

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO:

Moving to secondary school

Online safety tips to support children



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What are kids doing?

- It's a time when children are beginning to **make deeper social connections** for the first time and learning how to **interact with each other online** which can be overwhelming.
- **The Smartphone becomes a status symbol** and an important tool to stay connected to their friends but it also puts them under **pressure to interact**.
- School interactions with friends **cross over into the online world** and at times it can be challenging to balance this with school work and other activities.

Online activities

- **Socialising online** on a range of social apps
- **Watching TV online** through YouTube
- Building their digital footprint by **sharing details about their day to day life** with friends and family or people they've met online
- **Gaming online** with friends online regularly
- **Doing homework** through video chats with friends
- **Taking part in online challenges** with friends

What risks and challenges do they face?

As they become more active online, the probability that they will face an online issue increases.

60% of children in early years of secondary school experience a range of peer-to-peer online threats from being ridiculed in a group chat to harassment on social media*.

**Source: University of Suffolk Online peer-to-peer abuse report – June 2018*



Screen time

'Everything in moderation' applies to the screen time debate when it comes to 'how much is too much screen time'.

Research tells us that children, brains, behaviour and sleep can be affected by how much time they spend on screens.

What can you do to help?

The challenge is helping children to be able to focus on what they are meant to be doing online

- **Discuss how** screen-time is affecting their overall wellbeing
- Set some **digital boundaries** and help them be in control of their tech

Support from schools

Schools can follow a framework that guides children on issues around wellbeing, health and as part of this they give children strategies to manage screen time to avoid the negative affects.



the amount of time 12 - 15 year olds spend online in a week



Peer pressure

From chasing likes on social posts to taking part in risky online behaviour, at this age children are starting to learn about what is acceptable behaviour to follow to be accepted.

Peer pressure can change their behaviour in a positive or negative way depending on who is influencing them.

Also people they've only met online or YouTubers can have the same influence on them as people they know in real life.

What can you do to help?

- **Stand your ground** & apply rules to counter any negative peer pressure
- **Use a news story or something they can relate to** to discuss potential risks of peer pressure
- **Help them build the confidence** to say no if they are asked to do something that puts them or others at risk

Support from schools

Many schools promote an inclusive school culture and take the time to celebrate diversity to help form positive social norms. Through PSHE lessons young people also learn to develop emotional resilience and recognise the difference between positive and negative peer pressure.

Sexting

Exploring sexuality has always been a part of a child's development so it's important to have age appropriate discussions about healthy sex and relationships so they have the right advice.

Children take part in sexting for a range of reasons, to fit in, as a joke, to express feelings in a relationship or as a result of peer pressure.

Although children may be talking about it frequently research shows that that over time sexting has remained low ranging from 4% – 5% between 2013 and 2017.*

When sexting goes wrong, it can affect a child's emotional wellbeing, reputation and can lead to blackmail or legal consequences.

**Source: Suffolk Cybersurvey 2017*

What can you do to help?

- **Discuss the risks of sexting** and what to do to resolve the situation if it does happen
- **Encourage them** to be critical about people's intentions
- Make sure they can **come to you or a trusted adult** if they need support without judgement
- **Create potential responses** if they are asked to share a nude
– Try Zipit app for support



Support from schools

PHSE and Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) lessons help children explore and discuss subjects such as relationships, respect, consent, risk taking, exchange of sexual messages and images between peers and bullying. The government has recently announced their intention to make much of this compulsory from 2020.

Sexting guidance helps schools to determine how they should deal with incidents and when external agencies should be involved. In cases where the image is shared as a joke or without intended malice then the school may deal with it themselves however, if there was intended malice and it was shared without consent then the police or social care may be involved.

Cyberbullying

Research shows that children experience more cyberbullying as they move through secondary school.

As they are new to the social world online, it can be tricky to see how their words and online actions can impact others. A video created by BBC Own It showing students reading the nicest and nastiest comments shared by others online brings to life how words can have a real impact on children's wellbeing.

Cyberbullying can affect children's mental health, learning and can lead to legal consequences in some extreme cases.

What can you do to help?

Getting to grips with 'netiquette' of what is acceptable to post and having coping strategies are essential to help children make smart choices online.

- **Discuss the difference** between banter and bullying
- Discuss the **influence of school culture** in how friends relate to each other
- **Teach them** how to report or block people

Support from schools

All schools should have a policy that guides their response to incidents, they may have mentors who can help or carry out 'Anti-bullying programmes' to raise awareness.

