

Essex County Council Online safety – Summer 2022

Children and young people today are growing up in an increasingly complex world, living much of their lives online. The internet provides many opportunities for our children, but also brings with it risks. We need to help our children understand these risks and equip them with the skills to keep themselves as safe as possible online. We also need to be confident that they understand how to report online harm and where to access help and support if they need it. Any child can be vulnerable online, and their vulnerability can fluctuate depending on their age, developmental stage and personal circumstance.

It is important to teach children how to navigate the online world and equip them with sufficient knowledge and understanding to keep themselves safer online. General messages about online safety are appropriate, as to refer to specific potential harmful websites and apps can increase risk. The key to help children and young people develop are:

- ✓ **How to evaluate what they see online** – children need to be able to assess and make judgements about what they see online, and not automatically assume that what they see is real or appropriate
- ✓ **How to recognise techniques used for persuasion** – children should understand the techniques that are often used to persuade or manipulate others
- ✓ **Online behaviour** – children should understand what acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour (in themselves and others) looks like. They should apply the same standards of behaviour and honesty on and offline, including respect for others.
- ✓ **How to identify online risks** – children should be able to identify possible online risks and make informed decisions about how to act
- ✓ **How and when to seek support** – children should understand safe ways in which to seek support if they are concerned or upset by something they have seen online, and also how to report online harm

Resources for parents and carers:

- [Internet Matters](#) – a not-for-profit organisation set up to empower parents and carers to keep children safe in the digital world. Their support for parents includes a range of downloadable guides covering subjects such as transition to secondary school, Vlogging & livestreaming, online gaming and cyberbullying
- [NSPCC](#) - includes a range of resources to help parents keep children safe when they're using the internet, social networks, apps, games and more
- [Parent Info](#) - from CEOP and Parent Zone, Parent Info is a website for parents covering all of the issues amplified by the internet. It is a free service which helps schools engage parents with expert safety advice, endorsed by the National Crime Agency's CEOP command. This website provides expert information across a range of online harms

- [Parent Zone](#) - offers a range of resources for families, to help them meet the challenges of the digital age, including parent guides on the latest digital trends and platforms.

Resources for pupils:

- [BBC Own It](#) - support for young people to take control of their online life, including help and advice, skills and inspiration on topics such as friendships and bullying, safety and self-esteem
- [Childline](#) – includes information for pupils on sexting, gaming, grooming, bullying, porn, relationships.

There are further resources for schools on [Essex Schools Infolink / online safety](#), The Essex Safeguarding Children Board also has a lot of information about [Online Safety \(escb.co.uk\)](#) and parents can be directed to the website.