Action

This section has been developed to help generate discussion about positive actions and strategies young people can take to ensure they thrive online. Both encountering inappropriate content and the amount of time spent online can have a negative impact on a young person's wellbeing. This section of the toolkit aims to empower young people to reflect on their own digital wellbeing and understand how to respond to certain situations if they or someone they know encounters them online. It also encourages young people to use the internet for good by taking action and making a positive difference online and through technology.

❓ Challenges for young people with additional needs

The internet can be an empowering place for young people with SEND as it allows them to have a voice and offers experiences which they might not otherwise be able to have. However, the things they do online can have a very real impact on their lives offline, both positively and negatively. Young people with SEND will need further help and support in understanding the choices they have online. Young people with additional needs will also need support understanding or recognising appropriate action to take online. Focus should always be put on actions which have a positive outcome rather than no action at all.

💓 Managing digital wellbeing

Young people's wellbeing is determined by the physical and emotional experiences they have on a daily basis. As technology continues to be such a huge part of their lives, from communicating with others to exploring content they enjoy, it has a real impact on their wellbeing. This is often referred to as 'digital wellbeing' or 'online wellness.'

Digital wellbeing is essentially about having an awareness of how being online can make us feel and looking after ourselves and others when online. This can include recognising the impact being online can have on our emotions, on our mental wellbeing and even on our physical health and knowing what to do if something goes wrong.

Our digital wellbeing can be influenced by the choices we make online, the content we see, the interactions we have with others and even how long we spend engaging with technology and the internet. **Reports** have found that those who spend extended amounts of time online are more likely to see upsetting content, receive abusive comments or send abuse to others.

😊 Using 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 or play games. It also provides endless opportunities to have a positive impact on others such as sending a kind message or supporting a good cause.

Taking action – Strategies to empower young people

Young people can see and engage with a whole host of content online, both intentionally and accidentally. Whilst the majority may be age appropriate, there is always the possibility of coming across something which leaves young people feeling worried, upset or confused. **Research** from the London Grid for Learning asked 40,000 young people across the UK about their lives online. Young people commented on the best and worst things that happened online:

THE THINGS THEY LOVE:

Having fun

Making friends

The sense of community

Keeping in touch

Giving and receiving support

Videos and photos

Playing games

THE UPSETTING THINGS THEY FACE:

Self harm and suicide

Hate speech, bullying, fighting

Violent and obscene videos

Sexual approaches from adults

Animals being hurt

Being asked for nudes

Pornography

It is important to empower young people with strategies they can use in upsetting situations like those listed which can help them to stop engaging with the content and get help. These strategies could include:

★ Turn the device off or lock it.

★ Turn the device over.

★ Pause the video, game or song.

★ Take a screenshot to show a trusted adult.

★ Take the device straight to a trusted adult.

★ Press the report or block button.

Whilst it is important not to continue engaging with something that is causing worry or upset, it is also important to balance this with 'saving the evidence'. This is where a screenshot is taken so it can be shown to an adult at a later date which is particularly important in incidents of cyberbullying.

Getting help and reporting

There are different routes for help, support and reporting available online and offline. To find out more about how to support young people and helplines for professionals, please visit **www.childnet.com/teachers-help**.

It is important that young people are aware of the support available to them at home, in school and online. Details for online support and helplines for young people can be found at **www.childnet.com/young-people-help**.

Details for online support and helplines for parents and carers can be found at **www.childnet.com/parents-help**.

Finally, keeping open communication and continuing to learn and consider online wellbeing with a young person allows you both to enjoy the internet and get the most out of all its benefits.