# Beyond the classroom

*A is for ACTION – taking positive action online*

Beyond the classroom is designed for parents, carers and residential staff to help support the work being done at school to enable young people to take positive action online.

## What do we mean by action online?

Taking action online refers to the positive actions a young person can take to ensure they enjoy and get the most out of their time online. Coming across inappropriate content online, whether accidentally or on purpose, plus the amount of time spent online, can have a negative effect on a young person's wellbeing. Taking positive online action means empowering a young person to think about and know how to respond to difficult situations.

Thinking about their own and others' digital wellbeing is also a positive action young people can take. By thinking about how the things they do online impact their own and other peoples' feelings, young people can focus on using the internet for good.

## How can I help young people to take positive action online?

### 1. Find out about their life online

Start by finding out what the young person in your care likes to do and how they spend their time online. You could ask them to show you their favourite games, websites and apps. Communicate how spending time online makes them feel and ask if anything worries them about going online. If the young person is verbal Childnet's '**Let's talk about life online**' guide can help you with this.

### 2. Encourage them to use the internet for good

The internet can be a great place for young people to communicate with friends, find information to support a hobby or interest, watch videos, talk to friends, or play games. Encourage your child to use the internet to do things they enjoy, but to also think about what they can do to have a positive impact on other people, such as sharing encouraging messages on social media or supporting a friend who might be feeling left out of an online group.

### 3. Show them how to take positive actions in response to difficult situations

Discuss (or demonstrate) what they should do if something worries or upsets them online. This could include quick fixes like turning over their screen, pausing videos and games, or turning their device off. Make sure they know they can and should always come to you if something is upsetting them online, and familiarise yourself with where to go to for further support or to make a report **here**.

### 4. Help them to manage their digital wellbeing

Encourage your child to reflect on how spending time online makes them feel – both the positives and the negatives. You could make a list of things that make them feel good, and things that might make them feel bad. Make sure they know that you are there to support them, whatever they are feeling and try setting up a **family agreement** to establish and encourage healthy online interactions. Remember that the amount of time they spend online may also impact a young person's digital wellbeing. Find out more about screen time boundaries **here**.

# ✔ What is appropriate for a young person to see and do online?

This will vary depending on the age, maturity and needs of each young person, but generally:

- ☑ Chat with family or friends they also know offline
- ☑ Watch age appropriate films and videos
- ☑ Play their favourite games online
- ☑ Share images and videos with permission
- ☑ Do something nice for somebody they know
- ☑ Research an interest or hobby

# ✘ What is inappropriate for a young person to see and do online?

This will vary depending on the age, maturity and needs of each young person, but generally:

- ☒ Play games or watch videos intended for adults
- ☒ Make unkind comments about someone else
- ☒ Seek out or share images or videos showing nudity
- ☒ Participate in online challenges or videos which encourage dangerous behaviour
- ☒ Seek out or view content which is violent, gory or intended to scare
- ☒ Spend money for unknown rewards e.g. gambling

**Common Sense Media** is a great way of finding age appropriate content, and even have a section specifically for young people with **SEND**.

You may also like to look at **PEGI** for more information about how games are rated and familiarise yourself with what **parental controls** are available to lessen the risk of inappropriate content through filtering.

# 🌐 Online action at a glance

**STOP** and **TELL** an adult straight away if you see something online that makes you feel worried, angry or upset.

Look out for the warning signs which might help you know when you've been online too long (getting a headache, for example).

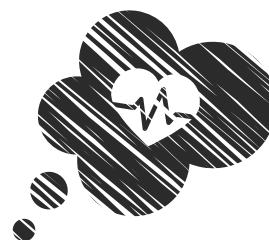Take regular breaks when you're online or using technology.

Balance the time you spend online with offline activities you enjoy as well, like going outside or spending time with your family.

If a website, game or app says it is only for adults or over 18s, do not click on it and find something else to do which is suitable for your age.

If you see a photo or video which makes you feel upset, angry or worried, you can pause it or turn the device off, as well as talking to an adult about what you've seen.

Think about how your actions online will make you and other people feel. If something you do is going to have a negative impact then **STOP** and ask an adult for help.

Make a positive difference online by saying and doing nice things for other people.

# Online Feelings Cards

This activity has been designed to extend the learning about taking positive action beyond the classroom and ensure the same online safety guidance is being reinforced and implemented in all aspects of a young person's life. Young people will be able to explore taking positive action online by taking the lead in conversations with parents and carers or residential care staff.

On the following page you will find three cards which you can complete together, using words or pictures according to preference/need as a prompt for young people. These can then be cut out and used by the young person when they're using technology and devices. Ask them to show the card which represents how they are feeling as an easy way to take positive action online.

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**Show this card if you are feeling:**

**WORRIED, ANGRY OR UPSET**

**STOP what you are doing online and TELL an adult.**

**The trusted adults I can speak to are…**

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**Show this card if you are feeling:**

**NOT SURE OR CONFUSED**

**These actions may also help:**
- ★ **Pause videos or games**
- ★ **Turn the screen over**
- ★ **Turn your device off**
- ★ **Take a break**

**The warning signs that something isn't right, or I need to take a break are…**

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**Show this card if you are feeling:**

**HAPPY, RELAXED OR EXCITED**

**The ways I can use the internet and technology for good are…**