

Tips for encouraging open discussion about digital life

### **Make your interest clear**

Ask to see your child's favourite games and apps which will help you spot issues

### **Be open, honest, and appropriate to their age**

When answering questions about puberty, relationships, etc.

### **Remind your child they can always talk to you**

Even when they view harmful content, talking about it openly will help

### **Discuss that not everything we see online is real**

Use examples from your own online world, like posts that show perfect houses

### **Try to remain calm**

Your initial reaction could stop a child from speaking openly about what they've seen

### **Create a family agreement**

About device use including when to use devices, parental controls and why it's good to talk

### **Keep talking**

## Online Safety Newsletter

March 2024

## Online Challenges

Online challenges can commonly appear online through social media or other online platforms. The 'challenges' themselves can vary but often encourage individuals to "one up" the original challenge which can lead to harming themselves, others, or property in the real world. They are often created to cause alarm and have been designed to seem enticing or exciting for young people.



What should you do?

### **Don't encourage it**

Warning others about an online challenge may seem like the smart thing to do but naming it can inadvertently direct other people towards it. Sending warnings can draw unwanted attention towards the challenge and the potential harm it can bring.

### **Have open conversations**

Children and young people can encounter online challenges that may cause upset, they may also see challenges that may initially seem 'fun' but could actually cause real offline harm. Ensure that you or someone your child can trust is available to talk.

### **Report it**

Stop the spread of harm by reporting it online. Social media sites and other platforms should direct users to report content that is harmful.

TikTok have also produced this resource to help you talk to your child about challenges and the potential risks:

<https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en-sg/online-challenges/>

**Staying safe online**  
Advice to share with your child

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**Tell a trusted adult if something upsets you**

**Take breaks from being online**

**Don't chat with strangers**

**Ask permission before downloading anything**

**Avoid sharing private photos**

**Don't give away personal information**

**Double check your news sources**

**Take notice of age restrictions**

**Stick to trusted apps**

**Be suspicious of new information**

**Show respect to others**

**Be honest with parents and carers**

## Snapchat new parental features

Snapchat is a social media app used for messaging and sharing photos and videos. You must be 13+ to sign up. Users can send messages (snaps) to others that are only seen for a set time.

**What are the new features?**

### **Story settings**

You will be able to see who your child is sharing their story with e.g. all their friends or a smaller group.

### **Contact settings**

See who your child has been contacted by and who they can send messages to.

### **Others settings**

Check if your child is sharing their location with friends on the Snap Map.

Restrict the use of snapchats "My AI" to stop the AI producing inappropriate content.

### **How to set it up**

Snapchat has enabled a simple step by step guide to set up and use their family centre (Parental controls) [Snapchat Parental Controls | Parent's Guide to Snapchat](#)

### **Mobile network parental controls**



All mobile phone providers offer free parental control services which limit the content children can access via the internet to content suitable for under 18s. However, they may not always be automatically switched on. Check with your service provider that the parental control settings are switched on, and ask for them to be switched on if they are not. You should be able to do this via your account setting on your provider's website.

## Starting a conversation about life online

**Be positive and open-minded about the internet**

### Talk early and often

Make conversations about the internet part of your daily routine

### Create a safe space for conversations

Talking face to face can sometimes be difficult, so talking while walking alongside or while in a car might be easier. Make sure there are no distractions

### Keep it relevant

The way your child uses the internet will change as they grow older. So, ask open-ended questions to let your child lead the conversations you have to get a feel of the challenges and experiences they face online

### Be proactive

Create an agreement together on how the internet will be used, including time spend online, who your child can communicate with, appropriate apps and games and safety tools to report and block harmful content

## Game age ratings



Every game sold in the UK must feature an age rating. This gives a quick indication on who the attended audience for the game is. You can find this rating on the front of a game case or the game page when purchasing a game online.

However, even if the child is the right age for the game, there are other factors in the game which might mean the content is not suitable for them. If you want to learn more about the contents of the game, on the back of the game case or the game page, there are icons that tell you more about the contents of the game including if the game is scary, features online feature or drug references. Below are all the symbols you might find on a game:



## Think before you post

