with something online, what do you do?

3. 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, when travelling or whilst doing an activity together for example are options that might make it easier. The environment needs to be right too — free from unwanted distractions, so that everyone involved can concentrate fully and knows that they are being listened to.

Remind the child often that they can talk to you about anything, no matter how difficult, and that they will not be judged or blamed. A child might not be ready to share something straight away, so show them that you are there to listen whenever they are ready. Don't pressure them to talk and provide them with alternative ways to communicate, e.g., writing it down. Talking about something from the point of view of their wider peer group can also be helpful, so they aren't sharing first-hand experiences.

What settings does this app have that you could use to support you?


4. KEEP IT RELEVANT

As they get older, 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 parts of our bodies are private.

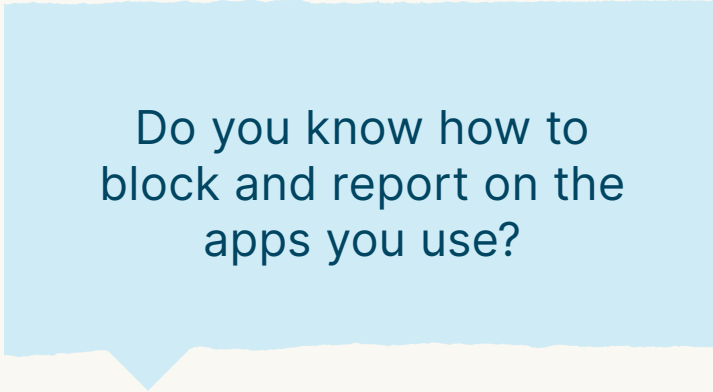
What's the best online safety advice that you've been given?

Can you give me any tips?

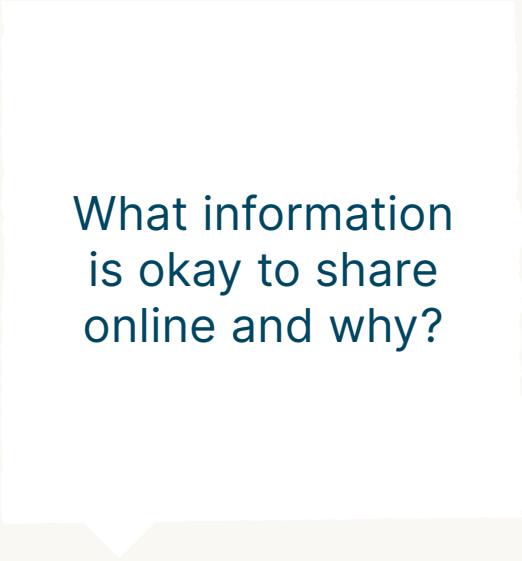
Is there anything you would change about the internet?



Do you think it's helpful to have content restrictions (parental controls) on mobile devices?



Do you know how to block and report on the apps you use?



What information is okay to share online and why?

5. BE PROACTIVE

Working together to create an agreement that outlines how the internet and technology will be used within the family, or within an educational setting, is a useful way to set clear expectations and boundaries. 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 the 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.

SECTION 5

Definitions of key words and phrases related to online risk

When talking about online risks and harms with children, young people or other adults, it's important to use clearly defined language and terminology.

CHILD / CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (CYP)

Any person below the age of eighteen years.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is a broad category that defines the harm caused to children by forcing or coercing them to engage in sexual activity, whether they are aware of what is happening or not.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE MATERIAL (CSAM)

This refers to material that depicts and/or documents acts that are sexually abusive and/or exploitative to a child. The term 'child pornography' should be avoided, as it can imply consent and undermine the seriousness of the subject.

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

A form of child sexual abuse in which a person takes advantage of a power imbalance to coerce or groom a child into engaging in sexual activity of any kind. Coercive tactics might include offering gifts or money, pretending to be a peer, friend and/or boyfriend/girlfriend, and threatening to share images of the child. The term 'child prostitution' is not acceptable due to potential implications that the child is somehow willingly involved, complicit in or to blame for their abuse. Moreover, 'prostitution' is legal in some countries, while the sexual exploitation of children is a crime.

CONSENT

The agreement to do something, or permission for something to happen. Consent is required in many situations, not just situations of a sexual nature. For example, you should ask for consent before posting a picture of someone online or adding them to a group chat.

COERCION / COERCIVE CONTROL

The practice of persuading or manipulating someone to do something by using force or threats. Coercive control is an act, or a pattern of acts, of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten a victim.

FILTERING

An internet filter is a type of software that determines what content will be available to the user, or what will be restricted or blocked.

GROOMING

'Grooming/online grooming' refers to the process of establishing or building a relationship with a child, either in person or by using the Internet or other digital technologies, to facilitate either online or offline sexual contact with that child.

HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR (HSB)

This is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour displayed by children and young people which is harmful or abusive. Child-on-child sexual abuse is a form of HSB where sexual abuse takes place between children.

**IMAGE-BASED ABUSE/
NON-CONSENSUAL
IMAGE SHARING**

A form of online sexual harassment which refers to nude, partially nude or sexually explicit photos or videos being taken and/or shared without someone's consent.

ONLINE HARM

Online harm is any behaviour that may hurt a person physically or emotionally that takes place on any digital platform.

ONLINE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Any unwanted sexual behaviour, conducted on any digital platform, which can make a person feel intimidated, threatened, humiliated or discriminated against. It is recognised as a form of sexual violence.

PARENTAL CONTROLS

Settings that can be applied to individual devices or services that allow or restrict the content that can be accessed to ensure that content is age appropriate.

SEXTING

Sexting has been defined as the self-production of sexual images, or as the exchange of sexual messages or images. It is important to note that it is often done by consenting adolescents, though there are forms of unwanted sexting, e.g., images that have been taken, shared, sent or received non-consensually.

SURVIVOR

A person who has been hurt, harmed or injured because of a crime, accident or other event or action, or who has suffered because of the actions of someone else. Those who have experienced a traumatic event may prefer to use the term survivor rather than victim (below), due to the positive connotations of resilience that it evokes.

VICTIM

Someone who has suffered because of someone else's actions or beliefs, or as a result of unpleasant or traumatic circumstances.

VICTIM BLAMING

Any language or behaviour that implies (intentionally or unintentionally) that the victim of abuse or harm is fully or partially responsible for their experience.


Wherever possible, these definitions have been informed by the Luxembourg Guidelines for Interagency Terminology.



SECTION 6

Finding the words

Talking about life online is great, but finding the right words can be challenging — especially when young people may have their own slang and terminology.



Children and young people's language

Children and young people often have their own expressions, idioms and terminology that they use throughout their lives, including to talk about and describe their online activities. The form and content of these communications can depend on several factors, including online trends, location, age group and wider interests.

Because of the evolving nature of children and young people's language, attempts to define key terminology will often go out of date quickly after being written. Regular conversations with a child or young person may help to understand their language more clearly, and sometimes asking what a term means is all you need.

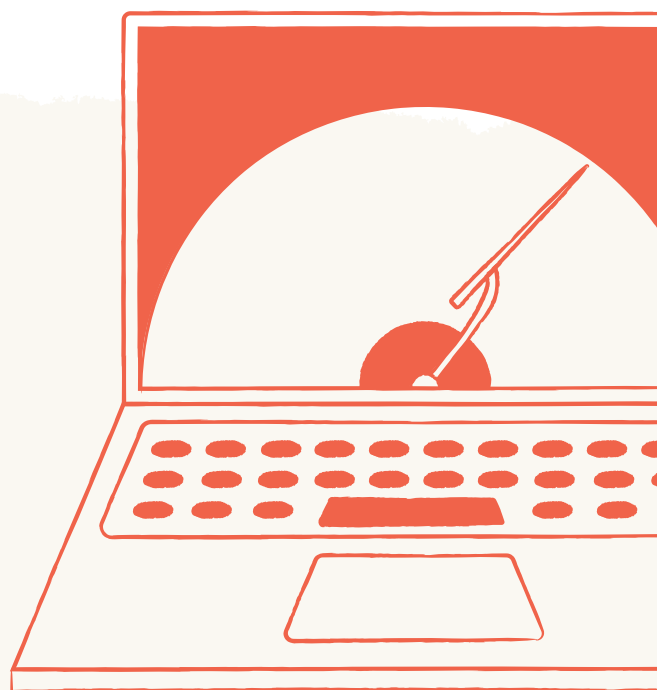
Clear communication about online risks and harms

The language that we use changes all the time, especially when talking about an online world that is constantly evolving. When talking about online risks and harms with anyone (adults or children), it's important to use understandable language and terminology which is respectful, promotes dialogue and avoids judgement.

Using the correct language, and being able to explain why it's important, also demonstrates that you know and understand the subject well and are therefore well placed to provide help and advice. However, simply having those conversations, and enabling them to take place, is of primary importance here.

Gender socialisation shapes how children communicate and perceive online behaviour, creating different expectations around sexuality, harm and shame. When adults engage with children in conversations about online harm and abuse, it's crucial to be mindful of these influences. Whether

adults are men or women, parents, teachers or mentors, these factors can impact trust and the conversation's dynamics. This highlights the importance of these factors in addressing online abuse and promoting open conversations with children and young people, ultimately enhancing online safety for everyone.



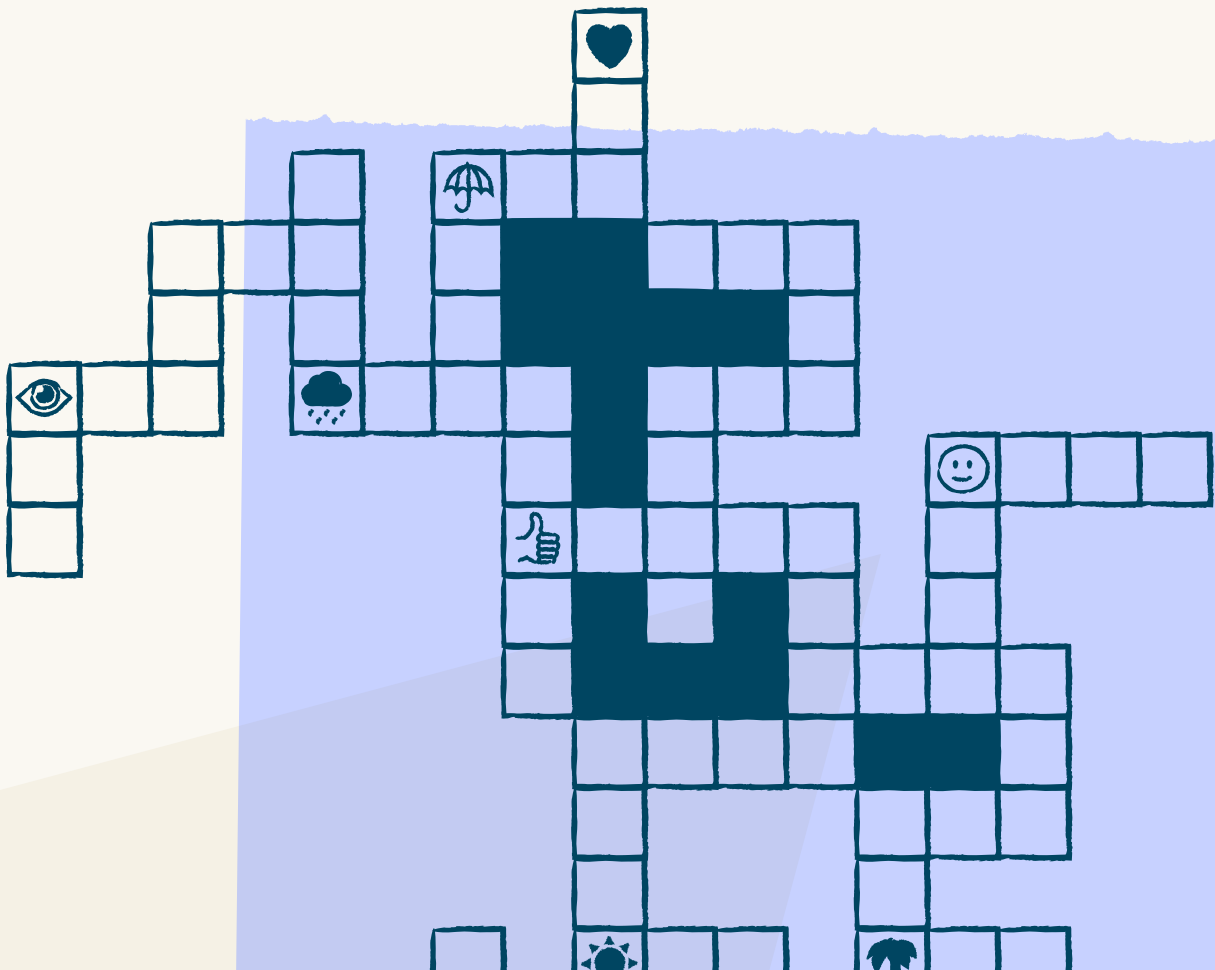
FOR EXAMPLE

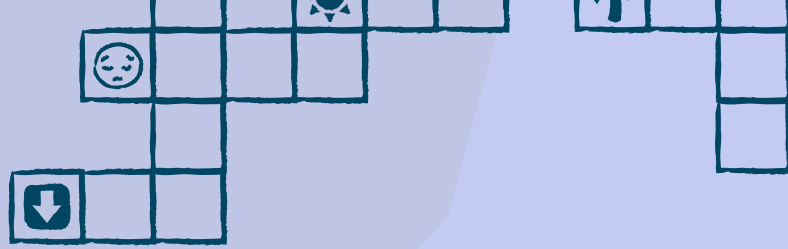
For example, 'child pornography' is sometimes used to describe child sexual abuse material (CSAM). Child pornography is not an acceptable term and using such language acts to legitimise images which are not pornography. Rather, they are permanent records of children being sexually exploited and abused, and as such should be referred to as child sexual abuse material to reflect the seriousness of the offence that has taken place.

For more information about recommended terminology, turn to page 16.

Tips for finding the right words

- If you're unsure whether a child or young person is familiar with the topic you want to talk about, it can be helpful to start by asking how they describe it. E.g., while an adult might talk about 'sexting,' a young person might know that as 'sending nudes.'
- Use age-appropriate language. When talking to younger children about online risks and harms, it can be helpful initially to talk around the subject rather than naming it, as this could scare them. For example, instead of talking about the risks of 'grooming,' a more age-appropriate conversation would be discussing who we trust and how we know who to trust.
- As children get older, using more specific terminology can become both useful and appropriate. In incidences of online bullying, it can be useful to help children or young people be specific in their language — for example, if the online bullying becomes online sexual harassment.
- Avoid jargon or very technical terms in conversation without clarifying exactly what behaviour or risk you're describing.





In the case that a child or young person uses terminology that could be problematic, you should:

- Take time to research the appropriate language to use and the reasoning behind its importance, so that your own understanding is up to date.
- Avoid showing anger, disapproval or judgement. Instead, use the situation as an opportunity for open and constructive conversation.
- Explain to them clearly why it is important to use one term over another. For example, 'We use _____, because the term _____ could mean _____.'
- Approach children and young people with open-ended questions such as, 'What do you think the differences are between the two terms?' or, 'How might using one term over another make someone feel?'
- Be mindful of the context of the situation. Some terms, such as 'victim' and 'survivor,' can be personal to individual people. If you are speaking to a victim or survivor, try sensitively asking them what term they prefer to use. Make sure to then use this term moving forward and ensure others do the same.
- Remember that encouraging young people to use the correct terminology for genitalia, from the earliest age possible, can also help avoid confusion and misunderstandings in the case of child sexual abuse.



SECTION 7

Tackling challenging topics

To ensure that children and young people are informed and prepared for risks they may experience, it's important to have conversations about difficult topics.

As children get older, wanting more freedom and privacy online is natural. There will come a time when they're using the internet self-sufficiently daily, and this independence is a natural part of their development. Often, adults can plan for difficult conversations but occasionally they may be needed earlier than anticipated — for example, if a child is inadvertently exposed to online harm they don't understand.

Discussing challenging topics might seem like a daunting prospect, but it's important to remember that young people need support and guidance in all areas of life — especially when it comes to sensitive issues.

If you need to talk about something difficult with a child or young person, 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, in an environment that feels safe to the child.
- Consider the best approach for the child. You might want to directly explain the concerns that led to the conversation or feel that asking some broader and more open-ended questions is more suitable in the first instance.
- Acknowledge that they might not feel ready to speak straight away, or there may be someone else that they feel more comfortable talking to. If possible, find a way to facilitate the next conversations.
- Insist that they are not at fault and that they have done nothing wrong. Whatever they tell you, it's important not to make them feel guilty about what happened.
- In some instances, the child might prefer to communicate differently, e.g., write their answers for you rather than verbalising them.
- Give the child time to process what you are saying and share their thoughts, without interruption or blame. If you are a professional, try to minimise notetaking and maximise active listening (maintain eye-contact if culturally appropriate, nod, etc.). Listen carefully to any confusion or concerns.
- Reassure them you are always there to help and even if you don't know the answers, you can find them out together.
- Get support quickly if they need it. This might be from family, friends, the school or other agencies.

SECTION 8

Recognising signs of online abuse

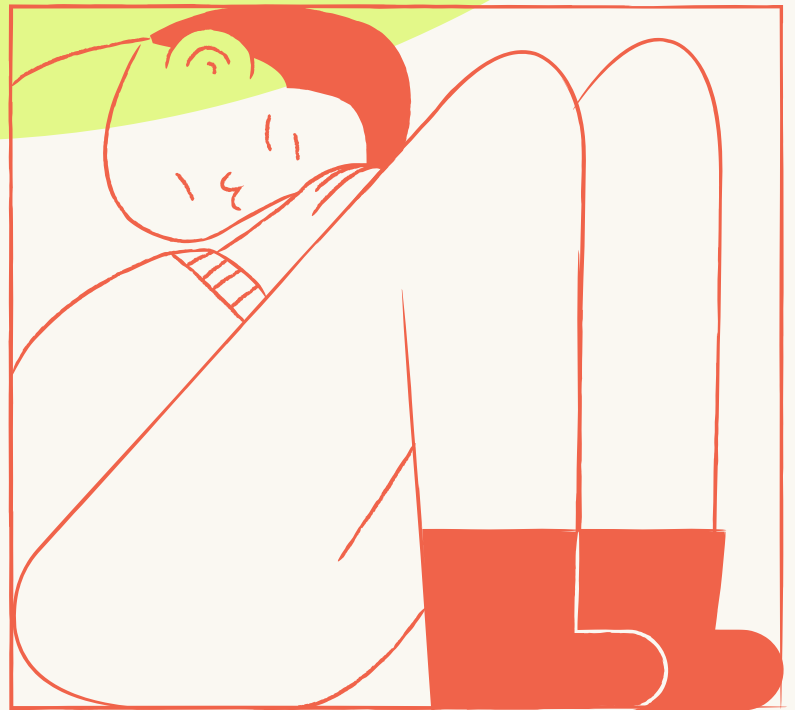
Identifying signs of abuse early, and taking action, is important in protecting children and young people.

Online abuse can be categorised as any type of harmful contact that happens on the internet. It can happen on any connected device and on any platform, e.g., social media, online chats, voice chat in games, comments on live streaming sites, text and messaging apps, email and private messaging. Children and young people can be at risk of online abuse from people they already know offline, as well as from those that they only know online.

Children and young people may experience various kinds of abuse online, including bullying, emotional abuse, online sexual harassment, exploitation or coercion and online hate. These incidents may also be in conjunction with physical, emotional or sexual abuse that's happening offline, such as bullying or an abusive relationship. Children and young people can also be groomed online.

This is a process of manipulation to develop a relationship with a child, with the intention of exploiting them and causing them harm. Harm caused by grooming can be sexual abuse, both in person and online, and exploitation to obtain sexually explicit images and videos of the child, including those that are taken by the child themselves. Grooming techniques could also be used to radicalise someone or to obtain financial information from the child or their family.

Open and honest discussions with children about consent and power imbalances are crucial in addressing online risks, especially in activities like livestreaming and related online interactions. Recognising these aspects not only boosts online safety but also deepens our understanding of digital interactions, promoting a safer online environment.



There are certain warning signs to look out for that may indicate a child is experiencing abuse or other difficulties online. For example, the child might:

- Make changes in their internet use, e.g., they start spending a lot more or a lot less time online than usual.
- Want to stop using apps and services or participating in offline activities that they previously enjoyed.
- Display unexplained changes in their behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn, distant, upset or angry after going online or using their devices.
- Become more secretive about their online activities. For example, not wanting to share information about who they're talking to and what they're doing online, and isolating themselves (closing their door or leaving the room) to use their devices.
- Mention names of friends, contacts or followers that you are unaware of and be vague, or unwilling to talk, about who they are.
- Start to talk about more adult issues, demonstrate behaviours or use language that is inappropriate for their age.
- Have unexplained gifts, credits or money to spend online.

The effects of online and offline abuse are wide-ranging, and can lead to a child or young person:

- Experiencing problems with their sleeping, including having nightmares.
- Being extremely tired and having difficulty concentrating.
- Displaying behavioural problems or falling behind at school.
- Becoming socially withdrawn.
- Being more emotional or experiencing unusual outbursts of anger.
- Taking less care of their appearance or presentation.
- Feeling anxious or depressed, or experiencing panic attacks.
- Developing an eating disorder.
- Having thoughts about, or carrying out, self-harm.
- Having suicidal thoughts.
- Suffering from other mental health difficulties.
- Having flashbacks or repetitive or disturbing thoughts.



When examining the effects of online abuse, it's also essential to understand the issue of re-victimisation. Content that has been reported and taken down always has the potential to be re-uploaded and shared online, subsequently leaving victims feeling fearful that they may have to relive their trauma again in the future. The effects of online abuse can be both short-term and long-term and trauma may resurface or be triggered later, even if the original incident has seemingly been addressed.

Listening and caring about a child who has suffered trauma is key to helping them heal. While you as a caring adult might feel helpless as content can be re-uploaded, your availability and support can already be a huge help to the child or young person.

SECTION 9

Supporting a child who has disclosed online abuse to you

Do

- Acknowledge how difficult it must have been to talk and let them know they've done the right thing by coming to you.
- Use language that lets the child know that what's happened is **not** their fault.
- Listen calmly and objectively to what they have to say. Reacting with shock or anger may close the conversation, and children are likely to remember this reaction in the future.
- Allow them to explain it in their own words, at their own pace.
- Reassure the child that whilst it cannot be kept a secret, only the adults who need to know will be informed.
- Save the evidence **where appropriate**. Evidence may include screenshots taken on a laptop or mobile device, emails, texts or online conversation histories. This is different in the case of CSAM — see the DON'T section for more information.
- Take notes after you've spoken to the child. Try to keep these as accurate as possible.
- Report the abuse as soon as possible to the relevant agencies (school, children's services, police) so that the details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly.

Don't

- Interview, interrogate or decide if the child is telling the truth. Instead, listen impartially and keep it factual. Record statements and observable things, not your interpretations.
- Assume anything, speculate or jump to conclusions. Don't ask leading questions or provide language for the child.
- View images of CSAM. This is illegal and should be avoided. If a child reports that their device contains inappropriate images, ask the child, *'If I look at these images, what will I see?'* If it is CSAM or otherwise inappropriate/illegal images, the device should be brought to authorities.
- Make promises that may not be able to be honoured (such as promising you won't tell anyone or that this will never happen again).
- Ask the child to wait until another person can be present to witness the disclosure.

Avoiding victim blaming

Victim blaming is any language or behaviour that implies (intentionally or unintentionally) that the victim of abuse or harm is fully or partially responsible for their experience.

Whether you are a parent or carer, or work with children and young people in a professional capacity, victim blaming is damaging for children and young people and can discourage them from seeking support or talking openly about their experiences.

When young people fear that they will be in trouble they will be less likely to come forward and share their concerns and ask for the help they need. To avoid negative outcomes, it's crucial that young people are encouraged to talk to trusted adults and assured of a safe space for conversations.

Avoid phrases and questions like:

- Why did you do that?
- Why did you break the rules that we set?
- Why didn't you come forward sooner?
- What did you expect would happen?
- You should have known better.
- That was a dangerous choice.
- You put yourself in danger by...

If you work with children and young people, your setting's policies and procedures should promote anti-victim blaming attitudes and language. If adults in your setting display victim blaming attitudes, consciously or unconsciously, it is important to discuss this with them and challenge this behaviour in a constructive way.

SECTION 10

Reporting cases of online abuse

If you are made aware of, or have concerns about, a potential case of online abuse, then working in partnership with the right agencies ensures that the appropriate support is quickly received.

For parents and carers

Talk to your child to offer support and reassurance and, if appropriate, report the suspected abuse to the child's school and/or to the relevant national authority.

Report the incident online using the reporting, blocking or moderating settings available on the services that the child is using.

You can also report child sexual abuse material to the platform or site where it is hosted or via national and international reporting mechanisms. For more information see pages 28 and 40. If you think your child is in immediate danger, contact your local or national police force.

For professionals

All settings and organisations that work with children and young people should have child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures in place. The designated safeguarding person or officer will be able to let you know where these are if you are not familiar with them.

These documents should be regularly reviewed, read and understood by all adults. Ensure that you communicate with your safeguarding lead or line manager to keep your knowledge and practice up to date.

If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child, follow your setting's mandatory procedures to record the concern and escalate either to an individual or organisation with safeguarding responsibility, or to the relevant authority, e.g., local police, national reporting organisation or local support services.

If you think the child is in immediate danger, contact your local or national police force, a national helpline or other relevant agencies, such as your local child protection services.

Using correct terminology while reporting

If your role has mandatory safeguarding procedures, it is critical that any reports use correct terminology to accurately describe offenses. It is also useful for parents to use correct terminology, as it will help you access the correct support and guidance.





SECTION 11

Key online safety messages to share with children

Education and support are the best tools that a child can have when it comes to understanding and managing risk online.

The following key online safety messages cover a wide range of topics, based on the risks that children and young people may encounter online. Whilst lots of children and young people will be using Wi-Fi in their homes with filtering in place or may have content restrictions set up on

their personal devices, these kinds of controls are not guaranteed to be one hundred percent effective. Therefore, sharing key messaging can help support children and young people in their safe and responsible use of the internet.

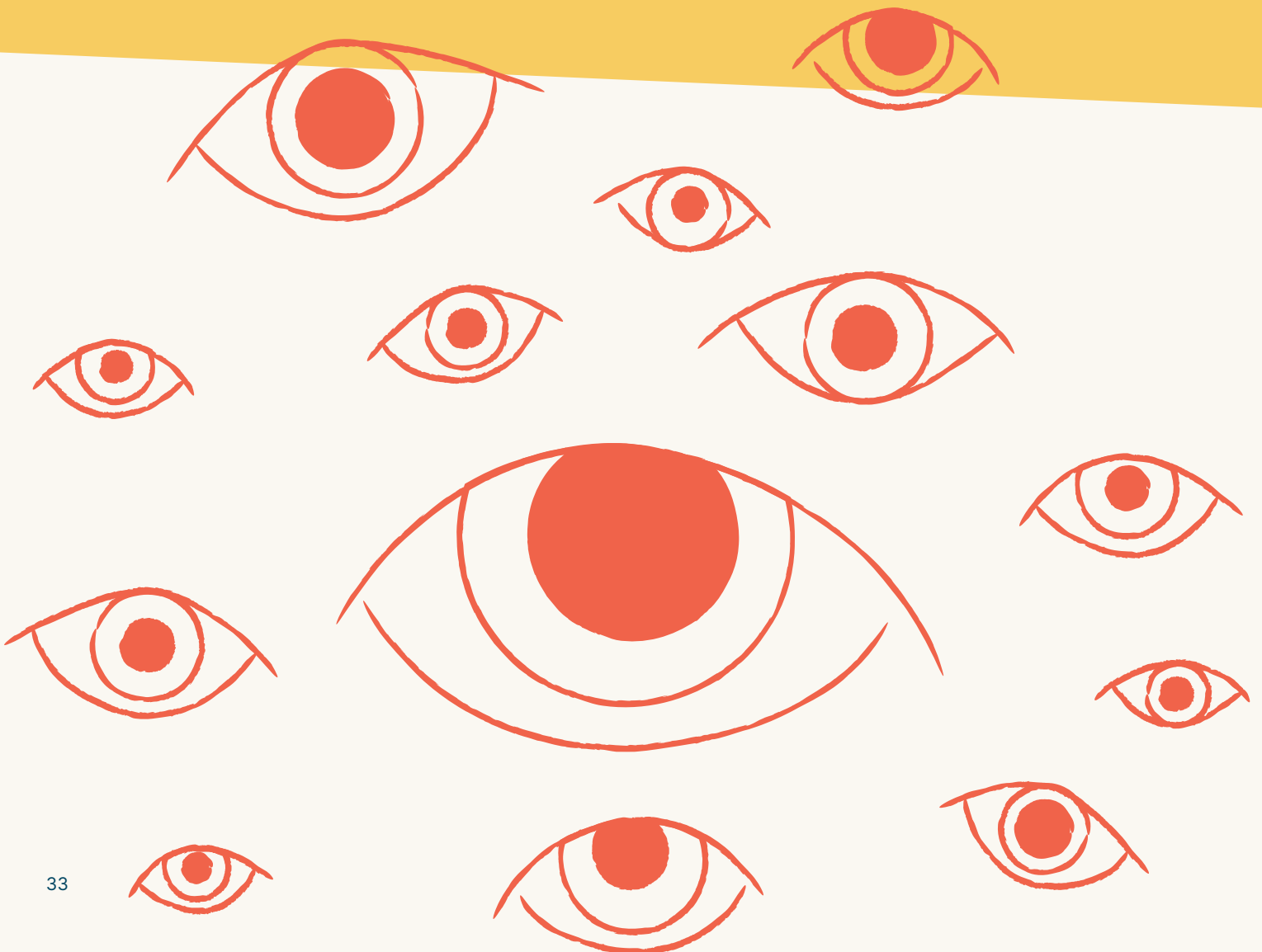
1. CREATING AND SHARING CONTENT

As children grow older, their interests are likely to move from merely consuming content to creating and sharing content of their own, and there are several factors that need to be considered if they are to learn how to do this safely and responsibly. Depending on the age of the child you are talking to, two useful questions to ask could include:

“Who can see what you are sharing online?”

It's important that children and young people keep their personal information safe and use the privacy settings that are available to them, to ensure that they're happy with the audience for their posts. They may need help to put these in place.

It's also essential to remember that even with these settings, screenshots can be taken, livestream can be recorded, messages and comments can be copied or forwarded on to others, and things posted online may resurface in the future.



“Do you have consent for what you want to share?”

When it comes to sharing content online, it's important that you have consent from whoever is in the photos or videos that you upload. Consent is a key concept for children and young people to explore and understand, and one that is often overlooked. A straightforward way to talk about consent is that it must be:

FREELY GIVEN

This means that no one should ever feel pressured into giving permission for something to happen.

REVERSIBLE

If someone gave consent in the past, it is their right to change their mind.

INFORMED

The person must be given all the information for them to be able to properly give consent.

SPECIFIC

This means that each example of seeking consent needs to be specific to that moment and that no assumptions can be made. For example, just because someone has given consent in the past doesn't mean that you can assume that they would give consent again.

Modelling consent is important. Before posting pictures or any other content related to the young people in your life on social media, show them what you want to post and ask for their consent.



2. ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

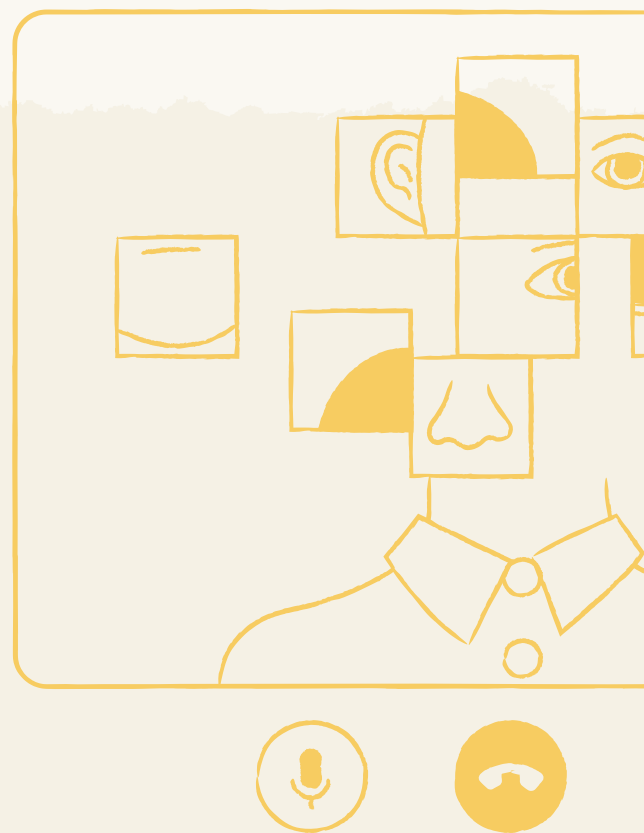
The online world is constantly evolving in terms of what children and young people can do, especially the ways in which they communicate with one another. There is little distinction now between 'life online' and 'the real world,' as being online is a natural extension of offline socialising and is very much a part of real life. At times, the people causing harm to children online may be individuals they know in their everyday lives, such as school friends, neighbours or even family members. For many children, the online and offline world are intricately linked, especially when it comes to addressing these concerns. Several of the 'online risks' are essentially variations of 'social risks' that emerge uniquely in the online environment. By understanding this connection between online and offline risks, we can provide better support and guidance to children as they navigate the digital world, ensuring their safety in all aspects of their lives. Depending on the age of the child you are talking to, two useful questions to ask are:

“How do you know this person?”

With so many children using the communication features offered within gaming platforms, friendships are developing online between people that have never met face to face, and so the messaging that children and young people receive must reflect this. Ensuring that an adult approves all friend requests is a useful step to take for younger children, as is investigating the settings that are provided to control whether the chat features are switched on or off.

With older children who can chat with other users online, it's important to talk about the kinds of things that are okay to discuss online and behaviours to be aware of that indicate something might not be right. Ensure that children

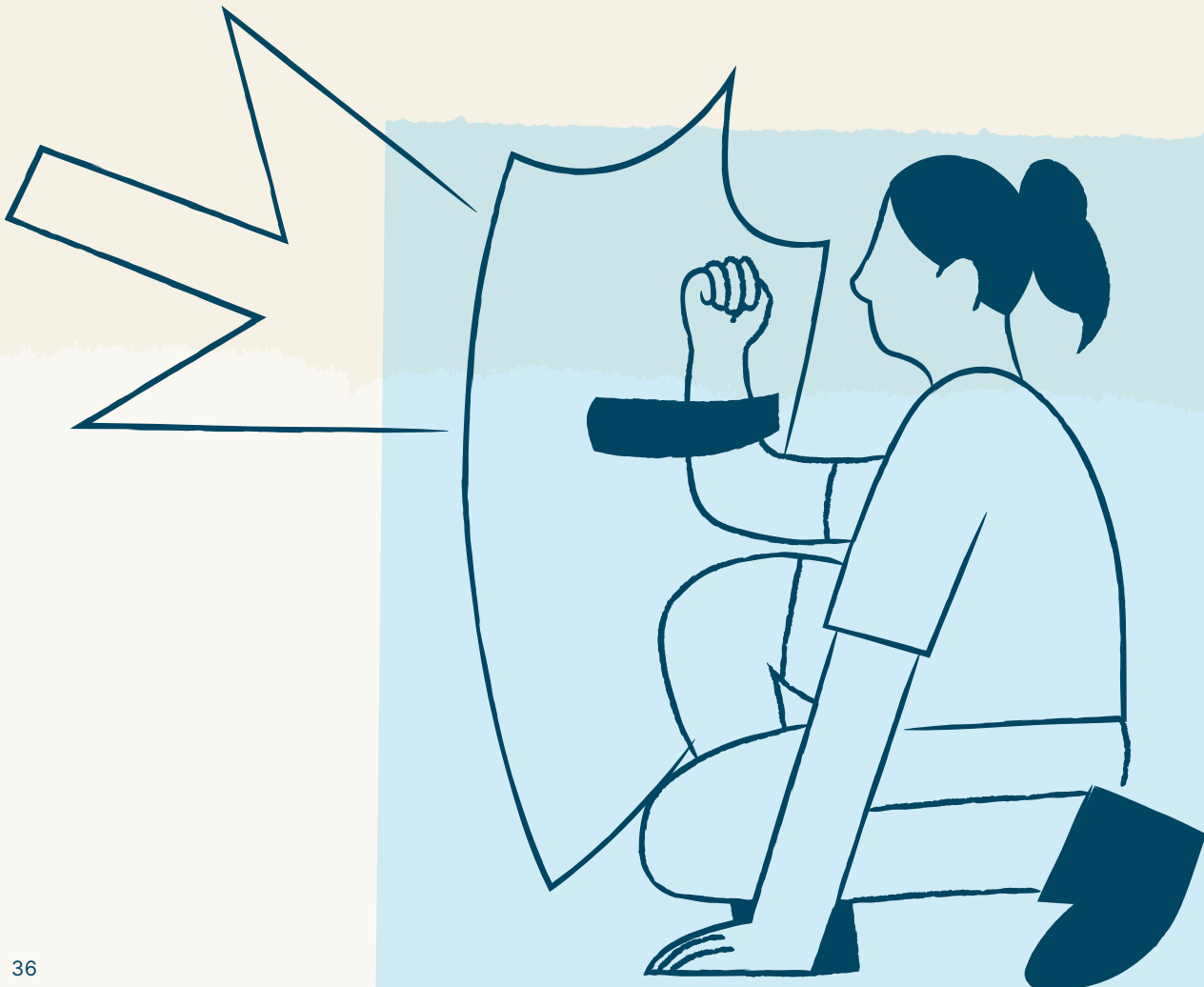
and young people know that friends made online are still strangers, and if any conversation or behaviour makes them feel uncomfortable (for example, if anyone is asking for personal information or for them to send images of themselves) then it's vital they speak to a trusted adult straight away.

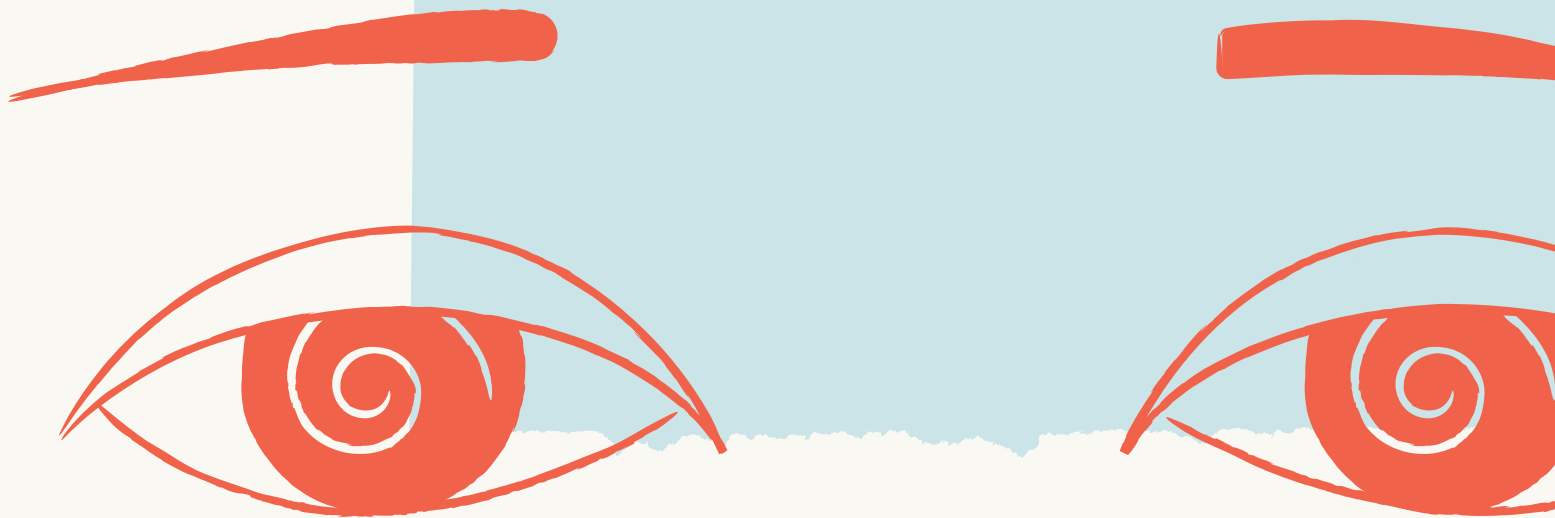


“What would you do if someone is pressuring you to do something that you don’t want to do?”

Pressure from others could include a number of different things, for example, requests to send images or videos of themselves (clothed, partially clothed or nudes), joining in with behaviours that might upset others or taking part in risky online challenges. The key messaging here is that no one has the right to pressure them into doing anything online that they are uncomfortable with, and to tell a trusted adult straight away if this is happening.

A ‘healthy’ friendship or relationship is not one that is based on an abuse of trust or power, and it’s okay to say no to things that they do not want to do. However, as a child or young person it can be difficult to say no under pressure, and so these are conversations that need to be started, and even practised, at an early age.





3. MENTAL HEALTH

The internet is an incredible resource and a brilliant way to connect with others, engage with entertaining content and explore new interests and trends. However, it's important that children and young people understand the impact that online content and interactions can have on their mental health and overall wellbeing. If going online is beginning to have a negative impact on children and young people's mental health, it's important to be able to recognise that this is happening and take necessary steps to redress the balance and protect the child in question. Depending on the age of the child you are talking to, two useful questions to ask are:

“How do you know when you've spent too long online or think you might need to take a break?”

Empowering children and young people to be able to look at themselves and identify the physical and psychological effects of going online is something that can be done from an early age. Young children may be able to identify physical symptoms such as sore eyes and headaches following too much screen time and will certainly be able to let you know how seeing something upsetting or scary makes them feel.

These conversations can then be developed and extended as children get older, delving more into the kind of content that they might be consuming or interactions they are being a part of and the effect that it can have, e.g., asking how influencer content makes you feel, having conversations around content being edited to 'improve' the aesthetic, and the fact that because people are likely to show their 'best selves' online, what you are viewing is not reality.

“What would you say to someone whose online activities were negatively affecting their mental health?”

This question is helpful for two reasons. Firstly, it gives children and young people the opportunity to demonstrate what they know about protecting their mental health online, as it will be reflected in the advice they give. Secondly, it highlights the fact that going online can impact your mental health and therefore it's useful to become as attuned to this fact as possible.

If children and young people are:

- Aware of the positive and negative emotions that going online can evoke.
- Aware of the warning signs that something might not be okay.
- Given the opportunity to talk about it openly and honestly.

Then conversations around the internet, technology, mental health and how to support each other will become a normal part of their development.

4. REPORTING CONTENT AND ASKING FOR HELP

If children and young people see something online that makes them feel upset, worried or uncomfortable in any way, then the most important thing that they can do is tell a trusted adult straight away. It's also important that any inappropriate online content, behaviour or interaction is reported to the correct services. Depending on the age of the child you are talking to, two useful questions to ask are:

“Who are the trusted adults in your life that you could go to for help if you had a problem online?”

This could be a family member, family friend, someone at school or any other adult in their lives that they feel comfortable enough to speak with.



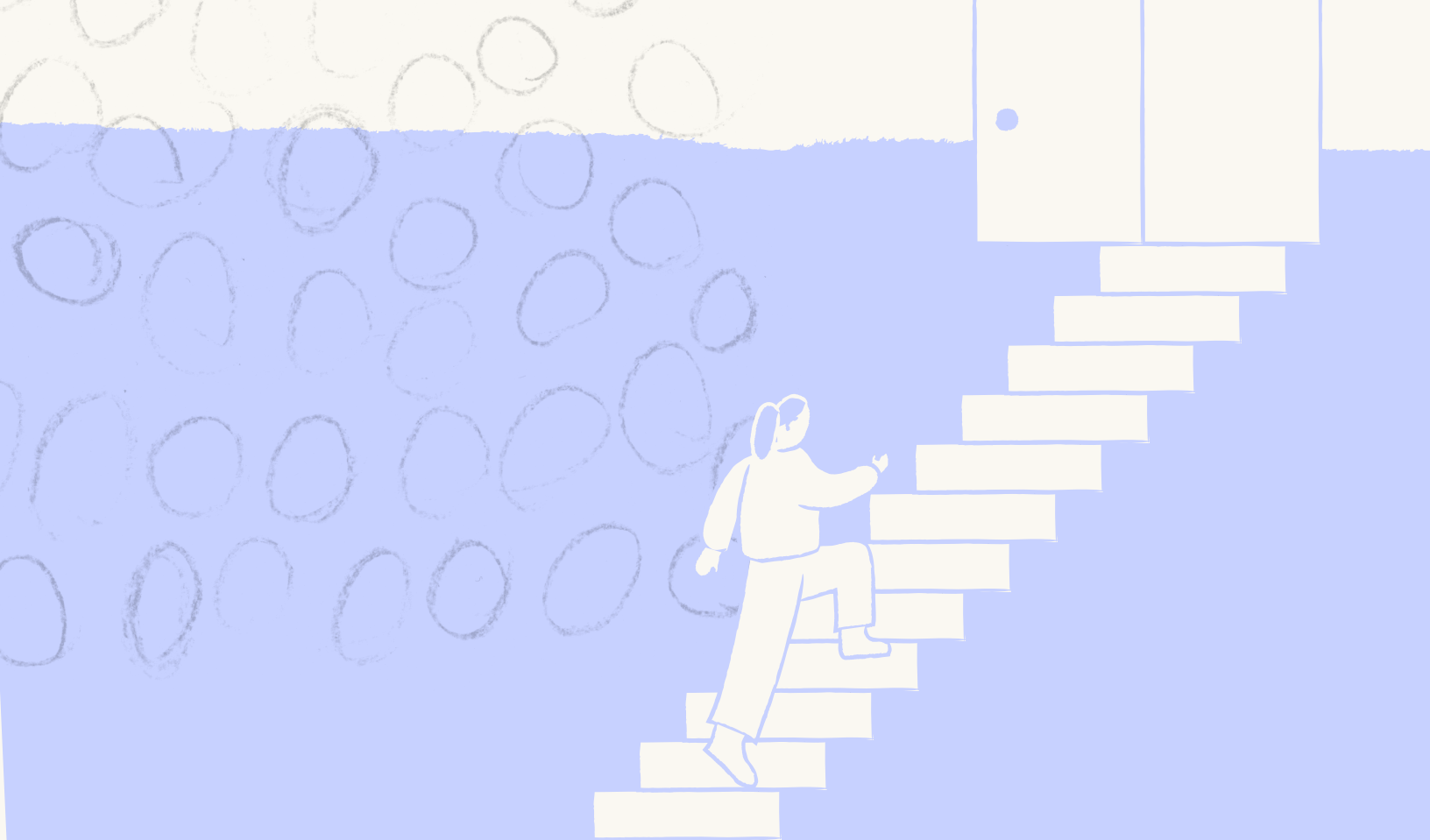
“Can you show me where to report something on this app/game/site?”

All online sites and services should have reporting channels available, where content or behaviour that breaks the user terms and conditions can be flagged to a moderator. However, these can sometimes be hard to find and children and young people may not know how, or when, to use them. Familiarising yourself with the reporting routes on popular services is a useful activity and by asking children if they know how to access these features you can assess their level of knowledge.

Unauthorised content or behaviour that can be reported might include:

- False information.
- Spam or unsolicited sales.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Hate speech on the grounds of ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender or other protected characteristics.
- Content that incites violence or terrorist activities.
- Content that encourages or promotes suicide or self-harm.
- Online grooming.
- Pornographic content or nudity.
- Child sexual abuse imagery.

If a child or young person does come to you with a problem that you need to report to an online service, then saving as much evidence as possible to substantiate the report is helpful. This might include screenshots of messages, images and chat logs. Depending on the country that you are in, there may be national reporting helplines or services for illegal online content that are available to you. If you feel that a child or young person is in immediate danger, then do not wait to get help — you may need to contact child protection services or the police.

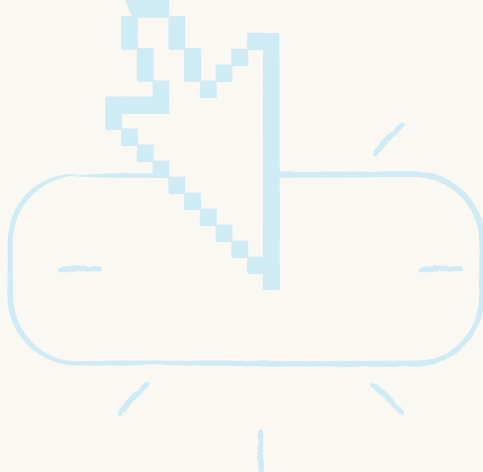


Where to go for help

- Helplines allow you to talk with a trained professional via phone, text or chat. They will discuss your challenges and can help connect you with the right support. For a list of helplines near you, visit icmec.org/hotlines-and-helplines/
- Hotlines or reporting portals allow you to report suspected child sexual abuse images or videos online. Find your national reporting hotline at inhope.org/EN
- For a free service that can help you remove or stop the online sharing of nude, partially nude or sexually explicit images or videos, visit takeitdown.ncmec.org/
- For resources for parents, carers, educators, and young people and detailed information about different online issues, visit UK Safer Internet Centre saferinternet.org.uk/
- For information and resources on helping to prevent online child sexual exploitation, visit thinkuknow.org.au
- For professionals who require more assistance in dealing with an online safety issue, reach out to the UK's Online Safety Helpline: saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline
- To report online threats, bullying, harassment, impersonation, violent content or self-harm content, go to reportharmfulcontent.com

Turning insights into action

Technology and the online world to offer children and young people an incredible range of opportunities. It is vital that the journey to becoming competent, independent internet users is nurtured at each stage by adults who are aware of how children and young people use technology and can provide effective advice and support when it's needed. By following the tips and information given in this guide, and by educating ourselves and the children in our care, we can create a safer, happier and more fulfilling online experience for all children and young people.



Annex B Social media visuals

Talking about the internet — 1a carousel



Talking about the internet — 1b static



Warning signs — 7a carousel



Warning signs — 7b static



Instagram example

