

Parent Guide:

A comprehensive guide to
support parents and
children in their
transition

Moving into Secondary School



Online Safety UK Ltd.



Online Pressures & Worries for Year 7's

71% have a social media profile



Social Media

26% see online bullying happening



Cyber Bullying

52% of parents do not know what their child does online



Private Life

9% of girls felt under pressure to send explicit images



Body Image & 'Nudes'

72% play 11+ hours a week



Gaming

68% bargain homework with extra time on a device



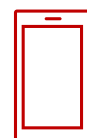
Homework Vs. Social

89% spend more than 33 hours a week on their screen



Increased Screen Time

65% Own Their Own Phone



Expectation to own a top of the range phone

61% felt their social life started in Year 7



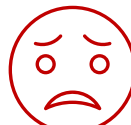
Making deeper Social Connections

50% saw hateful or harmful content online



Unsuitable online content

18% worry everyday about what their friends think of their online profile



Increased Social Anxieties

21% add more than 500 people to their social media profile



Normality of Online Connections

Source: OFCOM children-media-use-attitudes-2019-report

You can manage all the above, and win!

Just keep reading...



What are kids doing?



- School friendships go from during school time to 24/7 through their devices
- Children are making deeper and meaningful friendships for the first time
- Gaming & Social Media are becoming an essential part of daily life
- They are taking part in online challenges
- They are using technology to learn faster than they ever have before

This is the first time that children are likely to be allowed more freedom of access to devices. The transition into Senior School is seen as the time where they are getting old enough to have their own phones and their own social life, but is YOUR child ready for that? Even if they are, do it with them so you can learn their interests and get some understanding about how their only world looks. Try not to judge their online world, remember that we live in a different era and it is not how we are used to it being in school.

School Support:

Every school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead and usually have more pastoral or safeguarding staff who can be spoken to directly if you have concerns of any kind.

What risks are they facing?

- Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a big issue for senior school children
- Cyberbullying and other online threats will increase as their online usage increases
- Unbalanced emotions (outside of teenage normality) which can be triggered by the content they view online, or just far too much screen time
- Introduction to online influencers such as 'vloggers' and other internet celebrities who will influence the things they like



As your child becomes more active online, the risks they face online increase. Holding them back from being online, also adds social risks such as isolation and FOMO (described to the left). When you believe your child is ready, it is about letting them use the internet but knowing you are there as a safety net. This cannot be done if you do not know what they are doing most of the time and have no way of keeping some control. It is important to be aware that there is some very upsetting, extreme, or depressing content online that is easy to access intentionally or not, so look for warning signs in their mood.

School Support:

School staff may be able to identify triggers or expand the reasoning behind concerns you may have. Never be afraid to speak to staff about concerns you have.

Cyberbullying

X!#!

- Cyberbullying is witnessed by 26% of senior school pupils in their first two years
- Even the most unexpected child may be found to be bullying others
- They are taught early that sitting back in a group chat and watching is just as bad as being actively involved. They must remove themselves and/or report it to someone (school, adult, Police etc.)

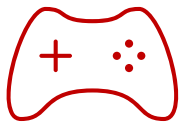
Children need to understand the line between "banter" and bullying, importantly. You should also make sure they know how to block and report people on whatever platform or game they are using as this can be an instant relief. If your child comes to you with a problem like this, stay calm and talk it through with them, they will feed off of your immediate reaction and may never come to you again if you react in a negative manner immediately.

School Support:

If the bullying is happening and the offender and aggrieved party both go to the same school, the school will likely follow their policies in dealing with this bullying in partnership with parents.



Gaming



- 71% will play games more than 11 hours a week
- More than 25% will play for more than 30 hours a week
- Gaming can fuel aggression in children, if it does, this means they are not emotionally capable of dealing with what is in front of them
- Gaming becomes an addiction very easily and one that can follow them into adulthood if not addressed

Gaming has positives and negatives attached, gaming can promote teamwork, coordination, time & resource management as well as problem solving and critical thinking. Games that are not age appropriate or bring out aggression in a child will negatively impact their mental wellbeing, but they will find it hard to come away from those games without encouragement. Games can also be a doorway to a host of online strangers who they feel they share similar interests and develop strong friendships fast.

School Support:

Schools follow specific framework to help support a child's wellbeing, health and as part of this can either give strategies to tackle these concerns or get further professional help to aid the family.

Screen Time



- Screen time will rise dramatically as they enter year 7, with 89% spending more than 33 hours a week on a screen
- There is no concrete "safe amount of screen time" it is all about "in moderation" which will be different for each child
- Screen time can be used in a positive way by connecting, researching, learning, and socialising
- Excessive screen time effects sleep quality dramatically

Probably the most obvious one that yet goes untouched by most parents, use parental controls (listed in following pages) to keep some form of control on screen time in the early days if you can at all. Adults and children alike suffer from screen addiction within a household, so work on better control and reduced time together. If you make it a family goal, you are all more likely to succeed. Try the Online Safety Contract in following pages to outline these rules together.

School Support:

Schools can follow the framework from the Government called education-for-a-connected-world that outlines support mechanisms for a child's health, wellbeing, and lifestyle (including sleep & social media pressures)

Sexting



- 9% of year 7's say they felt pressured at some point to share explicit pictures (most of the time to people they knew)
- Sexting is the sharing of sexually explicit pictures of videos to someone else
- Sexting is the modern day way of exploring sexual curiosity and therefore should be approached carefully by parents
- The risks and potential legal punishments only stop the minority from getting involved

Speak to your child about healthy relationships, see what it looks like to them and guide them on what is not healthy at their age. Explain that once it is sent, it can almost never be recovered and could be out there on the internet for the rest of their life. Another issue is that once a girl (normally) sends a photo they risk being "shamed" at school and online which can result a barrage of cyberbullying or contact from sexual predators online if they find their usernames.

School Support:

Schools will educate on the first instance but repeat issues around this can be a sign of a child (intentionally or not) putting themselves at risk of child sexual exploitation and will potentially need to report this to CEOP or the Police.



TOP PARENTAL CONTROL APPS

FREE FOR ANDROID AND APPLE - Google Family Link lets you restrict apps being downloaded, set bedtimes with the screen, limit amount of time per day on certain apps or the screen, monitor messages and so much more, all remotely from your own device.

Google Family Link

FREE FOR APPLE - within the settings of any iPhone 5S and above (once you update your software in the settings) Screen Time allows you to monitor phone usage, restrict access to apps, restrict time spent on apps, set sleep times for the phone and much more. This must be done on the device itself and cannot be done remotely.

Screen Time on your iPhone



FREE FOR ANDROID - Within the settings icon of any android phone, you can limit the time spent on apps, setup an authorised user to allow app downloads, restrict explicit content and set sleep times for the phone. This must be done on the device itself and cannot be done remotely.

Android Digital Wellbeing: Tools for balance



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"Dad, can I have a social media account?"

So, when is the right time
for my child to join social
media...?



Firstly, are they old enough?

For many Social Media apps, the minimum age requirement is 13. The reality is around 4% of children from the age of 6 or 7 are setting up their own social media accounts and **by the age of 10, 21% have a profile**. This causes pressure for parents holding back. It is important when thinking about allowing them onto the app, whether the content is appropriate for them and the age rating is a good indication for this.

Source: OFCOM children-media-use-attitudes-2019-report

Third, have you tried them on a Social Media platform for kids?

Have you tried them on something aimed at their age group? Something like GeckoLife, where the parent sets up a parent profile then adds the kids afterwards. Sometimes allowing them straight into the Social Media world can be overwhelming for them.

It's like teaching them to cross the road, you their hand at first to help them get better at it, before you step back and let them take their own strides.

Second, are they asking because of peer pressure?

Following on from their age, many parents will still be considering whether their children go on Social Media because of how big the peer pressure can be. **By the age of 8, 37% of children own their own mobile phone**, this can cause problems for you at home if you don't want to give them that freedom just yet.

It is important that you sit down with them, understanding what they want to have it for. If it is their need to connect with friends, this is the most common way they do this outside of school.

If they can develop an understanding of the risks and demonstrate them to you, this can go a long way to allowing you to know if they're ready.

Source: OFCOM children-media-use-attitudes-2019-report





Lastly, have open non-judgemental conversations, often

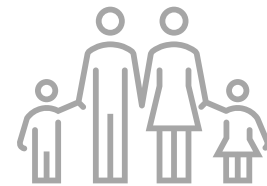
You can't be there all the time and it's important for them to experience things for themselves and potentially make mistakes along the road. It is just as important that they know they can come to you at any time with a problem and you will help them without judging them.

- 1) Some things that may help would be sharing your own issues in the past (online or offline),
- 2) Making sure you give them 100% of your attention when they ask questions, putting down your own devices.
- 3) Talking often, either with you starting the conversation, or them.

Fourth, are you both prepared for the risks they may face?

There are positives and negatives to the online world. A snapshot of the risks includes cyberbullying, sexting, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO).

Before they go onto Social Media, talk to them about these risks and what they can do if they feel they need help, including Childline, Internet Watch Foundation and NSPCC all offer channels of help either on the phone or live chats.



Questions to Ask



Who do they want to be online?

We all will know you can be a lot braver online, than in real life. So, talk to them about the things they do and say online and how it adds to their "Digital tattoo" and will shape how people interact with them



Can they recognise who and what to trust online?

We will be familiar with the term "Fake News" by now, but how do

they recognise what they are reading is and is not real online? Also, do they recognise the very real possibility that strangers from across the world may try to contact them and would they know the boundaries of conversation with people they have not met before in real life?



How much would they share?

A key feature to all Social Media is sharing things about your life to others. Talk to them about the risks of over sharing, specifically about personal information like their age or where they go to school and how easily you can accidentally share this information with simple photo's in their school uniform.



What will they do if something bad happens?

It's important to know how they would react; would they hide it away? Would They speak to you or a friend? Would they become depressed or unconfident? Explore this with them.



What Apps / Games do they want to use and why?

Speak to them about their reasons for wanting specific apps or games, it will help shape your understanding of what they want out of it all.

You are doing great!

If you decide at this point to allow them onto Social Media, never forget to keep checking in.

Ongoing open and non-judgemental conversations are so important to their online lives.

Having some rules around how and when they can use Social Media is important to, check out the Online Safety UK Family Agreement for guidance on setting up house rules for everyone,

Make sure to check in with their privacy settings occasionally, as these can reset without their knowledge,

If the decision is still a no, then keep the conversation going! Allow them to show you they're maturing as at some point they will be ready

Do not stop now! Keep checking in...



When things go wrong, support them through it

Try to avoid being the angry parent every time your child comes to you with a problem online. It's tough sometimes but take a moment and listen.

As all children from any generation, we have all made mistakes and your children will do the same. The online world is relentless and unforgiving so their mistakes can last longer and hurt more.

They need to know if they've done something wrong or that something is happening that isn't right, they can still come to you and you won't just shout at them, you will listen. Let them know you don't have all the answers, but you can sort it out together.



Remember that YOU are their role model

STAY IN CONTROL



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Creating an effective environment for kids to chat to you



1

TALK OFTEN & OPEN

- ❖ From the moment they are picking up a device and talking, speak to them about what they are and show an interest, it will help you later as doing it will feel more natural and normal for both of you.
- ❖ Try not to bamboozle them for an hour, just have short chats about what they like, what they are doing or what they have been thinking about whilst online.

2

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

- ❖ Be the role model that you are as a parent, by sharing what you are doing and how you behave online. Show them that you are always learning, just like them.
- ❖ Be supportive of them so they feel that you are interested and have some idea of what they may be feeling or experiencing, letting them know if they come to you with an issue.

3

PICK A GOOD TIME

- ❖ Picking the right time to have conversations is so important, give yourselves some time together whether this is around the dinner table, or whilst they are getting ready for bed.
- ❖ Make it an everyday routine, so the same time each day (within reason) is the time when they would expect you to start a conversation, it will begin to prompt them to start the conversation sometimes

4

SEE WHAT THEY LIKE

- ❖ Find out their hobbies and interests online, explore those things with them, let them show you how it looks and explain why they like it.
- ❖ See what apps or games they and their friends are using right now; you will be surprised how quickly some of this can change.
- ❖ See if there are things online that you would both like to share some time in doing, it can be good digital bonding.

TOPICS TO COVER WHILST CHATTING

5

HAVE A SAFE ZONE

- ❖ Have a place in the home where you can have comfortable conversations.
- ❖ Try to ask positive and open-ended questions, even if this is challenging in how they are acting.
- ❖ If they begin to talk, hold back on saying anything, just listen and let them flow.
- ❖ Remain calm, even if inside you're fearful, angry or upset.

6

PERSONAL INFORMATION

- ❖ Understand what information they're putting out online, if any.
- ❖ Look out for simple mistakes such as usernames that give away age and hobbies
- ❖ Show them good examples of Social Media accounts that are safe
- ❖ Teach them to have difficult passwords that they do not share with even their closest of friends

7

CRITICAL THINKING

- ❖ Introduce them to the fact not everything they see and hear online is real, there is quite a bit of Fake News.
- ❖ Allow them to understand that on top of this, some people will hide behind fake profiles and they're usually very hard to find.
- ❖ Agree together some guidelines with these risks in mind, such as online speaking to people online you have met in real life

8

FIXING ONLINE ISSUES

- ❖ Make sure that you both understand where and how to report online issues on whatever platform they are using
- ❖ Also give them some tips and strategies on how to manage their emotions whilst online, as this is where most people get into some trouble. Give them advice about putting the device down, or seeking help from a family member if they are worried about something

9

ONLINE PERSONALITY

- ❖ See who they are being and who they want to be online, as this may differ from real life.
- ❖ Show them that being kind online is called being a Good Digital Citizen.
- ❖ Help them realise that everything they do and say online leaves a trace as part of their "Digital Tattoo" almost none of it can be undone online therefore it is important they think before they act.



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FAMILY INTERNET SAFETY PLAN

THE _____ FAMILY



Let us get talking



Search the home, how many devices that connect to the internet do we have as a family? _____

How do we as a family use the internet?

E.g. Homework, Social Media, the news, speak to friends & family, playing games



What shall we do to keep our family safe online?

Where shall we keep our devices?

E.g. downstairs, in a drawer, living room area



What can we use our devices for?

E.g. Homework, speaking to friends & family, playing games



What should we not do online?

E.g. be abusive, search for 18+ content, spent all day on it



When should devices turn off or be put away?

E.g. after dinner, 1 hour before bedtime, before school



What can we do if something worries or upsets us online?

E.g. Tell mum or dad, report it, delete it



What can we do to improve how we use the internet?

E.g. Spend less time on something, spend more time using it as a family, and learn more about what each does on the internet on a regular basis



Adult:

Child:

STAY IN
CONTROL

Signed: Adult:

Child:



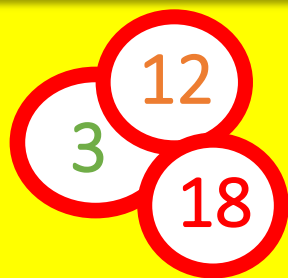
Online Saf

Five Tips for Keeping Children Safe Whilst Gaming



1

Be interested in what they find interesting, show willingness to learn about what they like to play without being judgemental. Then let them show you how it works and discuss around the "what if" topics of strangers, bullying etc. and what they could do about it like report it or block the user or speak to someone.



Use App Store and PEGI ratings to help you judge whether the platform is suitable for your child. Remember, do not just look at the age rating, looking at the content warnings next to the age rating too. Talk to your child about why certain games are appropriate and others are not so appropriate.

2

3

Whilst in conversation, ask them who they play with online and who they "party up" with too. If they have a headset, listen in from time to time too. Talk to them about any bad language being used or heard over the headset, making sure they know how to report abusive behaviour if it was directed at them.

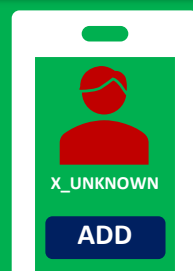


Gaming can become very addictive, very quickly. Speak to them about what you both see as an appropriate amount of time on games and come to an agreement around it. Encourage small breaks in their gaming, even if it is to come down and help with something around the house quickly, breaks are important.

4

5

Show your children how to protect themselves whilst online by being a good role model and showing them how to think critically. Teach them about the dangers of sharing too much personal information and about not acting on emotions which is very easily done online. Allow them to understand some people hide behind fake profiles for bad reasons.



Self-Esteem, Selfies and Unrealistic Expectations

REAL LIFE



MAKEUP

Why is this an issue?

Selfies are not just about posting pictures; the pictures are often filtered and must be perfect. They are also now an integral way of promoting your personality and the way you live your life online and offline

Young people often watch the like count of a photo, if after a short time it does not have enough likes they will take the picture down because they feel it was not good enough. This is linked strongly to long term self-esteem issues

Selfies seen by social media influences can set unrealistic expectations about how they must always look throughout their life. Perfect bodies, faces, home setups are not realistic but when you see it constantly, you expect it for yourself



Help Empower Them



Their body is their own

There is every mounting pressure on young girls online to "be like everyone else" and show off their bodies. This can lead to requests of explicit images from friends or complete strangers. They often oblige because they do not know how to say no and don't want people to feel bad, show them their body is their own and they do not need to.

Find their positives

Discuss with them what they like about themselves, understanding that they are unique, and it is not about what others may like about them. Encourage and promote them accepting who they are and focus in on the positives, try not to dwell on the negatives brought up too much and how they would like to change themselves as this is not healthy.

Being mindful and selective

Talk to them about who they follow and why, discuss that following someone because "they're perfect" is not a good reason all the time. See if they only follow people of one body type and discuss with them about their own body type. Refreshing their mind that they are their own person and must be realistic in what they expect of themselves.

They are more than what the mirror shows

Children sometimes need a reminder that life is not all about looks and influencers are usually followed by people because of their personality too. Having value in what they can do and who they are goes a long way to having good self-esteem allowing them to also be happy about what they do see in the mirror.

Role Model by being positive about your own body image

You have been their biggest influence in life before the internet, so be mindful of how you speak about yourself. Whilst around them try and keep your perspective positive to encourage them to be positive about themselves. You may find this helps you at the same time.

Why they "like" something

Discuss with them what "liking" something on social media means for them. Are they recognising that they really liked what they have seen or is it because they feel the person in the picture is way better than them? Encourage some critical thinking, that everyone is unique, and no one looks like anyone else



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Managing Their Digital Wellbeing

1 Getting an understand of Online Risks

Get to grips with what online risks they may be exposed to, now they are going to be going online more often. Help them understand how they might present themselves online,

Make it specific to them, if they game, talk about other gamers who may be strangers, what is too much personal information. If they use Social Media talk about the pressures this can put on someone their age, explaining also about Fake News and people who hide behind fake account who may appear real and genuinely nice initially.

Importantly, it is inevitable that issues and risks will arise during your child's time online, there is just no getting away from it. Show

Them how you deal with problems online in a responsible way and encourage them to do the same. Equally, just because something would not affect you as an adult does not mean it should not affect your child so my sympathetic to them in situations that require that attention. In the worst-case scenarios, you may have a child who feels low mood often or severe anxieties and may need more thorough, long term care and attention that you cannot do on your own.

3 Be a Role Model and learn from experiences together

2 Knowing your immediate and long-term support options

Learn together about what support is out there online, but also remind them on the long-term support they have in friends and family around them. All social media platforms have ways of reporting, but there are many ways to get to that stage, so take some time with it. Importantly, let them know that support such as Childline is available to them at any time and is completely free and confidential. Lastly, train yourself as

that safety net for them to accept the world that your child lives in and not to judge them on it, as this will discourage them from coming to you with issues in the future

Screen time to excess is not healthy for anyone. But did you know there are four types of screen time? Some of them are encouraged and good for you.

There is positive screen time which is Creative (making music, videos, art etc.), Communicative (SMS, Emails, Social Media) then less positive screen time if done too much which is Active (basically gaming or searching the web) and Passive (Watching Youtube, Netflix etc.). Having a mixed and healthy screen time is important for the whole family, including times where there are no screens allowed for anyone such as the bedroom, dinner time etc. Try it together, you will not regret it!

4 Having a healthy, balanced screen time as a family



Tips for A Child's Social Media Account

Official "App Store"

Make sure you are downloading or installing from the official AppStore or Google Play Store. If your child wants you to download from a website, it's likely to be fake and/or malicious software and they may steal your information

"APP"
STORE

Friend & Family opinion

Consider asking friends and family for their opinion, by sharing the app with them. You may be guided by other people's experiences

InstaMedia

Online Safety UK Ltd.

Install

Share



Age
12+

4.0 out of 5



2,076 Reviews

Reviews

The higher the review rating, the better an overall experience a user has had on the App. Try reading a few to see how you feel, remember to balance the reviews with positives and negatives

Try it

Why not try and Install the app yourself? Firstly, to know how it works and looks, secondly, you can monitor their account from your phone if you install it.

Age Ratings

Age Ratings are important, if the age is 12+ (like most social media apps are) then that is because of the potential exposure to content that is not suitable for people who are younger

? Usernames

Is their Username giving away personal information like your name or age?

? Privacy Settings

Is the account Private? Automatically set to Public, you should find out with them and learn how to set it to Private

? Chatting Online

Who are they talking to? Can they add other people? If so, check in on a regular basis to see who they are adding. Ask them the question "Do you know that person in real life?"

? Content

Are you happy with the content? Check it with them, how do they feel with what they are seeing?

? Report

How can you report? Find out how and show them how to do it

