Youth Voice in Online Safety
Resources for use with 11-14s

Want to talk about it?

Making space for conversations about life online

UK Safer Internet Centre

NOMINET

Contents

On 7th February 2023, Safer Internet Day was celebrated across the globe. Marking the 20th year the day has been celebrated, the UK campaign put children and young people's voices at the heart of the day and encouraged them to shape the online safety support that they receive.

As part of the celebrations, young people hosted an event for representatives from government, charities and the internet industry. During the event they spoke about how every generation has a different experience of childhood, and that growing up online is a unique and, at times, challenging experience. Now, more than ever before, it is important that we take time to listen to children and young people about their online lives.

Building opportunities for youth voice into your online safety provision can be a springboard for conversations that shape how we talk about and respond to online issues, not just for one day, but throughout the whole year.

Originally created for Safer Internet Day 2023, these resources have been adapted to help you start conversations with your learners and discover:

- **What issues really matter to children and young people?**
- **What changes to they want to see?**
- **What online safety advice and support do they need?**

Want to talk about it?

Making space for conversations about life online

10 things you need to know about using these resources

1. It's all about youth voice!

Let's all make time to hear from children and young people about the issues most affecting them online. By understanding their perspectives and experiences, we can provide the very best support and advice.

2. Establish a safe space.

Consider how to establish a supportive environment for children and young people to open up about their experiences and learn about potentially sensitive topics. By helping them feel confident and secure, they are more likely to share and ask questions, without fear of judgment or negative feedback. For ideas visit: **childnet.com/learning-environment**.

3. It's okay to just listen.

It's not always the right time to offer online safety advice, especially if a child/young person has just been sharing something they love about the internet. It's okay to just listen and then use what you've learnt to support them in the future.

4. Use free, ready-made resources to save time.

Online safety is a huge topic, but there are lots of incredible free resources available to help. Kickstart the conversation with the activities here, then find resources on specific topics at **projectevolve.co.uk** or **childnet.com/resources**.

5. Be ready to calmly respond to safeguarding concerns.

While discussing their online lives, it is possible that children and young people will raise concerns about things they have seen or experienced online. Make sure you are up to date with your school or setting's safeguarding procedures and for further advice on how to respond in these situations visit: **childnet.com/safeguarding**.

6. Get everyone involved and spread the word.

We can all work together to keep children and young people safe online. Help raise the profile of online safety with other professionals, parents, and carers. Share these resources or what you have learnt about young people's online experiences. You can also spread the word on social media.

7. Know where to get more information or help.

Remember that there's plenty of help and advice available if you need more information about anything online safety related.

The UK Safer Internet Centre's 'Need Help?' page contains further information on reporting specific concerns to organisations outside of your school/setting. Visit: **saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/need-help.**

The Professionals Online Safety Helpline is a free helpline offering advice and support to all members of the children's workforce on any online safety issues. Visit: **saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline.**

8. Be inspired by children and young people.

Children and young people will have their own ideas, expertise, and suggestions on how to stay safe online. Find opportunities to elevate their voices as peer leaders or even running information sessions for educators or parents and carers. You'll be inspired by what they can achieve!

9. Kickstart conversations that last all year round.

By making conversations about the online world a regular part of your work with young people, you're showing you recognise its important role in their lives. Kickstart the conversation today but make it a regular habit all year round.

10. Have fun!

The internet is amazing and has so much to offer children and young people, but online safety skills are an increasingly important part of all our lives. By having fun, working together, and engaging with the online issues young people care about the most, we can all create a safer internet for the future.

Ready to get started?

Time needed: Approx. 45 mins

These three simple activities are the perfect way to kickstart conversations about life online. They include opportunities to discuss different uses of technology and how it affects our wellbeing (positive and negative).

Activity 1:

Positives by numbers

This activity works best in small groups. Each group will need a dice and a copy of List 1 and List 2.

In their groups, learners take it in turns to roll the dice twice. The first throw corresponds to a category from either List 1 or List 2. The second throw gives the number of examples they need to give in that category. The learner then has 30 seconds to say or write their examples.

If a learner rolls the same category as a previous learner, they should try to think of different examples.

List 1

1. Ways of communicating with a friend online
2. Types of video you like to watch OR that you know are popular with children/young people
3. Apps you use OR that you know are popular with children/young people.
4. Games you enjoy playing OR that you know are popular with children/young people.
5. Ways of finding information/doing research online.
6. Ways that you can share online.

List 2

1. Positives of communicating with a friend online
2. Positives of watching video online
3. Positives of using apps
4. Positives of gaming online
5. Positives of using technology and the internet to find information/do research
6. Positives of sharing online.

Activity 2:

What online issues matter to you?

In this activity, learners will get the opportunity to discuss which online issues matter to them the most.
Make a copy of the graph using the mini example provided.

Next, ask learners to choose where to place each of the online issues. For example, how harmful is online bullying to children/young people? How frequently are young people experiencing it? Use the following list of issues or provide your own examples. Give learners the opportunity to come up with their own or adapt those provided.

Fake news and misinformation
Online only friends/talking to people you only know online
Filters on photos or videos
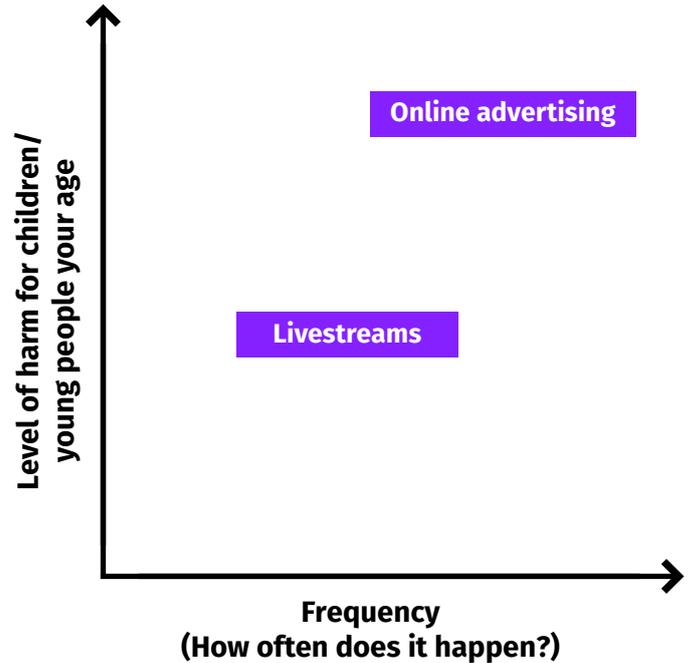*Online bullying*
Livestreams
Violent content in games
Excessive time spent online
Oversharing personal information
Scam emails and messages
Online advertising

To extend this activity, you could ask learners to identify which of these online issues are the hardest to talk about with a trusted adult and why.

Level of harm for children/ young people your age

Online advertising

Livestreams

**Frequency
(How often does it happen?)**

Activity 3:

Advising on online issues

Based on how they have plotted their graphs in Activity 2, learners should agree on an online issue that they'd like to focus on in more detail, either in groups or independently. For example, they might pick the one they've decided is the most harmful to children/ young people.

Learners should then make a poster, mind map, leaflet or presentation that explains why this online issue matters to them in more detail and what support they'd like adults to offer to help with this issue. It could include:

- Why is this issue potentially harmful to children/young people?
- What can children/young people do to help protect themselves against this?
- What can parents and carers do to help support children/young people with this?
- What can teachers/educators do?
- What can the internet industry (e.g. social media or gaming companies) do to tackle this issue?

Starting conversations

These activities are designed to get learners talking about their experiences of using the internet and the issues that matter online to them the most. They include opportunities to reflect on different forms of online communication, explore the influence of tech on their relationships and interests, and discuss the positive and negative impacts of online trends.

App analysis

Display the icons of well-known apps one by one. For example: Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, Discord, etc. Alternatively, use apps that you have heard your learners mention or talk about already. For each app, ask learners the following questions:

- Do people your age use this app? Mostly all? Some? Very few?
- How do children/young people use this app? How does it work?
- What are the positives of using this app? What's good about it?
- What are the potential negatives of using this app? What are the possible risks?
- How can children/young people protect themselves on this app?

Read all about it!

Divide your learners into groups. Ask them to discuss online trends or things that have gone viral online recently. Ask each group to share what they discussed.

Each group should then plan a news report on an online trend of their choice which they will present to their educator(s). You could allow learners to record their presentations so that they can reach more educators. Each report should include:

- A clear summary of what the trend is and why it exists
- What impact the trend has had (e.g. Was it funny? Did it get people talking about a big topic? Has it encouraged lots of people to make related online content?)
- Any positives and/or negatives to this trend

You may want to give learners extra time and access to computers to help them do further research or to create a presentation. Alternatively, they could write and design a newspaper story.

'Being Online' bingo

Their task is to find people who have done the things listed on the bingo grid **(page 12)**, both other learners and adults. They must find a different person for each category on the grid.

You could offer a prize for the first learner to come to you with a completed grid.

To extend this activity, learners could find out a bit more information from some of the people they ask. For example: How did you support a friend who was experiencing online bullying? What good cause did you support online and how did you support it?

Opinion compass

Display or read aloud each opinion about being online, one by one, as listed here. For each opinion, learners should state whether they agree, disagree or if they are undecided.

You can display these three options around the room, and ask learners to move to their choice, or ask learners to raise their hands. For each opinion, give the group the opportunity to explain their decisions and discuss their reasons.

To extend this activity, pick one of the opinions and host a group debate, with sides for and against.

1. Social media is too addictive and a waste of time.
2. The internet is a place where everyone can be their true selves.
3. Online gaming encourages real life violence.
4. Influencers, streamers and YouTubers are positive role models for children/young people.
5. There is no benefit to filters and editing photos - it's just bad for children/young people's mental health and self-esteem.
6. Being online has really improved the way that children/young people communicate with others.
7. Technology and the internet have made children/young people lazy.
8. Children/young people can easily find whatever they want online, and that's great!

Quote to Quote

The quotes shown on this page have come from children and young people across the country working with the UK Safer Internet Centre. Use these quotes and the supporting questions to prompt discussions with your own learners.

Why not ask your learners to come up with their own quotes and share these around your school/setting?

"
The best thing about being online is talking to friends, mutual friends, sending pictures and watching videos. *(13, she/her)*
"

Do you agree or disagree?
What are your favourite things to do online?
What does this person mean by 'mutual friends'?
What advice would you give someone chatting to 'mutual friends'?

"
My most controversial opinion about the internet is I've seen very little negative aspects so can't say I've experienced any of the harassment and bullying we are always taught about. *(15, he/him)*
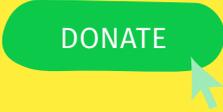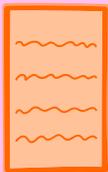"

Do you think online bullying is a serious issue?
Are some people more or less likely to be targeted by bullying and harassment? Why might that be?
What could someone who doesn't experience bullying online do to support those who do?

"
The best thing about learning online safety in school is getting to hear other opinions and group work. *(13, she/her)*
The worst thing about learning online safety in school is it normally repeats things we've learnt 100 times. *(15, he/him)*
"

Do you think it's important to learn about online safety in school? Why/why not?
What makes a good online safety lesson?
Why do you think teachers might choose to repeat the same safety messages you've heard before?

"
Something all adults should know about how young people use the internet is we use it to be very sociable! We are one of the most sociable generations. *(14, he/him)*
"

Do you agree that you are one of the most sociable generations?
What are the positives of being able to socialise online?
What are the negatives of socialising online? Is there anything that can be done to fix these?

"
One piece of advice I would give to my younger self about using the internet is to be careful and wary of things you see and don't automatically assume everyone is your friend. *(15, she/her)*
"

What kinds of things do you see online that you need to be wary of?
How can you tell who is and who is not your friend online?
What makes a good friend online?

'Being Online' bingo

Can you find someone who has done each of these things? Write a different name in each box.

Played an online game with other players	Supported a friend who was experiencing online bullying/online hate	Supported a good cause online (e.g. a charity, a social cause, etc.)	Reported fake news or misinformation online
Video called someone in the last week	Used the internet to research a topic that wasn't related to schoolwork	Learned a new online dance	Bought some merch from an online personality or streamer
Unfollowed, muted or restricted an account that was making you feel bad	Reviewed your privacy settings on an app	Left someone a nice comment on a post or a photo	Read a news story or an article online
Shared a funny video with someone in the last week	Downloaded a new app in the last week	Taken a group picture on your device in the last week	Used a group chat to cheer someone up
Used a maps app on your device to plan a route somewhere	Read a book virtually using a device	Shared a meme with someone in the last week	Watched a video tutorial online

Engaging parents, carers, and families at home

These activities can be sent home or provide other opportunities to start conversations with parents and carers about staying safe online. They include opportunities to:

- discuss media reporting on technology and the internet,
- prompt parents and carers to check-in with their child's technology use.

Trading thoughts

The online world is such a big part of all our lives now, and news stories and opinion articles are being posted about this topic every single day.

Ask learners to look for a news story or opinion article about the internet, technology, etc. Alternatively, provide learners with a few different examples for them to choose from.
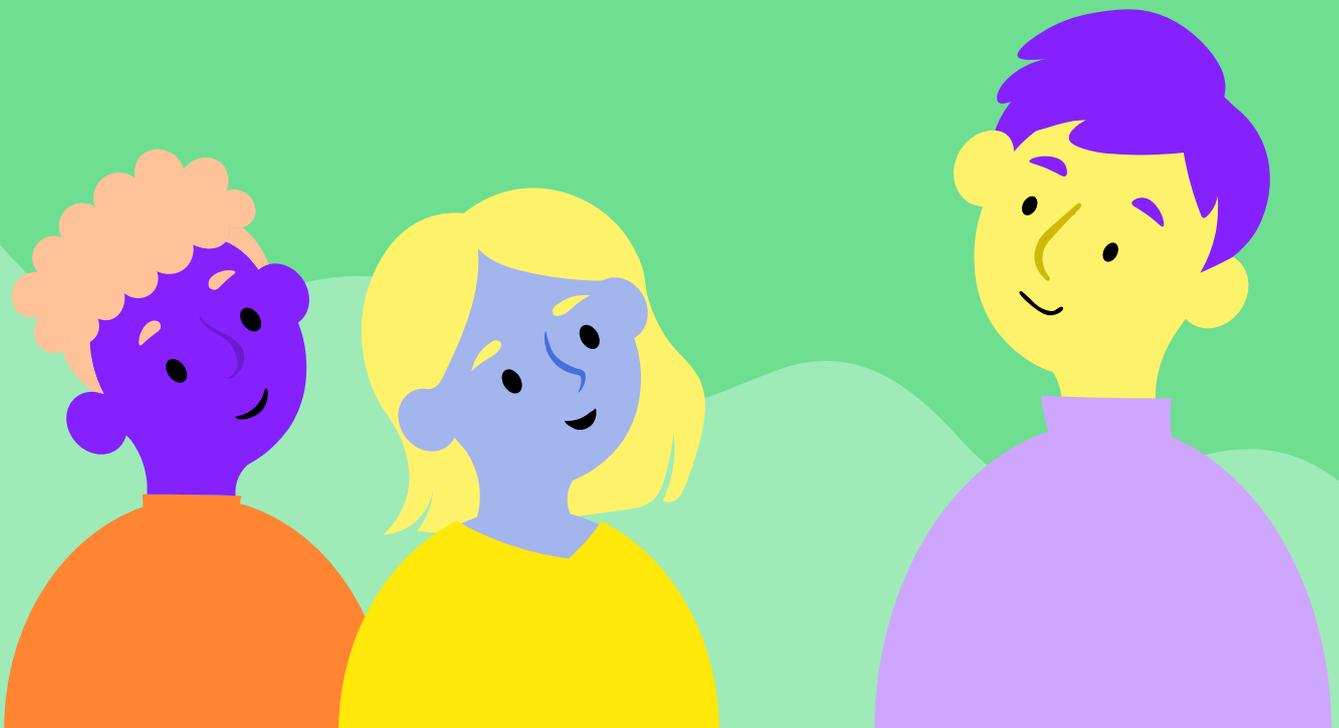
Learners should read the story/article and decide what they think about it. Learners should then have a discussion with a trusted adult of their choice about the article and get at least two different perspectives on it.

Tech diary

Encourage learners to keep a weeklong diary of the technology they use, the apps they use, etc. and how long they spend doing this each day. They should also encourage a trusted adult to do the same. At the end of the week, learners should compare their diary with their trusted adult.

What are the similarities and differences in how long they use technology for?

What are the similarities and differences in the types of apps they are using?

Getting children and young people to take the lead

These activities are designed to empower learners to take the lead and have their say. This could be peer-to-peer or with adults.

They include opportunities for learners to:

- Reflect on their experiences of getting their first device,
- Have a say on your school/setting's social media channels,
- Develop creative skills and share a short drama piece with peers.

School/setting tech takeover

Why not support learners to take over the school/setting's social media feeds for the day? They could suggest online safety tips to share, create their own hashtag, talk about online issues which are important to them or share photos of activities taking place.

Learners do not need direct access to the account and could create content or compose text separately for an educator to post.

Passing on your knowledge

Ask learners to think of some of the issues that children/young people may experience for the first time when getting their first phone. Ideas might include:

- Setting up their phone safely and securely
- Downloading apps for the first time and working out how to use them safely
- Group chats and the possible risks (e.g. bullying and harassment; lots of messages/notifications and the pressure to be online all the time)
- How to accept new friend requests safely

Ask learners to pick one of these issues to focus on and then design an advice leaflet on this issue for younger learners. It should summarise the possible risks and provide advice, e.g. speak to a trusted adult, make use of privacy settings, use the report and block buttons, etc.

These leaflets could then be shared with a partner school/setting or provided to younger learners.

Drama performance to share with peers

Divide your learners into groups and give each group one of the scenarios below. They should read through the scenario and then discuss the three questions.

Each group should perform their scenarios to the other learners. As well as performing the scenario as it is written, they should also perform how they've decided to resolve it, using the three questions to help them.

After each performance, the learners watching should evaluate how well they think the issue was resolved and offer further suggestions.

Alternatively, you may wish to generate some new scenarios with your learners led by the issues they think matter the most online.

Scenario 1

Chandri tells her friends that she has been sent a private message from someone that she has been playing an online game with. The other player has suggested that they meet up after school one day so that they can talk about game tactics.

What advice should the friends give?

How can the friends best help the situation?

Who can they get help from and how will this make the situation better?friends. Would I...?

Scenario 2

Tunji tells his friends that he made a joke about someone's gaming avatar. Tunji didn't think that it would be a big deal, but the person has been really upset by his comments. Two of their friends have started sending Tunji mean messages because of what he said.

What advice should the friends give?

How can the friends best help the situation?

Who can they get help from and how will this make the situation better?

Scenario 3

Charlotte accidentally saw a video online that made her feel really upset and uncomfortable. She tells her friends about it, but she is worried about telling her parents/carers because she thinks that she'll get into trouble.

What advice should the friends give?

How can the friends best help the situation?

Who can they get help from and how will this make the situation better?

Encouraging children and young people to tell someone about online concerns

Use the activities in this section to start conversations with learners about when and where they can access support.

Traffic light check-up

In this activity, learners will reflect on how being online makes them feel. Ask learners to list what they have done or seen online in the past week. Then ask them to colour code each item, depending on how it made them feel, using the categories below:

RED

Things that made them angry, very upset, very frustrated, or other strong negative emotions.

AMBER

Things that made them feel somewhat annoyed, confused, or other mild negative emotions.

GREEN

Things that made them feel happy, excited, made them laugh, etc.

STAR

The best thing they saw online that week.

Ask learners to share some of their ideas for each colour and explain their choices. Ask learners to look out for any patterns or repetitions in the group's answers. Are there things that are commonly making young people feel negative or positive emotions?

Take a seat

Read out one of the statements below and ask a learner to play the role of a person with this opinion. Ask the nominated learner to take a seat at the front. Invite other learners to give them advice, challenging their opinion and persuading them of the opposite. Repeat the activity with a different statement and a new learner in character.

"I've been involved with being mean to someone online but I think it's gone too far now. I don't want to tell an adult about it because I'm worried I'll get into trouble."

"I saw something online that I shouldn't have seen. I won't tell my parent/carer because they'll just overreact."

"Someone has been spreading rumours about one of my friends online. I can't tell an adult about it though, because I'll get called a snitch."

"I've got an online issue, and I feel like I should tell a teacher, but I don't know what will happen next and it's making me worry."

"Someone is bullying me online. I'm worried about telling my parent/carer because they'll take my device away from me."

Always someone to help?

Read out the following quote to learners:

"The best online safety advice I ever received was, 'there's always someone to help'." *17, (she/her)*

- Do you agree or disagree with this?
- Why do you think some children/young people may not want to ask someone for help with an online concern?
- What do you think can be gained from speaking to someone about an online concern?
- How do you decide when you can resolve something yourself, and when you might need further help?

Trusted adults

Start by asking learners what a trusted adult is and who the trusted adults in their lives are. You can explain that a trusted adult is someone who: you have a good relationship with; someone who has your best interests in mind; and someone you can rely on to help you.

Then get learners to vote anonymously on whether they feel like they'd talk to a trusted adult about:

- Experiencing online bullying
- Experiencing online hate
- Being contacted online by someone you don't know in real life
- Seeing upsetting content online
- Feeling pressure to be online all the time
- Someone sharing something online without their consent (e.g. a picture)

Ask learners, if they feel comfortable, to explain:

- Why they maybe wouldn't tell a trusted adult
- Why they think telling a trusted adult could be helpful
- What adults could do to make it easier to talk to them about these online issues

Young people under 18 who are worried that a sexual image or video of them may have been shared online can use Childline and IWF's Report Remove tool to see if it can be taken down. Visit: childline.org.uk/Remove.

What next? Creating a safer internet all year round

We hope these ideas will help kickstart conversations about the online world with learners in your school/setting but remember to keep making space for conversations all year round.

Make talking about the online world a normal part of your everyday work with children and young people and use what you learn to inform the support you provide in the future.

There are lots of fantastic and free online safety resources available to help you deliver key messages or follow-up on topics of interest.
Visit: **projectevolve.co.uk** or **childnet.com/resources**.

Here are some other top tips for ensuring online safety learning continues throughout the year:

Bring online safety to life and help learners make links to the world around them with cross-curricular links. Visit: **childnet.com/embedding** for simple suggestions of how to do this.

Reflect on how to make online safety accessible and inclusive. You know your learners best so make sure your messaging and support reflects their needs and experiences.

Celebrate and show the value of online safety through displays and regular assemblies emphasising key messages.

Be interested and let learners know they can come to you if they have any concerns about their online lives. Keep an open mind and remain non-judgmental so learners know that support is available.
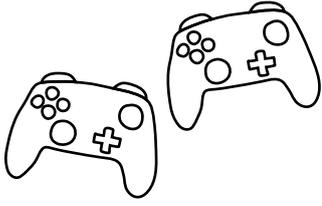
Keep parents and carers informed to help ensure learners are supported at home. Provide updates that are 'little but often' using your school/setting's social media or regular newsletters.
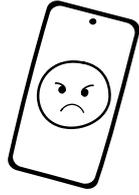
Printer friendly resources.

'Being Online' bingo

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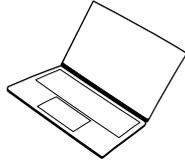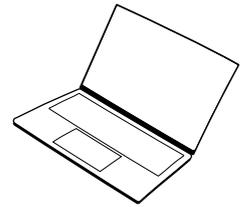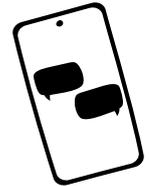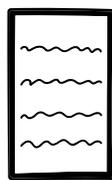|			
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Video called someone in the last week	Used the internet to research a topic that wasn't related to schoolwork	Learned a new online dance	Bought some merch from an online personality or streamer
Unfollowed, muted or restricted an account that was making you feel bad	Reviewed your privacy settings on an app	Left someone a nice comment on a post or a photo	Read a news story or an article online
Shared a funny video with someone in the last week	Downloaded a new app in the last week	Taken a group picture on your device in the last week	Used a group chat to cheer someone up
Used a maps app on your device to plan a route somewhere	Read a book virtually using a device	Shared a meme with someone in the last week	Watched a video tutorial online