What I wish my parents or carers knew ...

A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives
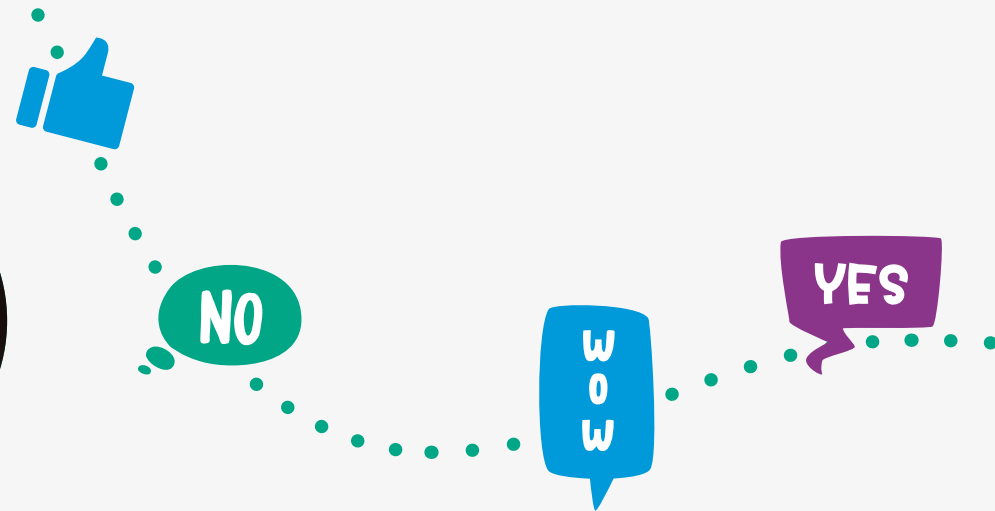
Dame Rachel de Souza
Children's Commissioner

INTRODUCTION

Parenting today can feel overwhelming — especially when childhood looks so different from what we grew up with. There's no manual, and it can be hard to keep up with the fast-changing digital world your child moves through every day. This guide aims to make those conversations easier and help you support your child with confidence.

YOUR ROLE AS A PARENT OR CARER

Being a parent or carer is both a responsibility and a privilege. Children tell me they need you to guide them, set limits, and make difficult decisions when things aren't clear-cut.

Parents today face a challenging dilemma:

- Allow your child online and risk exposure to harm
- Or hold them back from a space that is vital to how young people socialise, learn and play

It's understandable to feel uncertain — especially with constantly changing guidance and complex platform controls. But you are not supposed to be your child's friend.

WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

The last guide I produced like this it focused on sexual harassment online. This one is broader, reflecting how rapidly the online world is shifting and how everyday digital habits are shaping children's lives.

Its purpose is simple:

- Demystify common online challenges
- Help you start and sustain open conversations with your child
- Support you in setting regular, realistic boundaries

Technology companies still have a long way to go, and the online world is rarely designed with children's safety in mind. This guide offers clarity while work to address safety continues.

A SHIFTING LANDSCAPE: THE ONLINE SAFETY ACT AND BEYOND

Since the last guide, the Online Safety Act has come into force across the UK — an important step towards regulating the content children see. It is progress, but nowhere near perfection.

I will be watching international evidence closely to see where we can do better, including Australia's brave new law of removing under-16s from social media.

This guide recognises that parents are not only worried about harmful content — but about habits:

- Endless scrolling
- Difficulty switching off
- Pressure from peers
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Whether their child would tell them if something went wrong

It's absolutely right that we take evidence from around the world to tackle this global risk to children

WRITTEN WITH CHILDREN, FOR PARENTS

This guide reflects the voices of teenagers across England — including those with learning difficulties and disabilities — who shared openly what helps and what gets in the way when talking to parents.

Young people understand the pressures they face online. They also see the challenges parents face.

THE NEXT FRONTIER: UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL HABITS AND AI

Online habits have been forming for years — for adults and children alike. Now, AI is accelerating that shift in ways we're only beginning to understand.

AI already influences schoolwork, information gathering, creativity and communication. The gap between parents' understanding and children's experience is widening, and this guide helps you bridge it.

WHY COMMUNICATION MATTERS MORE THAN CONFISCATION

My research shows schools restrict mobile phone use widely, yet school leaders still rank online safety among their biggest concerns. That tells us something important:

Talking early and talking often is the most effective way to help children feel safe, supported, and willing to come to you when something goes wrong.

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT YOU TO KNOW

Teenagers may not always say it, but they want clear boundaries. In fact, when I ask them whether they'd give their future children a smartphone at the same age they received one, they tell me unanimously: no.

Their message to parents is clear:

Be firm, be kind, and trust your instincts.

Just take it that you know best – they don't.

FINAL MESSAGE

Your role cannot be outsourced. Not to schools, not to politicians, not to tech companies. No one knows your child like you do.

Meet them with patience and compassion — and extend the same compassion to yourself. Stay curious, stay involved, and keep the conversation open.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide explores why children often struggle to talk about their online lives, and offers practical ways to help.

We've focused on the subjects young people said were most important:

SCREEN TIME PAGE 8

WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN PAGE 12

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PAGE 16

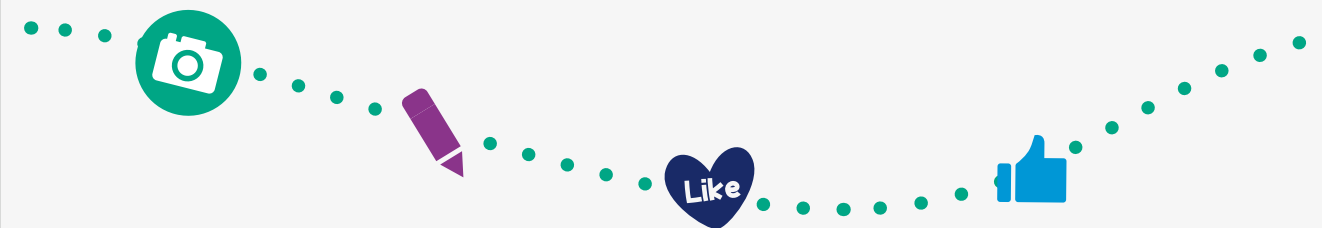### Under each topic we'll cover:

THE ISSUE AT HAND

A general outline and explanation of the issue

WHAT CHILDREN THINK

A summary sharing thoughts and feelings from children aged 13 to 18

TOP TIPS

Tips from young people on how to discuss the issue with them.

Following this, you'll find:

This guide provides advice and support for navigating the online world with your child, with tips to help understand and generate confidence on a broad range of topics. Previously, my team created a similar guide themed on online sexual harassment, **The things I wish my parents had known: Young people's advice on talking to your child about online sexual harassment**, which shares specific advice on pornography, sharing nude images, sexualised bullying, editing photos and body image, and peer pressure.

Why talking about digital life is hard for kids …

… and how to make it easier

Parents and carers don't know enough

1 Talk about both the good and the bad of life online

Young people say parents don't always understand the platforms they use or the online trends they enjoy. They also feel that adults focus mostly on what can go wrong, and rarely acknowledge the parts of being online that matter to them.

2 Be involved early and collaborate on key decisions

Young people say that when parents take an active interest from the start, they're better placed to help if something goes wrong. They also want to be consulted about decisions around their digital use, so they can understand the reasoning and feel the rules are fair.

3 When in doubt, ask your child

They know their online world best — and you're the person best placed to help them navigate it.

4 If you're still unsure, speak to a teacher or trusted professional

They can guide you towards the right advice and further support.

Fear of consequences

1 Create a safe space for talking about what they see online

Young people want to share their experiences but don't always feel they can. Help them feel comfortable talking about the apps they use and what they're seeing online.

2 Set ground rules together

Agree on rules with your child and be prepared for them to change over time. Reassure your child that you trust them, especially as they grow older. Involving them in these discussions helps them feel respected and empowered, as they can share their voice in the process.

3 Be honest and explain

If you limit social media access or end up taking their phone, give reasons. Young people understand that sometimes this is a reasonable response, but needs to be explained properly. If not, trust can be damaged and children might not open up a second time.

It's awkward/ embarrassing

1 Start conversations early and keep them going

Keep the conversation going, responding to your child's experiences. Don't let awkward or "taboo" topics stop you. **Conversation starters** are included later in this guide, and the **Thinkuknow website** has age-appropriate ideas.

2 Keep it casual

Use everyday moments to talk about their online experiences — for example, while walking or driving. Teens say they don't want "the big talk"!

3 Be a role model

Think about how your own habits set an example. Talk openly about them, use them to shape family rules, and share stories from your childhood or teenage years — reflecting on how things might be different in today's digital world.

4 Have a conversation and ask questions

If you're unsure how to start, try watching an **#AsktheAwkward video** together.

5 It's okay to laugh!

Sharing a laugh can ease tension and make conversations more comfortable. Teens say they don't want parents to be too serious or intimidating.

MANAGING SCREEN TIME

Screen time is the amount of time someone spends on a screen of any kind – this can include smartphones, tablets and laptops.

Screen time counters only measure minutes or hours, not what that screen time is used for. A child could spend an hour scrolling through TikTok, half an hour on Netflix and two hours on Google Classroom, and this would all add up to their total screen time.

69%
Aged 8–15 spend more than 2 hours a day on a screen*

23%
spend more than 4 hours a day on a screen*

*YouGov Polling from the Children's Commissioner's office

MANAGING SCREEN TIME

What children think

- **The online world is not separate to children's offline worlds**
  The online and offline worlds, for them, are interconnected and are both equally important parts of their lives where they learn, play and hang out with friends.

- **Almost all of them have social media accounts and go on them every day.**
  They said that they prefer online platforms like Snapchat and TikTok, where they can watch short-form videos and communicate with their friends through images and videos.

- **There are a lot of reasons children value being able to be online.**
  Some children felt it helps them to relax, while others explained that they have friends online, who they have met through shared interest groups, and that these friends are valuable to them. Often they feel that you don't understand these relationships.

- **Some feel addicted to their phones.**
  They explained that when they see their devices, they feel an urge to pick them up, and some reported being online for several hours a day.

- **Many children said that the online world was a big part of your lives too.**
  Children said that you often use the same platforms and apps that they do, but that they use them differently and access very different types of content. An exception to this was Snapchat, which many children use but few said their parents or carers were using.

- **Those who have rules for phone use at home said they follow them, mainly because the rules are explained to them clearly.**
  Very few children said they break rules at home, even if they feel annoyed when the rules mean they cannot use their phones every time they want to. When asked not to use certain apps, they generally understand parental concerns, when explained, and abide by the rules set out.

- **Those with younger siblings were particularly supportive of having rules around phone use at home as they are concerned with protecting their younger siblings.**
  They feel that their siblings need additional support around their phone use because their habits are different and they feel their younger siblings can exercise less control over their screen time.

Tips for setting rules on screen time

Social media and devices like smartphones are not designed with the best interests of children at heart. They are designed to keep people "on" them for as long as possible. Children are especially vulnerable to the features which are designed to keep people hooked online, which is why setting rules around device or phone use at home is important.

1   **Set rules and explain them.**
Children said that as much as they enjoy being able to use screens and the online world, they do not always feel in control and that they want rules to help them. Rules provide children with expectations of what is acceptable and give them clear boundaries. They said they generally abide by rules when they understand your concerns and reasoning behind them.

2   **Rules should address two things: 1) The amount of time your child spends on their devices; 2) What your child is doing on their devices**
You know your child better than anyone else, and you will know what rules and boundaries will be appropriate for them. As a rule of thumb, if you're worried about bringing up a topic, set a rule. For example you may want to be able to see who follows your child on TikTok. Trust your instincts and discuss with your child, explaining your feelings and reasoning.

3   **Have a look at the Be Mindful section of the Digital 5 A Day**
In the accompanying activity pack for ideas of ways to capture screen time and types of content your child is looking at to help start conversations about rules

4   **Take a collaborative approach and ask your child what rules they think would be good.**
But remember you are the adult and you should trust your instincts, building in their thoughts but setting rules that ultimately you are happy with.

"Don't be afraid to be firm, and if you are worried about that, your child is seeing harmful content and you don't know what they're watching and it's affecting their behaviour, just take it that you know best they don't."

"[Having rules] makes my focus kind of work, because if I'm on my phone [I'm distracted]"

"I think the best approach is to have an honest conversation about why managing screen time matters. The things like getting enough sleep, staying focused on school work, and creating a healthy balance is really important"

"Just don't break the trust … don't suddenly go behind a child's back. I've known parents go in like, take pictures of like their social media profile and confront them about pictures or comments."

Children's ideas for rules at home:

1   **No phones at the dinner table.**

Mealtimes should be time to recharge and connect with each other.

2   **No devices in your child's bedroom.**

This could be discussed to be after a certain time in the evening to encourage healthy boundaries between rest and screen time, preventing unrestricted phone use late into the night.

"A rule that I think is really important that I've always had was don't let your child sleep with their phone in their room … stuff online tends to go wrong late at night…say your parents are asleep it's really easy to just sit up scrolling, watching things."

3   **Have some phone-free time.**

Have a phone-free day or time at weekends or in the evening. Make it a family rule and enjoy time together without online distractions. For ideas, use the "getting off grid" activity in the activity pack to plan something you can all do together.

4   **Share why you're using your phone.**

Explain what you're doing if you use your phone in front of your child. Telling them that you are "looking something up" or "checking what time you're meeting someone" will show them that you are using it for constructive purposes.
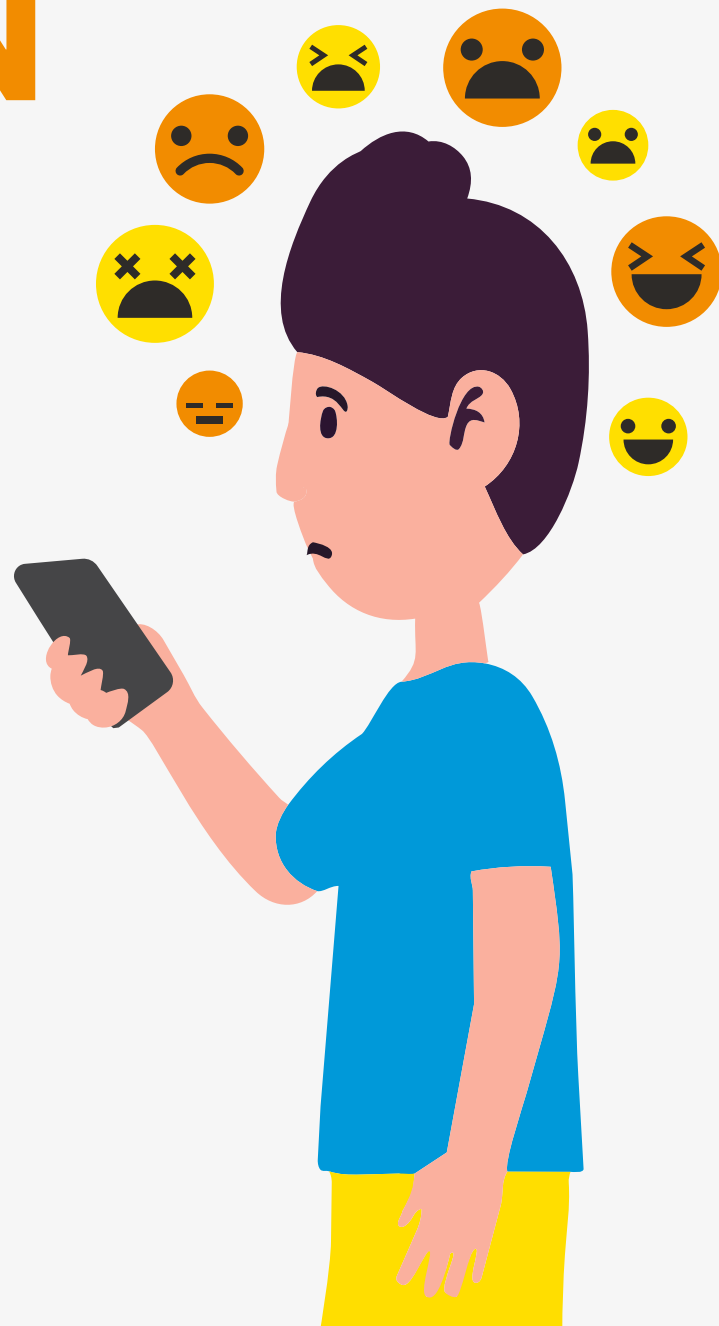
WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN ONLINE

The Online Safety Act is now in place, but the online world is still far from safe for children.

I released my **previous guide** to parents and carers to help them speak to their children about one of the most distressing kinds of online interaction – online sexual harassment and abuse.

My office and countless others have been working to reduce the risk of harm to children online, but there is still work left to do. This means that children are still having harmful experiences online and it is important that you understand how to talk to your children about their experiences and give them the help they need.

"Children are still having harmful experiences online"

What happens when children go online is not always in their control, but they often walk away feeling responsible for what happens there. It is really important that children are able to talk to someone about their experiences online, especially when something goes wrong.

What children think

- **They accept that bad things can happen and see it as an inevitable part of being online.**
  Children feel they can handle these experiences but, in reality, may not be fully equipped to manage them alone.

- **Children know that some harmful experiences they face would shock their parents.**
  This includes being contacted by strangers online, often through escalating interactions. Children also report seeing pornography, being approached by people selling things, and having intimate images of peers shared. If your child talks to you about something shocking, give them space to share and know how to support them. See the signposting section of this guide for advice on what to do when things go wrong online.

- **They are worried about how you will react.**
  The decision to tell an adult when something goes wrong online comes down to how they think you would react.

- **The harmful experiences children find more concerning include cyberbullying and content that glamourises self-harm and suicide.**
  They said for these concerns they want support from the adults around them. This guide includes signposting to services should harm occur online.

- **When something bad happens online, most children said they wouldn't speak to their parents or carers first, if at all.**
  These children said they rarely have honest conversations with their parents about their online lives. They worry parents won't understand or stay calm, and fear their phones might be confiscated. As a result, they often try to handle issues themselves or with a friend.

"[people are] friendly and then they kind of ask random things like out of nowhere. Maybe what you look like or your address".

WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN ONLINE

Tips for dealing with bad things happening:

1 **Use parental controls, but check in regularly with children about how they feel these are working.**
"Children are going to try their hardest to bypass parental controls and screen time limits […] it needs to be […] a collaborative approach where the parent and the child kind of decide together, kind of compromise."

2 **Set clearly thought out, specific boundaries on social media usage and consequences for inappropriate use - and explain them.**
Have times built in to discuss changes to restrictions e.g. loosening them with age or applying different restrictions to certain apps that you feel are particularly harmful.

3 **Confiscating your child's phone doesn't always have to be the answer when something goes wrong.**
Children said they worry about losing their phones or having them taken away as punishment, and that stops them asking for help. You may instead want to think about setting rules about safe boundaries and usage. See "setting rules" section for more help with this. Be honest about the situations that would result in their phone being taken and come to an agreement about this so they know it could happen and the reasons behind it. And importantly, stick to these.

4 **Know how and where to report things.**
It is never ok for a child to be harmed or put at risk, so know that you are right to report something bad if it happens. Social media platforms have reporting functions, but you may want to go to a third party because platforms response times and outcomes vary. This guide has links to support and reporting services you can go to if something goes wrong online or you think your child is at risk.

Here are some reporting services you can use in specific situations:

Online sexual abuse or grooming
You can report your concerns directly to **CEOP**, the National Crime Agency's Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command. You can also call the police.

Bullying
For information on how to support your child if you suspect they are being bullied, visit the **NSPCC website**. Childline are available to talk to online, on the phone, any time. Your child can call 0800 1111 or visit their website.

Nude image sharing
If your child is worried a sexual image or video of them may have been shared online, they can report to **Childline** and the Internet Watch Foundation's **Report Remove tool**. This helps children and young people report an image or video shared online, to see if it is possible to get it removed.

Speak to your child's school
They should have a policy to deal with incidents of bullying and sexual harassment/abuse and can help you to support your child.
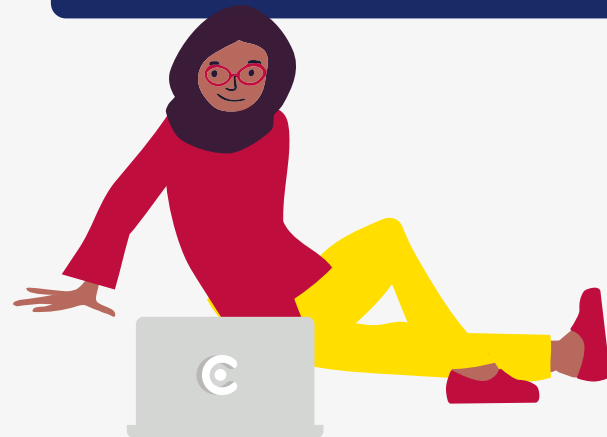
WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN ONLINE

Signs to look out for
We asked children which behaviours might signal that something has gone wrong online. Here are the themes they mentioned.

- Not doing as well at school
- Change in character
- Hiding away
- Changes
- Grades dropping
- Spending less time online
- Suicidal ideation
- Self harm
- Loss of interest in hobbies
- Unusually anxious
- Isolation
- Negative thoughts
- Disgusted
- Secrets
- Fear
- Feeling withdrawn
- Stopped eating
- Getting in trouble at school
- Decorative behaviour
- Less sociable
- Unexplained gifts
- Less self care
- Mood swings
- Not speaking as openly
- Constantly tired
- Starting unnecessary arguments
- Looking sad

Children's behaviour can change for a number of reasons. If you notice any of these, consider whether online behaviour or experiences could explain the change. Have a look at the **Signposting to other support services** page for places you can go for advice including where you can get immediate help.
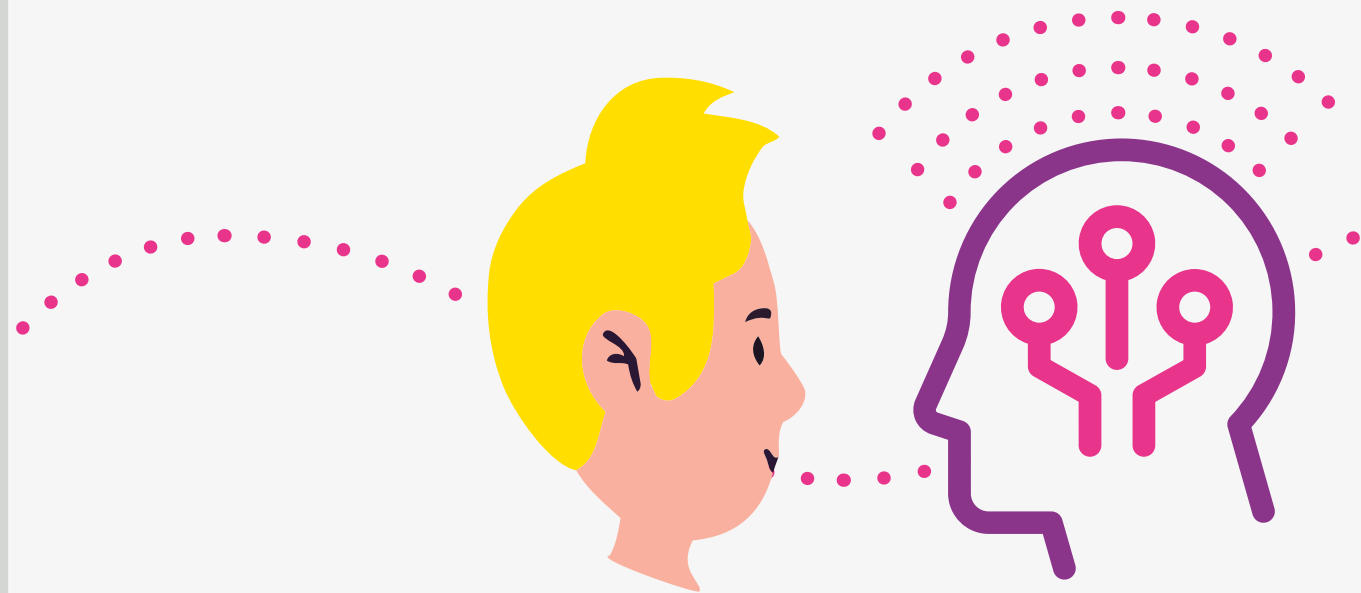
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

AI has been embedded into almost every online platform in recent years.

Simply searching for something online now brings up an AI explanation, and chatbots are now features of social media platforms. This means that interacting with AI is inevitable, and it is important that you understand what AI is, how it works and how to manage the risks around it.

Children shared how they would describe AI to their parents and carers and how they and their friends use AI in their everyday lives:

How do children describe AI?

"Intelligence created by humans to make their lives a little bit simpler and it's applicable to many different fields, like education and healthcare."

"It's a place for information when you can't be bothered to find the information."
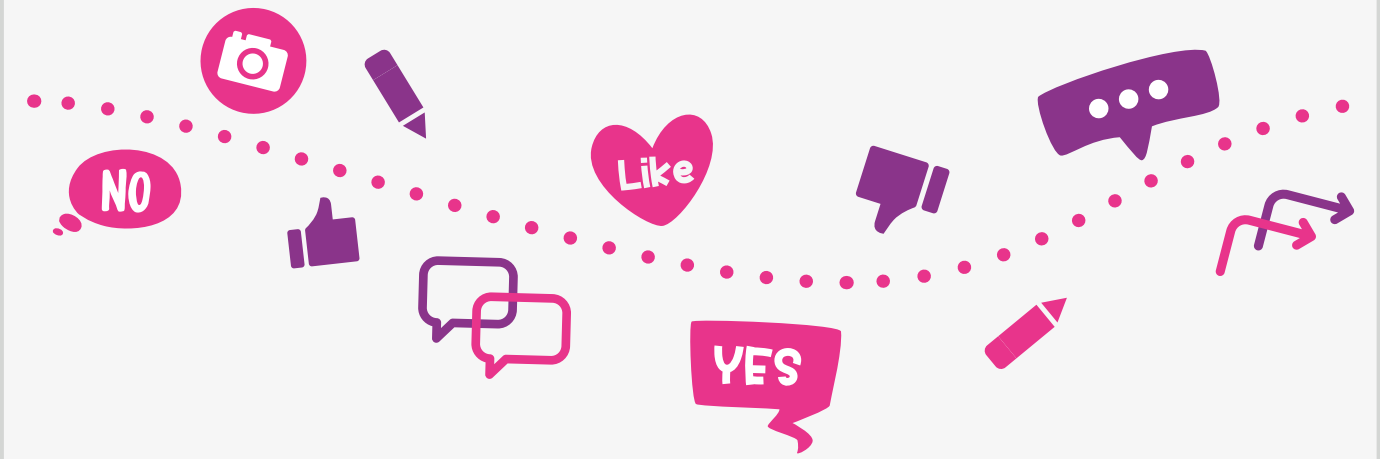
How do children use AI?

"Because they're students, they use it for things like researching ideas with ChatGPT. You can also use it to write essays and so on. Unfortunately, it's also used for more negative things, like deepfakes and other harmful content."

"It would help a lot if parents made sure their children are using it in helpful ways, because it makes everything so much more efficient."

"I think it takes away the whole purpose of having to look properly for something […] because when I search something with AI and it tells me in two seconds, I kind of lose interest."

"I think we focus a lot on the negatives of ChatGPT in society. But if it's used properly—especially in education—it can really complement children's learning. We just need to find a balance so we don't rely on it too much."

What you need to know about AI

It is important to check in with your child about their experiences of AI tools and AI generated content. As AI is embedded in everything from healthcare to classrooms, interaction with it is inevitable.

BE AWARE

You or your child may not always know when content (including text, images and videos) has been generated by AI. It is more important than ever to have conversations with your child about fact checking and thinking critically about what they see online.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

What children think

- **They feel that AI is now a normal, almost inevitable, part of life.**
  Most children use AI tools for fun and often find the content funny. Others dislike AI's impact on their schoolwork or personal lives but feel unable to avoid it. They've noticed AI is now embedded in many parts of life, including homework and information searching.

- **They mostly seem relaxed about AI tools, but there were some notable exceptions.**
  One child called Sora "dangerous", and others shared the view that the common use of AI tools to complete homework is unfair, because they feel AI generated content is valued more by teachers than work they do themselves.

- **For some children, ChatGPT might have overtaken Google as their main method of searching for information.**
  Additionally, they are able to name numerous other AI tools that they use, including OpenAI's Sora, Google's Gemini and Meta's Llama. However, they are not able to explain how these tools work.

- **They are critical of the content they see online, knowing and understanding that some of it is likely to be AI-generated.**
  Some mentioned that platforms often provided helpful labels which mark content as AI-generated, and others said that some AI image-generated images have a watermark of the AI company name on it. Children appreciate these transparency tools and find them informative. Many said they feel able to spot an AI image when they see one.

- **They feel that you can be tricked by AI tools.**
  Even though many children felt able to spot an AI image themselves, some felt the same could not be said for their parents or carers. Children feel that they know more about AI than you do, and some children feel actively concerned that their parents or carers are "gullible" and at high risk of being tricked by AI tools.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

"It's annoying because I think it takes away people's creativity—their ability to think for themselves—and it can overshadow those who genuinely want to try or have a passion for writing."

"Because [my dad] has this group chat with all his football mates, and they do silly stuff— like he has one friend he teases a lot. So he creates fake images with AI, even AI images of his friend."

"I want to get rid of those AI overviews on Google. I really want to, I don't know how."

"Some people are so gullible they believe anything"

Tips for managing children's AI use

1 **Be curious about what AI tools your child is using, and how.**
Try and ask them to explain what the tool does and show you an example of it in use. You will learn more about the role AI has in your child's life if you let them lead the way.

2 **Model being sceptical about AI generated content.**
Ask your child if they think the information a chatbot gives them is real. You might want to ask ChatGPT or another AI tool a question, and show your child the answer and ask them what they think. Ask your child: "what does AI think, and what do you think?"
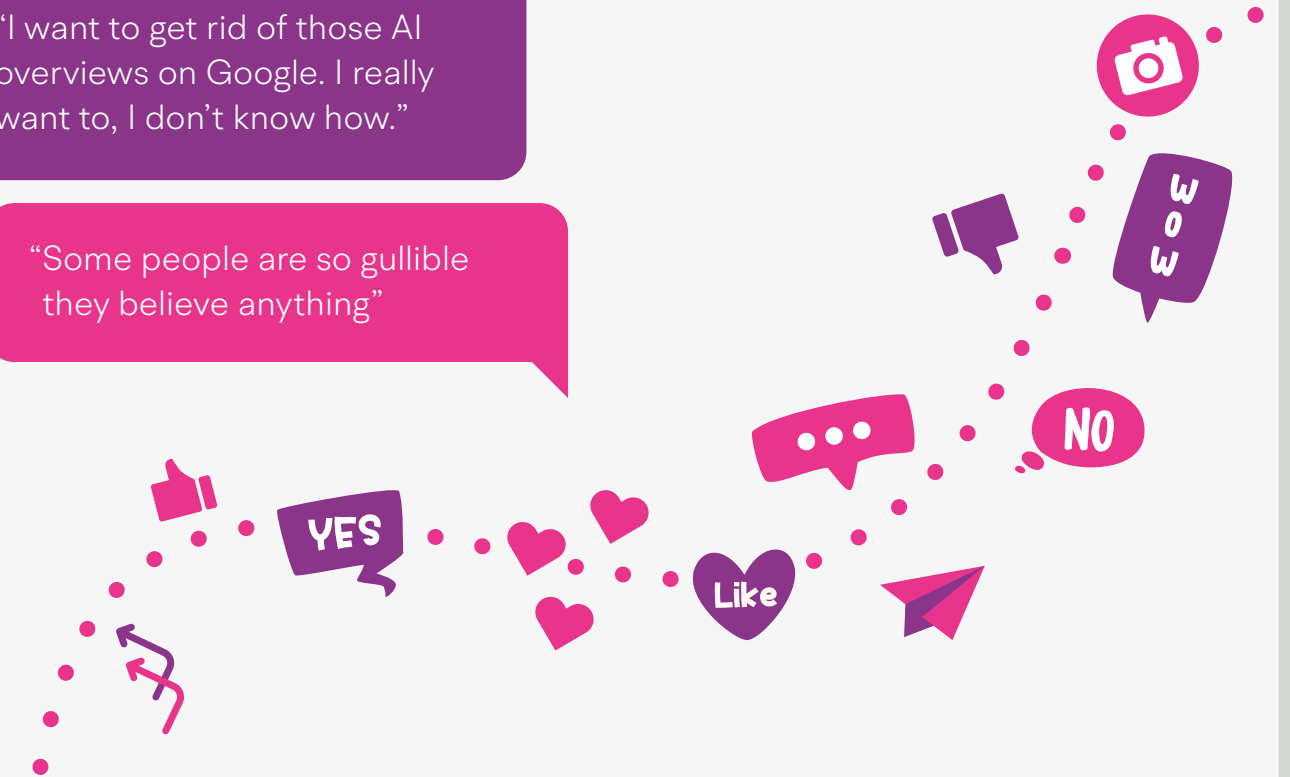
CHILDREN'S PREFERRED PLATFORMS & AI TOOLS

Social media platforms

Some platforms and apps have minimum age requirements, but only some of them check that the people who use them are the age they say they are. It is useful for you to know what age your child has to be to use them.

It's important to consider when you think your child is ready to use certain apps or social media platforms, regardless of the age those companies say their platforms are suitable for. You might decide to wait a few years beyond the stated age limit.

Below is information about the top platforms and apps children are using, along with the minimum age required to create an account.

These details are correct at the time of writing (December 2025) but may change. New apps and platforms will also emerge, so keep talking with your child about where they go online.

Tiktok
Social media platform for creating and sharing short videos (15 seconds to 3 minutes). Featuring a large 'Discovery' section for finding new content. *Age limit: 13.*

TikTok shop
Online marketplace where users buy and sell items. *Age limit: 18.*

TikTok Live
TikTok's livestreaming function. *Age limit to broadcast: 18 Age limit to view broadcasts: 13.*

Youtube
Social media platform for sharing videos. *Age limit to create an account: 13. Age limit to livestream: 16.*

Snapchat
Social media app for sending photos, videos, and messages that disappear after viewing. It has a 'Find Friends' feature to add contacts and optional location sharing. *Age limit: 13.*

Instagram
an image and short-form video sharing social networking site. Instagram has a "for you" page where users can explore posts curated by an algorithm. Age limit: 13. Instagram Live age limit: 16.

Roblox
Gaming platform where users can create, share, and play games together. It includes 'Robux,' which allows in-app purchases for avatars or worlds. *No minimum age, but staggered protections for certain functions.*

X
Formerly known as Twitter, a social media site where users communicate through short messages. *Age limit: 13.*

Reddit
Docial networking site where users can share media in different communities, usually arranged by specific interests, e.g football. Topics containing content that is harmful to children under the Online Safety Act (including pornography) are subject to age verification. *Age limit: 13.*

Twitch
Livestreaming service where users stream or broadcast to each other. *Age limit: 13.*

Pinterest
Social media platform which allows users to create virtual pinboards and view other people's images. *Age limit: 13.*

Quora
Social networking site where users can ask and answer questions of each other. *Age limit: 13.*

AI tools

Below is information on the top AI tools children are using and their minimum age requirements at the time of writing (December 2025). These may change, and new tools may emerge, so keep talking with your child and checking their security settings.

ChatGPT
A generative AI chatbot designed by OpenAI. ChatGPT can create conversational responses to user-generated prompts. *Age limit: 13. Parental consent is required for users under 18*

Microsoft's Copilot
An AI assistant that creates text, images and finds documents, among other tasks. *Age limit: 13.*

Snapchat's MyAI
Snapchat's built in AI chatbot. It uses OpenAI's GPT technology. *Age limit: 13.*

Gauth
An AI powered study assistant designed to help students with homework. It offers solutions, explanations and access to tutors. *Age limit: 13.*

Google's Gemini
An AI tool that creates words, images and answers. *Age limit: none for free version; premium-model AI App Plan: 18.*

Character AI
(character.ai)
An AI chatbot that takes on specific characters, rather than answers in a general chatbot style. Some versions of the tool are for users aged 18+ and age verification is required to access that part of the tool. *Age limit: 13.*

ViggleAI
An AI powered image generator, which allows users to create dynamic videos out of static images. *Age limit: none.(Parental consent is required for users under 18)*

Sora
An AI tool that generates videos using text-based prompts. *Age limit: 13 (with parental consent) or 18.*

Age Assurance

It is useful to know whether ages are checked on the platforms, apps and AI tools your child is using.

A process for determining age.

Some platforms, apps and AI tools are not appropriate for children or children under the age of 13. Some of these tools have minimum age requirements, but only some of them check that the people who use them are the age they say they are.

There are three ways of assuring age, from most to least accurate: age verification, age inference, and age estimation.

1. Age verification
Requires proof of age, for example a government ID document.

2. Age inference
Uses data provided by the user to infer their age, for example the search terms or the language they use.

3. Age estimation
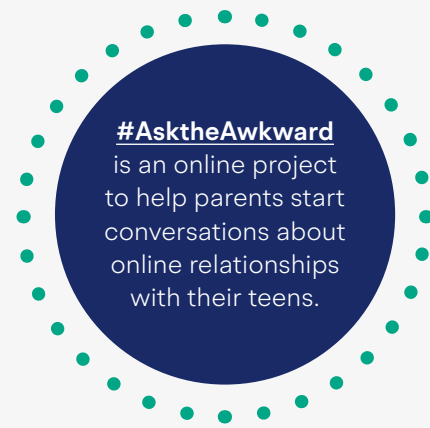Determination of age range, using unverified sources such as facial scans.

The Children's Commissioner does not recognise methods such as checking a box or asking a user to enter their date of birth, as an accurate method of age assurance or verification..

Discuss the platforms, apps and AI tools your child is using and whether they have asked for age verification and how your child feels about it.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

It's important to regularly talk to your children about these topics, as they are part of their everyday lives.

Create a culture of openness, curiosity, and approachability so your child feels comfortable coming to you with problems. Here are some suggestions for conversation starters from my Youth Ambassadors and Youth SEND panel:

#AsktheAwkward is an online project to help parents start conversations about online relationships with their teens.

What did you see on [insert platform e.g. Snapchat] today?
Refer to **page 20** for a list of platforms

Can you show me to how to use (this platform)?

What do you think might worry me about you being online? What might worry you about me being online?

Do you think a family agreement for online use is a good idea? How might this look for us?

How much do you think I should know about what you do online?

Do people say things online they wouldn't say in person? Why?

I saw something strange online today and thought I would check in to see how you are feeling when online

Who do you feel comfortable talking to about things you see online? Do you know who you could turn to if you needed to? It doesn't have to be me — I just want to make sure you have someone you can rely on.

Why do you think managing your screen time is important? How might your sleep or social life be affected if you didn't?

CREATE THE CULTURE BEFORE THE CRISIS

CHECKLIST
How I am taking action to help my child

Have discussions and conversations

☐ Discuss apps and platforms being used

☐ Agree your ground rules and discuss the reasoning behind them

☐ Decide a joint time to go screen free and plan something to do together

☐ Share experiences of the online world

☐ Prepare a list of potential questions and issues you are concerned about that you would like to discuss

☐ Start conversations and normalise talking about online habits and experiences

☐ Discuss the tips for managing screen time in the accompanying activity pack with your child

☐ Go through the 'reach out for support' section of the activity pack after completing the 'my support network' activity with your child

Do activities

☐ Share our accompanying **activity pack** for young people with your child and try the activities

☐ Go through our Digital 5 a day in the **activity pack** together

☐ Watch an **#AsktheAwkward video**

Increase your knowledge

☐ Find out information about the apps and platforms your child is on

☐ Look at the resources and further information

Reflect

☐ Plan a way to re-evaluate ground rules and open up discussions around social media use

☐ Reflect on your own phone usage and how you can role model behavior for your child

Children aged 13+ who would like to find out more about the work of the Children's Commissioner and take part in opportunities to share their voice, can join the Youth Voices Forum.

ACTIVITY PACK TO SHARE WITH YOUR CHILD

There are so many activities you can do with your child to open up this conversation, and to learn more about managing your digital lives together.

All these activities are in the accompanying activity pack for young people that you can give to your child and go through together.
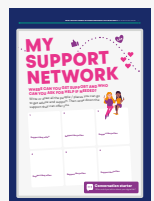
The activity pack includes:

Digital 5 a day
Practical steps to achieve a healthy and balanced digital diet. Chat through your thoughts, ideas, concerns and needs.

Getting off grid
Create a shared grid of phone-free activities to suit your family. Encourage your child to try one each day and do some together.

My support network
Work with your child to create a support network of people they can talk to and places they can get support.

Reach out for support
Organisations that provide expert information, advice and support

Real-life scenarios to discuss
Relatable situations to help you discuss and practice

Tips for managing screen time
Like the activities in this guide, these help your child reflect on their habits and talk about shared rules.
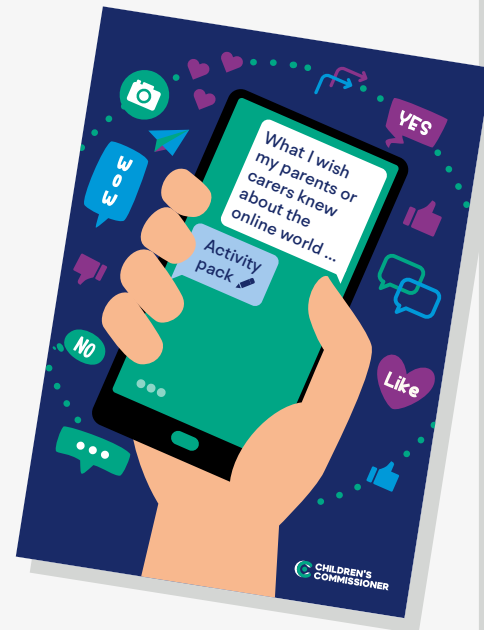
Digital agreement
Use this to discuss and come up with ground rules together

A note to my younger self
Try this with your child to start a conversation and help them think about their digital lives.

DOWNLOAD THE ACTIVITY PACK HERE

SIGNPOSTING TO OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES

Peer pressure

ParentZone
Advice and support for parenting in the digital world

Childnet
Guide to setting up a family agreement

YoungMinds
Talk to an online counsellor

Harmful content

Thinkuknow
Age-appropriate activities to discuss issues including porn

Set Up Safe
Step-by-step guides on setting up parental controls on your child's device

Childline and Internet Watch Foundation Report Remove tool
If your child is worried that an image or video of themselves has been shared

National Crime Agency CEOP
To report concerns about online sexual abuse or grooming

NSPCC helpline
To report experiences of sexual harassment and abuse in school call 0800 138 663

Bullying and online harassment

Childnet
Resources on a range of topics including online sexual harassment

Family Lives
Support and advice for parents 0808 800 2222

Parent Talk
Parenting advice from Action for Children, offering a free 1:1 live-chat with a parenting coach

Report Harmful Content
Advice on reporting harmful and abusive content

Childline
For children experiencing bullying or for any worries your child may have 0800 1111

The Mix
Advice and support for under-25s

CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER