

**THSCP Online Safety
Guidance and Resources**

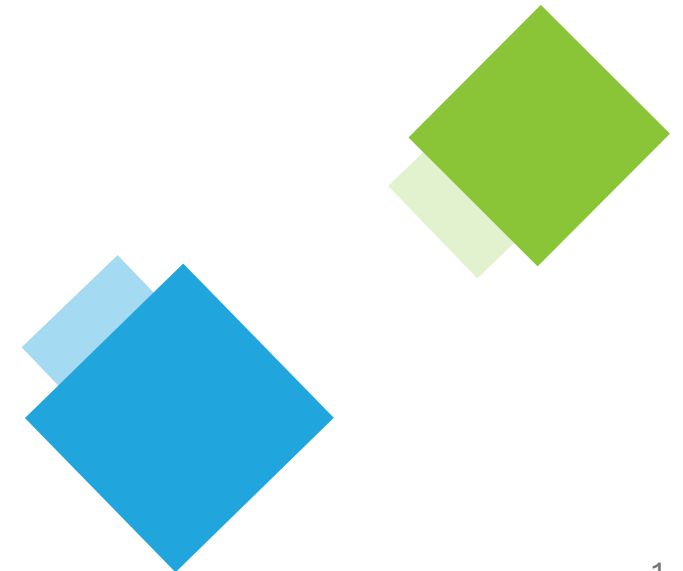
**For Parents, Carers and
Professionals**

April 2025

Tower Hamlets
**Safeguarding
Children**
Partnership



Next review date: April 2027



Contents

- [Introduction](#) (with a [message from the THSCP Young Scrutineers](#))
- [Emergency safeguarding contacts](#)
- [Glossary of terms and apps to be aware of](#)
- [What is the law?](#)
- Key risks
 1. [Cyberbullying](#)
 2. [Inappropriate content](#)
 3. [Online grooming](#)
 4. [Sexting and 'sextortion'](#)
 5. [Privacy and data security](#)
 6. [Scams and fraud](#)
- Practical actions for [parents and carers](#) and [professionals](#)
- Ideas from the Young Scrutineers – how can [parents and carers](#) and [professionals](#) collaborate with young people to keep them safe online?
- Useful resources, including [visual media and case studies](#), resources for [parents and carers](#) and [professionals](#) and details of [specialist organisations](#) providing guidance and support.

The THSCP has compiled this document to provide a brief overview of some of the key risks children face in the online world, and to signpost parents, carers and professionals to resources. We have also provided some tips for practical action you can take if you know or suspect a child to be at risk of online harm.

This guidance is not intended to be exhaustive, and there is a great deal more to know about the topic through the links provided throughout the guidance and in the resources section at the end of the document.

The dangers posed by the online world can seem overwhelming, but when parents, carers and professionals are aware of the issues and work together, there can be significant progress in safeguarding children.

Introduction

If you think a child is in immediate danger, contact the police on 999

If you're worried about a child, but they aren't in immediate danger you should:

- Contact local child protection services. In Tower Hamlets you should contact Tower Hamlets MAST:
 - Phone: 020 7364 5006, Option 2 or 3
 - Extension: 5606 / 5601 / 5358 / 7796 / 3342 / 7828 / 6469 / 3181
 - Email: **MAST@towerhamlets.gov.uk**
 - **If you are a professional, please complete the MAST request for support form.**
- Follow your organisation's child protection procedures. Organisations that work with children and families must have safeguarding policies and procedures in place.
- Contact the NSPCC Helpline on 0808 800 5000 or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk. The NSPCC provide child protection specialists who will talk through your concerns and give expert advice.
- If your concern is about online sexual abuse, you can make a report to [Child Exploitation and Online Protection \(CEOP\)](#).

Emergency
safeguarding
contacts

A message from the THSCP Young Scrutineers

The THSCP Young Scrutineers are three young people, aged between 16 – 18, who are employed to scrutinise the activities of the THSCP and provide a young person's perspective on safeguarding strategy.

We asked the Young Scrutineers why they think online safety is important. They had the following message:

'Online safety is one of the most important aspects of safeguarding as the internet can be the starting point of child abuse. Young people aren't exposed explicit content or harmful material, there are various social media platforms where users can post videos or pictures of themselves and sometimes can create content which is not suitable for younger users. There are various social media platforms where users can create content that is not suitable for younger users. Online safety ensures that young people are protected from harmful material and know how to tackle potential threats. This is now important more than ever as the internet continues to rapidly evolve; it is imperative that professionals and parents have an increased awareness of the potential dangers, particularly with tools like AI. This can be used negatively, such as creating false images to spread false news therefore it is important to be aware of such risks.'

Jabin Jannat Rahim, Zahid Sufian and Maisha Ahmed, Young Scrutineers, Dec. 2024

Glossary of terms and apps to be aware of

The internet is constantly evolving and so are the terms and concepts used to speak about it.

Here is a glossary of words to familiarise yourself with:

[Glossary for internet safety and terms | Internet Matters](#)

There are also new apps, social media and gaming platforms which are continuously developed. It can be challenging to keep on top of what your child is using, and what the functions and risks of each are.

You can find out more about them here:

[Apps and Platforms | Internet Matters](#)

Some you may have heard of before, but there will be many that are unfamiliar.



What is the law?

In the UK, the primary legislation designed to protect children online is the **Online Safety Act 2023**. This Act introduces a comprehensive framework to ensure the safety of children and adults on the internet by imposing new duties on social media companies and search services. These platforms are now legally responsible for safeguarding their users, particularly children, from harmful content and activities.

Key provisions of the Online Safety Act include:

Duty of care

Online platforms are required to implement systems and processes that minimize the risk of illegal activities and promptly remove illegal content when it appears.

Protection against harmful content

Platforms must take proactive measures to prevent children from encountering harmful content, such as material promoting self-harm or suicide. This includes using effective, privacy-preserving age assurance technologies to restrict access to this content.

Enforcement and penalties

The Act grants regulatory authorities the power to enforce compliance, with potential penalties for non-compliant platforms, including substantial fines or service restrictions.

Read more about the Act [here](#), and more about how the Act will be enforced [here](#).

Cyberbullying refers to the use of digital technologies, such as social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, or other online channels, to harass, intimidate or humiliate someone. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the victim in real life, and unlike traditional bullying, cyberbullying can happen anytime and anywhere, due to the pervasive nature of the internet. It can leave the victim feeling trapped and helpless.

Examples of cyberbullying can include:

Sending threatening, abusive or harassing messages.

Spreading rumours or false information about a person online.

Posting embarrassing videos or photos without consent.

Impersonating someone, perhaps with the intention of causing harm or damaging their reputation.

Excluding someone from online groups or activities intentionally.

Key risks - Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying often happens in private, which means it can be challenging to identify. Indicators that a child is experiencing cyberbullying can include:

- A sudden reluctance to use their phone, computer or social media accounts.
- Secretive behaviour, such as hiding their screen or avoiding discussions about their online activity.
- Refusing to go to school, avoiding family, friends or social interactions, or dropping out of activities they previously enjoyed.
- Sleep disturbances, including difficulty sleeping or nightmares.
- Decline in academic performance, inability to complete work and difficulty concentrating.
- Low self-esteem, including feelings of worthlessness and shame.
- Anxiety, depression or mood swings, including increased irritability or sadness or signs of ongoing stress and fear.

The impact of cyberbullying can be significant, with long-lasting effects on a child's mental health, self-esteem and physical well-being. Repeated bullying may also lead to a diminished self-worth and confidence, and extreme cases, has been linked to self-harm and suicidal thoughts, especially if the bullying is persistent and severe.

Be aware that while the perpetrator may be someone your child knows in real life, it could also be someone they have met online, and may be of any age, gender or be based anywhere in the world.

Indicators of Cyberbullying

Practical actions - Cyberbullying

Recognise the signs

Refer to slide 9 for more information

Educate yourself and your child

Learn about cyberbullying, discuss digital etiquette and foster open communication

Monitor and guide online activity

Set boundaries, use parental controls and stay involved with your child's internet use

Respond to incidents

Stay calm, document evidence, block and report and advise your child against retaliating

Seek support for the child

If your child is distressed, contact one of the specialist organisations listed on slide 36 or arrange professional counselling support through your local GP or privately.

Engage with schools and authorities

Inform the child's school, request information about bullying policies, and escalate through the contacts on slide 4 if necessary.

Build resilience and coping skills

Promote self-esteem, teach stress management tools and model positive conflict resolution behaviours and peer support.

Follow up

Keep checking in with the child to ensure the situation has improved and they feel safe and supported.

For more information, we recommend you access the following resources:

[Cyberbullying | Bullying online advice](#) (Parents and Carers)

[Protecting children from bullying and cyberbullying | NSPCC Learning](#) (Professionals)

[Cyberbullying: What is it and how to stop it | UNICEF](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

[What Is Cyberbullying | StopBullying.gov](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

Cyberbullying – further resources

IMPORTANT RESOURCE: TAKE IT DOWN

Take It Down can be used to remove sexual images and videos of themselves by assigning a unique digital fingerprint, which online platforms use to detect and remove from the internet.

[Take It Down](#)

IMPORTANT RESOURCE: THE REPORT REMOVE TOOL

The Report Remove tool helps young people under 18 in the UK to confidentially report sexual images and videos of themselves and remove them from the internet.

[Report Remove tool | Childline](#)

Children can inadvertently or intentionally come across harmful content online. This content can include violent images, explicit sexual material or other inappropriate and distressing content. This can have significant long-term consequences for children's mental health and cognitive development, leading to emotional and psychological distress, and in some extreme cases, trauma. Children exposed to harmful content may also develop a distorted worldview or negative attitudes on political matters, relationships or body image.

Children may encounter this content through a range of ways:

Through search engines, including on the Dark Web, which may yield explicit or harmful results.

From clicking on pop-ups or ads, designed to appear enticing, which then lead to harmful websites.

Friends or acquaintances may share inappropriate links, deliberately or unknowingly. This might be viewed as a joke, dare or bonding activity.

Through 'autoplay' features, on sites like YouTube, where videos play automatically, and can lead to inappropriate content after several videos.

Through forums, chats or links shared by friends or strangers on social media or gaming platforms, which may link children to inappropriate content.

Through algorithmic recommendations or trending topics and hashtags on platforms like TikTok, Instagram or Twitter, which may recommend harmful content based on trends.

Clickbait, through which titles and thumbnails may lure children into inappropriate material.

Disguised content, including games or videos which appear child-friendly but contain hidden inappropriate material.

Key risks - Inappropriate content

Impacts - Inappropriate content

Emotional and psychological

Children may feel fear, anxiety or shame after consuming harmful content, may be confused about what they have seen, or become desensitised to graphic content.

Behavioural

Children may display harmful behaviours, becoming aggressive and secretive, or behaving in a way that increases their risk of harm.

Cognitive and development

Inappropriate or radical content may distort a child's worldview and disrupt their natural emotional and social development.

Social and relational

Children may suffer from difficulty building healthy relationships or interacting appropriately with peers. They may also become isolated from friends and family.

Self-image

Unrealistic depictions of beauty or sexuality can lead to self-esteem problems or limit how children perceive their roles in society.

Long-term effects

In the long term, children may experience addiction to adult content or trauma from disturbing or extreme content. They may also believe harmful behaviours are normal.

Supervision

Monitor children's online activities and use parental controls to block inappropriate content.

Open communication

Encourage children to talk about what they see online without fear of judgement.

Education

Teach children critical thinking skills to identify, report and reject harmful content.

Professional support

Seek support from a specialist organisation or counselling if a child shows signs of distress or trauma from exposure.

Practical action and resources - Inappropriate content –

For more information, we recommend you access the following resources:

[Use Parental Controls to Keep Your Child Safe | NSPCC](#) (Parents)

[What parents need to know about inappropriate content? | Internet Matters](#) (Parents)

[Children and technology: Age-appropriate usage advice | NSPCC](#) (Parents)

[Inappropriate or explicit content | NSPCC](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

[Dark Web Explained](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

Key risks - Online grooming and exploitation

Online predators use digital platforms to build trust and manipulate their victims, often aiming to exploit them emotionally, sexually or financially. Perpetrators may also exploit children into illegal activity or seek to radicalise them. As with cyberbullying, the perpetrator may be someone known to the child, a stranger or a person the child has met online. It can sometimes be difficult for children to recognise that they have been a victim of grooming, as the perpetrator uses trust to manipulate their victim, and they may feel that they have a close relationship with their perpetrator. Online predators often operate on social media, gaming platforms and chat rooms popular with children and may use direct messaging or comments to initiate contact.

Tactics of online grooming and exploitation can include:

Grooming

Predators gradually gain a child's trust by pretending to share interests, offer support, compliments or excessive attention. Boundaries are tested with progressively inappropriate conversations or requests.

False identity

Predators may pretend to be someone else, often another child or a teenager, to seem relatable. They might use fake photos, profiles or personas, or images, videos and text generated by AI to establish credibility.

Isolation

Predators encourage secrecy to telling the child to keep their interactions and online activity private from parents or trusted adults.

Exploitation

A child may be coerced into sharing personal information, photos or videos, and threatened or blackmailed once compromising material is obtained. Predators may encourage children to meet up in real life to engage in illegal activity.

Manipulation

Predators may build trust and create dependence by giving the child money or other gifts or create a sense of dependence by acting as a confidant or a friend. They may also expose a child to violent or inappropriate materials to shape behaviour and views.

Types of online grooming and exploitation

Predators may seek to groom or exploit a child for a range of purposes:

Sexual

A predator builds trust with a child to manipulate them into sexual exploitation or abuse.

Criminal

Children are manipulated into participating in illegal activities.

Radicalisation

Groomers attempt to indoctrinate children with extremist ideologies.

Financial

Exploiting children for monetary gain.

Self-harm or suicide

Encouraging a child to engage in self-harm or suicidal behaviour.

Human trafficking

Children are groomed for trafficking, often forced labour or sexual exploitation.

Indicators of online grooming

It can be challenging to identify when a child has been a victim of online grooming, especially where this has led to sexual exploitation. It is unusual for children to disclose grooming to an adult due to feelings of shame, or because they may be unaware they are being groomed or don't want to get the groomer in trouble. Children may also be frightened of what the groomer may do if they speak out. Signs that a child is being groomed include:

Sudden changes in online behaviour, such as spending more or less time online, or using devices late into the night.

Spending more time out of the house or going missing from home or school.

Being secretive about their online use and how they are spending their time.

Having unexplained gifts, big or small, or more money than you would expect them to have.

Having a friendship or relationship with a much older person.

Using language, including sexual language or concepts linked to extremism that you would not expect them to know.

Seeming anxious, depressed, upset or withdrawn.

Misusing alcohol and drugs.

Any child is at risk of being groomed, and it is important to remember that both boys and girls can be groomed. Some children are at a higher risk, particularly those who are vulnerable. Children in care, with disabilities or those who are neglected are particularly targeted.

Practical action - Online grooming

If you know or suspect that a child is being groomed online, you should take the following steps to prevent further harm:

Recognise the signs

Refer to slide 9 for more information

Educate about grooming

Teach the child about online safety and how to recognise inappropriate behaviour.

Talk to the child

Stay calm, ask open-ended questions and offer reassurance.

Preserve evidence

Take screenshots, note details and do not delete messages – keep all digital evidence intact.

Seek support for the child

Contact one of the specialist organisations listed on slide 35 or arrange professional counselling support through your local GP or privately.

Protect the child's online presence

Review privacy settings, block and report the offender set boundaries and monitor the child's online activities.

Report to the authorities

Report to the police, CEOP (see slide 4 for details) and social media platforms

Follow up

Keep checking in with the child to ensure they feel safe and supported.

Online grooming – further resources

For more information, we recommend you access the following resources:

[Grooming and online grooming | Childline](#) (Parents and Carers)

[Grooming: recognising the signs | NSPCC Learning](#) (Professionals)

[Grooming | Metropolitan Police](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

[Grooming Signs | Types Of Grooming | National Fostering Agency](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

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Key risks - 'Sexting' and 'sextortion'

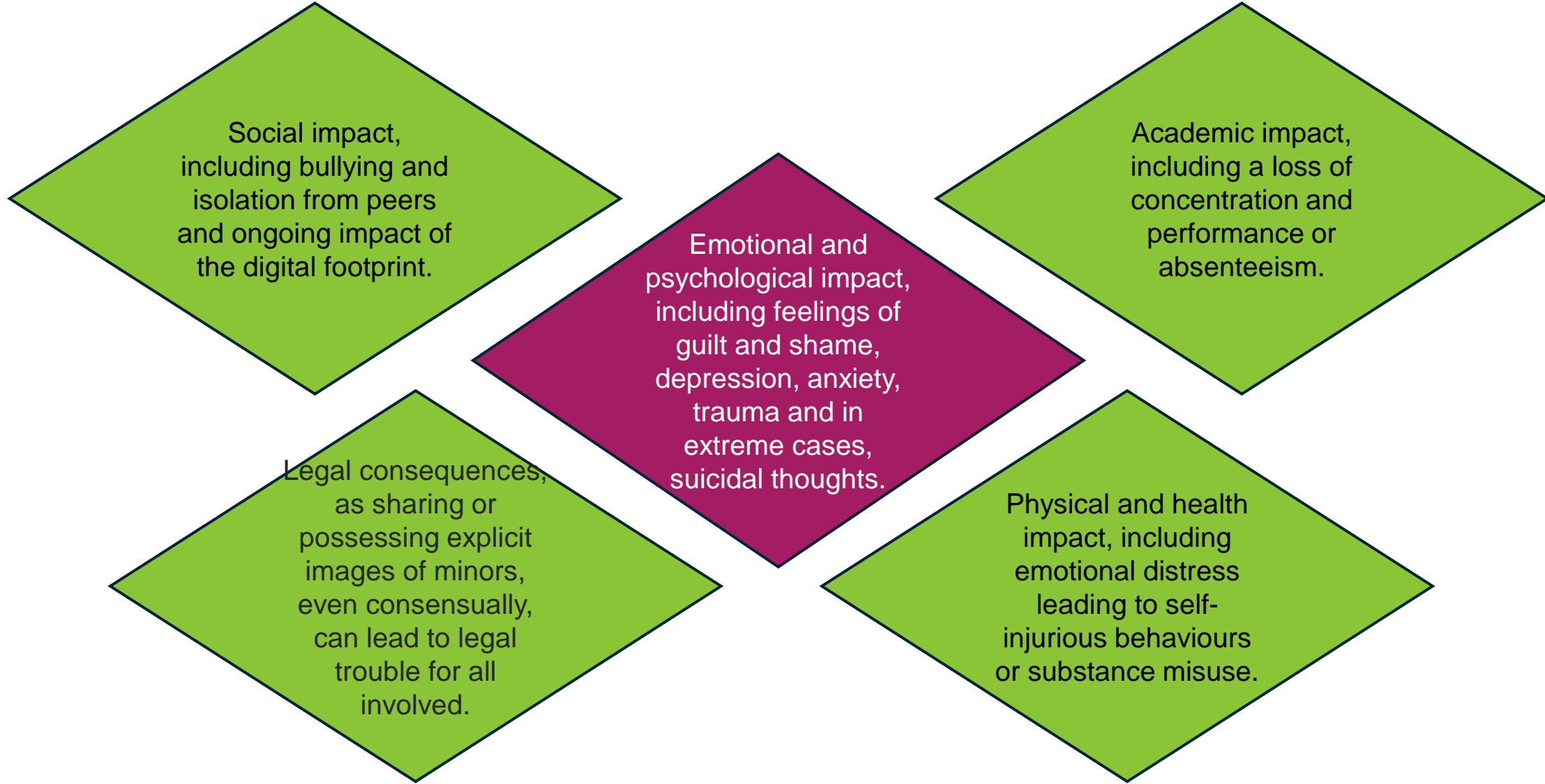
With the widespread use of smartphones and social media, 'sexting' and 'sextortion' has been a growing concern for children and young people, posing significant risks to emotional well-being, safety and privacy.

'Sexting' involves sending, receiving or sharing sexually explicit messages, images or videos via digital devices. While it might initially seem consensual, sexting can lead to significant harm.

'Sextortion' occurs when someone threatens to share explicit content or images unless the victim complies with their demands, which may include sending more images, performing explicit acts or providing money.

Young people may feel pressured by friends or romantic partners to send explicit content as a way of expressing trust or affection. They may not fully understand the potential consequences or feel empowered to say no. It can occur between a child and someone they know in real life, or a stranger online, sometimes posing as a peer to groom a victim for explicit material. Fake profiles and anonymity on social media and messaging apps can make it easy for predators to manipulate children, who may underestimate the permanence of digital content, or falsely assume that images and videos shared via platforms like Snapchat, Instagram and WhatsApp disappear or remain private. Once explicit content is shared, it may be used to blackmail children, threatening to expose them to family, friends or online communities.

Impact - 'Sexting' and 'sextortion'



Social impact, including bullying and isolation from peers and ongoing impact of the digital footprint.

Academic impact, including a loss of concentration and performance or absenteeism.

Emotional and psychological impact, including feelings of guilt and shame, depression, anxiety, trauma and in extreme cases, suicidal thoughts.

Legal consequences, as sharing or possessing explicit images of minors, even consensually, can lead to legal trouble for all involved.

Physical and health impact, including emotional distress leading to self-injurious behaviours or substance misuse.

Practical action - 'Sexting' and 'sextortion'

To protect a child:

Educate children about the risks of sharing explicit content and recognise the tactics of predators.

Encourage open communication and normalise asking for help.

Set boundaries and rules, teaching children that it is never safe to share explicit photos or videos.

Prepare for emergencies, teaching children how to block and report and encouraging early reporting if they feel unsafe.

Promote self-esteem, reinforcing the idea that their value is not tied to sharing private content and challenge harmful norms.

In the event of an incident of harm:

Provide emotional support – stay calm, listen without judgement and reassure the child .

Ensure the child's safety – block the perpetrator, secure the child's accounts and preserve evidence.

Report the incident – to authorities, police and other specialised agencies, and involve the school if relevant.

Seek professional help, connecting the child to counselling services or specialised helplines.

Educate and empower the child, discussing boundaries and digital safety, helping them to rebuild confidence and avoiding blame.

‘Sexting’ and ‘sextortion’– further resources

For more information, we recommend you access the following resources:

[Sexting | UK Safer Internet Centre](#) (Parents and Carers)

[So You Got Naked Online | SWGfL](#) (Parents and Carers)

[Sexting: sharing nudes and semi-nudes | NSPCC Learning](#) (Professionals)

[Overview of Sexting Guidance for teaching and non-teaching staff | UKCCIS](#) (Professionals)

[Sextortion | National Crime Agency](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

[Sextortion | Metropolitan Police](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

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Personal data privacy is crucial for children in the digital age, as their online activity can expose them to significant risks if not managed properly.

Teaching children the value of safeguarding their personal information helps protect their safety, wellbeing and future opportunities. It matters because:

Protecting personal information reduces the risk of predation, cyber bullying and harassment, preventing potentially harmful individuals from gaining access to sensitive details about a child's life.

Oversharing or posting inappropriate content can harm a child's reputation, impacting future educational or career opportunities. Content posted online can remain accessible indefinitely, even if deleted.

If not correctly protected, a child's personal data can be misused by corporations, hackers or other third parties, and children can be subject to identity fraud, targeted advertising, scams and phishing attempts.

Teaching children about privacy helps them to make informed decisions about their online behaviour and encourages critical thinking about what is safe to share and with whom.

Key risks - Privacy and data security

Practical action and resources - Privacy and data security

Advise children to
'think before they post',
use strong passwords
and be sceptical of
requests for money or
information

Educate about privacy,
digital literacy and
encourage safe
practices

Ensure your child has
strong privacy settings
on any of their
accounts and that they
limit sharing

Monitor the child's
online activity and
regularly check-in

For more information, we recommend you access the following resources:

[Online privacy checklist for parents | UNICEF Parenting](#) (Parents and Carers)

[Digital safety and wellbeing kit | Children's Commissioner for England](#) (Parents and Carers)

[Protecting children's privacy online: Our Children's code strategy | ICO](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

[Children and the UK GDPR | ICO](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

Key risks - Scams and fraud

Children are increasingly becoming targets for phishing, malware and online fraud due to their lack of awareness to online threats. They may unknowingly engage with these risks while playing games, browsing websites or using social media.

Phishing

Phishing involves tricking users into sharing sensitive information, such as personal or account details or online data by pretending to be a trustworthy source. Children are targeted in some of the following ways:

- Fake emails and messages, where scammers pose as legitimate actors, requesting account or bank details. This may include threats of consequence if this information is not provided.
- In-game chats, where fraudsters send messages with links, claiming to offer free items, rewards or game currency.
- Social media scams including fake contests or giveaways that require children to enter personal information.

Malware

Malware refers to malicious software designed to disrupt, damage or gain unauthorised access to devices. Children may encounter malware through:

- Free downloads, including games or apps from unofficial sources that contain hidden malware
- Pop-ups and ads which entice children to click on them, sometimes through the promise of free giveaways, but that can lead to automatic malware downloads
- Pirated content, including games, movies or music can infect devices with malware.
- USB sharing – using infected USB drives to share files or games with friends.

Online fraud

Online fraud involves deceiving users to steal money or information, often through scams that appear legitimate. Children can fall victim to online fraud through the following ways:

- In-game purchases, including fake websites or sellers that claim to offer discounted game items.
- Subscription traps, including 'free trials' that secretly involve the child in recurring payments
- Charity scams, appealing to children's empathy with fake causes, encouraging them to donate or share their parents' payment information.
- Scammers may pose as friends or trusted individuals to trick children.

RISKS

Financial loss

Profile hacking

Identity/data theft

Device damage

Emotional distress

Practical action and resources - Scams and fraud

Educate about scams and fraud, teaching them about common scams like fake contests or phishing emails, and teach critical thinking to question offers that seem too good to be true or demand urgency.

Set rules for online behaviour, including limiting the sharing of personal details, avoiding clicking unknown links and exercising caution with free offers.

Monitor their online activity, reviewing apps and downloads, using parental controls, supervising social media and checking game interactions.

Provide practical tools, helping children to create unique and strong passwords for accounts, enable two-factor authentication and teach them how to report and block.

For more information, we recommend you access the following resources:

[Fraud | How To Help Your Child Stay Safe Online | MoneySense](#) (Parents and Carers)

[Teaching your child about online scams and in-app purchases | MoneyHelper](#) (Parents and Carers)

[What are social media scams? - Advice and guidance | Internet Matters](#) (Parents, Carers and Professionals)

Parents and carers – practical actions to safeguard your children from online harm

Educate yourself and lead by example – learning about online platforms, risks and modelling good behaviour, practicing mindful use of technology and balanced screentime

Educate your child – teaching them how to recognise red flags of grooming, scams or inappropriate behaviour, protect personal information, use strong passwords and employ critical thinking to question online content.

Open communication and stay involved – encourage conversations and have frequent check-ins with your child about their online experiences and discuss boundaries with regards to appropriate behaviour online.

Set rules and guidelines – define when devices can be used, set reasonable screentime limits and make it clear what types of content are out of bounds.

Use safe platforms – encourage the use of kid-friendly apps and platforms, designed with strict moderation and promote educational or vetted content that aligns with their interests.

Prepare for problems – know how to report harm or seek help and teach children how to block or report content or users and discuss what to do if they encounter something upsetting, such as telling a trust adult immediately.

Use parental controls – enable filters, monitor and supervise activity and ensure all devices and platforms have age-appropriate settings.

Professionals – practical actions to safeguard the children you work with from online harm

Educate yourself – keep up to date with emerging online trends and apps, understand the risks, signs a child may have experienced online harm and familiarise yourself with relevant online safety laws.

Promote online safety education – incorporate topics like cyberbullying, digital citizenship, privacy and safe browsing into lessons or workshops.

Teach practical skills – help children identify how to recognise risks, unsafe behaviour or suspicious online activity and teach critical thinking to help children to evaluate content and identify scams and misinformation.

Foster a safe environment – encouraging open communication where children can discuss their experiences, addressing incidents of cyberbullying and providing emotional and practical support.

Collaborate with parents and carers – share regular updates and insights on children's behaviour, provide resources and host sessions to educate parents and carers on the importance of online safety.

Utilise professional tools – use online safety platforms and other educational resources to guide children and maintain secure incident management systems for documenting and managing online safety concerns.

Prepare for incidents – familiarise yourself with systems to report online harm and safeguarding children, act swiftly and provide professional support.

How can **parents and carers** collaborate with young people to keep them safe online?

Ideas from the Young Scrutineers (parents and carers)

Talking to children and young people about online safety can be really challenging. We asked the Young Scrutineers for tips on how parents and carers could approach the topic in a way that would be engaging, impactful and would build strong and trusting relationships to promote safety.

Principles for communication

What principles could parents and carers follow to ensure they are communicating effectively with children and young people around the risks they might face online?

Find time to sit down with your children and explain the risks, raising awareness.

Look at your child's body language – how is the way you're communicating making the child feel?

What is the tone of voice and choice of words – is it condescending?

We would prefer it if communication was a two-way street.

Have more regular, low stakes talks 'What did you get up to on your games today?'

Building positive relationships

How can parents and carers build trust and positive relationships with children and young people to explore this issue?

Good communication strengthens relationships. The more often and more clearly you communicate, the better the relationship will be.

Try to make sure your children's voices are being heard too, and that your child feels comfortable to come to you with concerns.

Teenagers may be better at covering their emotions, so it is important to use your judgement to read this.

Effective collaboration

What are the ways in which parents and carers can collaborate with children and young people to ensure they are safe online but can also access the benefits that the digital world provides?

Families could have agreements on safe internet use. This will be specifically tailored to each family and will have a general outline of what good online safety practice is and include age and screentime restrictions.

Parents should make sure children are aware of the legal restrictions of their activity online.

Giving guidance

How might parents and carers provide advice and guidance in a way that is accessible, useful and accounts for the perspectives of children and young people?

Consider offering advice in a more casual way, including sharing social media posts which raise awareness around online safety.

Use real life stories from the news and case studies to discuss the issues – these can be explored together as a parent and child. The child won't feel alienated and will know there are other people going through the same thing.

How can **professionals** collaborate with young people to keep them safe online?

Ideas from the
Young Scrutineers
(professionals)

Talking to children and young people about online safety can be really challenging. We asked the Young Scrutineers for tips on how professionals could approach the topic in a way that would be engaging, impactful and would build strong and trusting relationships to promote safety.

Principles for communication

What principles could professionals follow to ensure they are communicating effectively with children and young people around the risks they might face online?

It would be useful to use role play and ask the students what they would do in this situation, ensuring that all voices and perspectives are heard.

It would also be good to share case studies and real-life examples as this is really impactful – not to scare but to inform of the dangers in reality.

The child should always feel heard and feel safe.

Building positive relationships

How can professionals build trust and positive relationships with children and young people to explore this issue?

Professionals should be aware that they won't have the same level of trust compared to with a parent – they should be prepared for the child to be more cautious. It may take time for the young person to build up trust to open up emotionally.

Teachers and other professionals should educate themselves on the area and particular challenges faced by the children they are working with and how to deal with this.

Effective collaboration

What are the ways in which professionals can collaborate with children and young people to ensure they are safe online but can also access the benefits that the digital world provides?

Professionals can provide a mediating space for children and families where these issues can be discussed with their input. This could include supporting the development of family contracts for online safety.

Professionals could also lead workshops or after school clubs where children and families can be given awareness and receive presentations on different topics, which they can then discuss.

Giving guidance

How might professionals provide advice and guidance in a way that is accessible, useful and accounts for the perspectives of children and young people?

A documentary or dramatization style of information-sharing, based on real-life cases would be useful. It would highlight the seriousness of the threats of the internet and keep young people engaged.

Dramatization is really effective as it grabs our attention. Sometimes it can be harder to capture such an important topic with lots of detail in a short format.

For younger children it will be important to understand the target age group and what issues impact on them.

Useful resources – visual media and case studies

The Young Scrutineers highlighted the importance of case studies, documentaries and dramatization in transmitting messages around online safety to children and young people.

Here are some links to videos you can use to engage children and young people in online safety messaging.

[Safer Internet Day 2025: Teaching resources - BBC Teach](#)

[Watch online safety films created by young people - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Staying safe online advice for parents | LiveSafe](#)

Useful resources for children and young people

It can also be helpful to direct children towards resources that they can access themselves, or under supervision, to learn about how they can stay safe online.

Here are some links you can follow for information aimed at children:

[Resources for 3-11s - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

[Resources for 11-19s - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

Resources for parents and carers

Organisation	Resource	Link
UK Government	Guidance for parents and carers to keep children safe online, including information key issues and further resources.	Support for parents and carers to keep children safe online - GOV.UK
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology – UK Government	Summary of the duties contained in the Online Safety Act 2023, a new set of laws which protect children and adults online.	Online Safety Act: explainer - GOV.UK
UK Safer Internet Centre	Tips, advice, guides and resources to keep your child safe online.	Parents and Carers - UK Safer Internet Centre
Internet Matters	Free, printable e-safety leaflets and resources to view and share on topics like age guides and key issues.	Online Safety Leaflets & resources - Internet Matters
Childnet/UK Safer Internet Centre	Conversation starter ideas for parents and carers to discuss online safety with children	Have a conversation Childnet Having an open and honest conversation about online safety – 5 questions for parents - UK Safer Internet Centre

Resources for professionals

Organisation	Resource	Link
UK Council for Internet Safety	Guidance for practitioners to safeguard children from online risks in early years settings.	Safeguarding children and protecting professionals in early years settings: online safety guidance for practitioners - GOV.UK
Internet Matters	Online safety leaflets and resources to be used in the classroom.	Online Safety Leaflets & resources - Internet Matters
NSPCC	Online safety training courses and resources.	Online safety resources and guides NSPCC Learning
UK Safer Internet Centre	Helpline to support professionals working with children and young people with any online safety issue they may be having.	Professionals Online Safety Helpline - UK Safer Internet Centre
CEOP	Training, resources, films and animated series for children of all ages to educate about online safety.	Online Safety Videos - eSafety Training

Specialist organisations

Organisation	Purpose	Link
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)	A charity working to prevent abuse and help children and their families when abuse has happened.	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) Helpline 0808 800 5000
Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)	A law enforcement agency keeping children and young people safe from sexual exploitation and abuse.	Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP)
Childline	A free, private and confidential service where children can talk to a trained counsellor about anything that's troubling them, any time of day.	Childline
Lucy Faithful Foundation	A UK-wide charity set up to tackle child sexual abuse.	Lucy Faithfull Foundation
Victim Support	A national charity dedicated to helping anyone affected by crime – not just victims and witnesses, but friends, family and anyone else caught up in the aftermath.	Victim Support
Get Safe Online	Provides advice on staying safe online.	Get Safe Online
Thinkuknow	An education programme keeping children and young people safe by teaching about sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.	Thinkuknow