



All National Online Safety, an initiative supporting parents, carers, social educators and other professionals to help children and young people stay safe online with their phones, tablets, laptops and consoles. This guidance is intended to help parents and carers understand the risks of children and young people using digital devices and to help them support their children and young people to stay safe online.

# Tips for Encouraging Open Discussions about DIGITAL LIVES

The online world is an entirely familiar and commonplace part of life for today's children and young people, far more so than for previous generations. There are many positives to children being able to access information, so it's important not to demonise the internet, games and apps, and not to doubt their positive aspects. At the same time, we do have a responsibility to educate our children about the hazards they may encounter online (just as we would about road safety or danger) so it is important that we don't shy away from talking to them about the complex – and often sensitive – subject of what they do and what they see when they're online.

Here are some suggestions for kicking off conversations with your child about their digital life –

## MAKE YOUR INTEREST CLEAR

Showing enthusiasm when you broach the subject signals to your child that you're keen to learn about the positives of their online world. Most children enjoy discussing online and so it might be child about what they see the most fun, or what games and apps they're into and how it makes them feel, or what their favourite games and apps are. You could also talk to your child about any apps that they need your attention – such as chat functions which might require a settings adjustment to limit contact with strangers. Keep listening even if your child guesses for a bit at first. They don't see you as being there to provide an answer, or they may be gauging your reaction.

## DISCUSS THAT NOT EVERYTHING WE SEE ONLINE IS REAL

Here, you could give examples from your own digital life of the online world versus the real world. For example, those Instagram photos which show the perfect holiday, spotlessly clean, never messy and immediately deleted. Explain to your child that there are many other aspects of the online world which are also deliberately presented in an unrealistic way for about – such as someone's relationship, their body, having perfect skin and so on.

## BE OPEN AND HONEST, APPROPRIATE TO THEIR AGE

At various stages, children and young people discuss their bodies, puberty and their body changes, about relationships, about how babies are made, and about sexual health. If your child knows that they can discuss these sensitive subjects with you, they may be better able to go looking online for answers – which can often provide them with misleading information, and, in some cases, lead to them consuming harmful content. Don't worry if you don't know the answers to their questions – just find out for yourself and go back to them once you have the facts.

## TRY TO REMAIN CALM

As much as possible, try to stay calm even if your child tells you about an online experience that makes you feel angry or worried. Our immediate reaction is to respond immediately, in some way we can be so quick to react that your child's reaction as a parent or carer could deter a child from speaking openly about what they've seen. Give yourself time to consider the right response, or perhaps speak with another member of staff or start while you are remembering your next steps.

## REMIND YOUR CHILD THEY CAN ALWAYS TALK TO YOU

In my role, I work with many children and young people who don't have a safe person to talk to about their online lives. It's important to let your child know that you're always there for them and that you're always there for them. If you're not sure about their online lives, it's always better to ask than to ignore it. If you're not sure about their online lives, it's always better to ask than to ignore it.

## CREATE A 'FAMILY AGREEMENT'

Involving your whole household in setting up rules is likely to be more successful than one person taking on the responsibility. This could include things like: 'I'm OK to use phones, tablets, computers and any other devices when we're all together and we've agreed why they're important, and why it's good to talk to each other about things we've seen or experienced online (it's good to talk)'. Top talking power remaining with the adults. It's understood that, as trusted adults, we need to make sure they are a safe, fun and good place. Allowing children to have their say when setting up with your family, empowered also makes them far more likely to stick to it in the long term.

## KEEP TALKING!

The most valuable advice we can give is to keep talking with your child about their digital lives. You could try using the ideas above to ask questions about their online experiences.

## Meet Our Expert

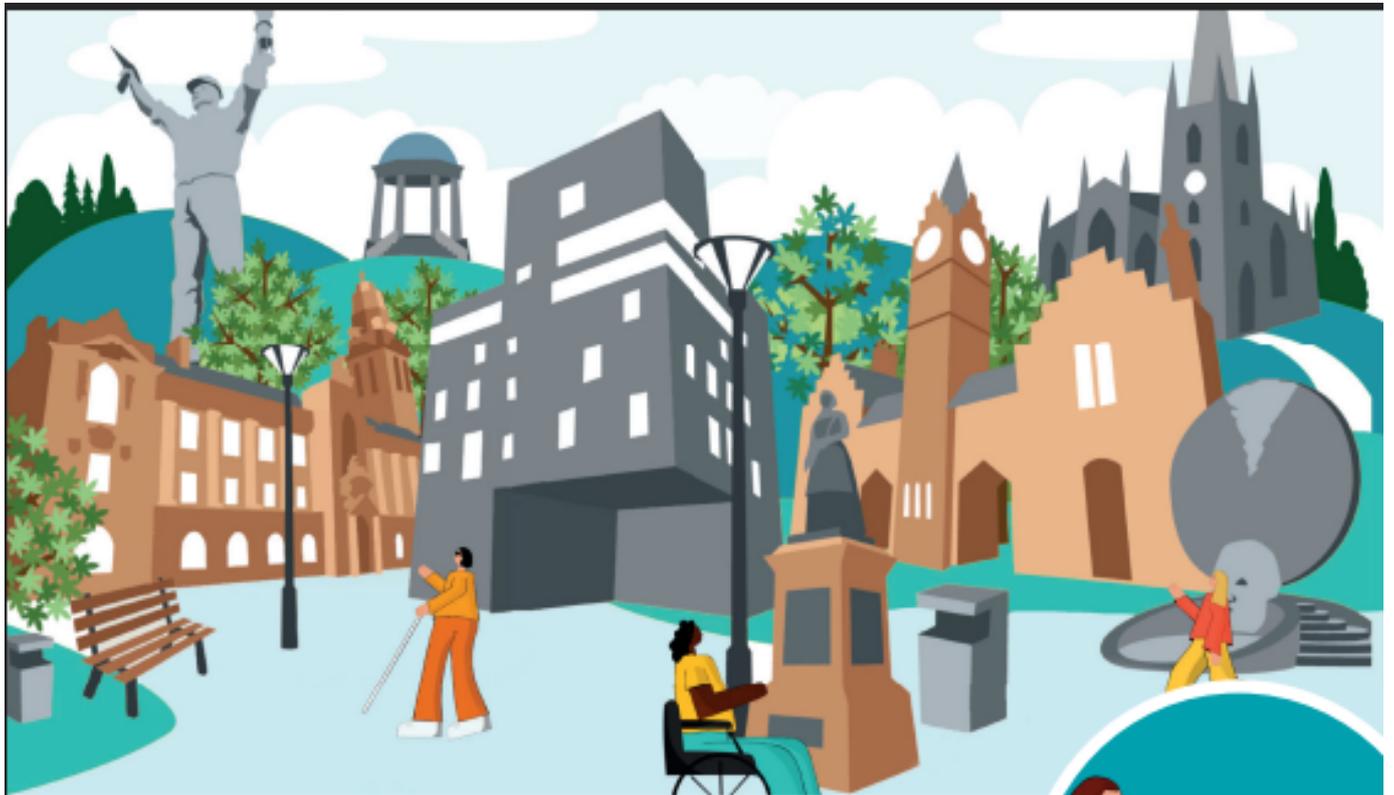
Head of Primary at Park Hall Infant Academy, Mrs Elizabeth Hill. She has over 20 years experience in primary education, including working in various roles in primary schools. She is a qualified teacher and has a range of experience in supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. She is also a member of the National Online Safety team.

## NOS National Online Safety

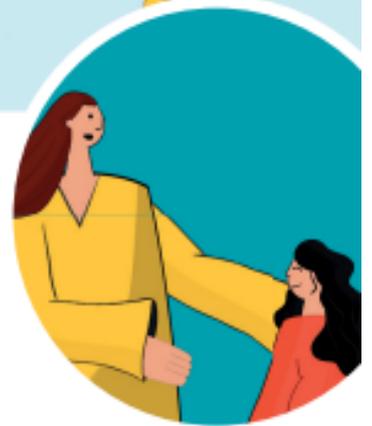
#WakeUpWednesday

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# Walsall's SEND Local Offer



**The Local Offer website provides useful information, available in one place for children and young people aged 0-25 years with Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), their parents/carers and professionals.**

This includes information about local services to help children, young people, parents and carers make choices about the support they receive.

The Local Offer is created and published in collaboration with SEND children, young people and their parents/carers.

To find out more, visit the Local Offer website:  
**<https://send.walsall.gov.uk/>** or scan the QR code:





# TOGETHERNESS



An update on

## WELLBEING FOR EVERY SCHOOL PARENT

Your NHS learning space created by psychologists

### February 2026

This Spring Term, we're delighted to share some helpful resources for parents experiencing all the big emotions of growing children.

**TogetherNESS** the NHS emotional health digital learning hub funded in your area. Your family has **free access** to expert learning about childhood development, wellbeing, brain changes, and much more to help you to connect with your children.

Here's a quick round up of what we think is great on TogetherNESS to help your children thrive.

#### Here for big feelings



#### Understanding your child's feelings

Our taster online learning journey to support you to understand your child's feelings as they head back to the classroom

#### Three key questions



#### How can I support my child with anxiety?

The Clinical Psychologist and Child Psychotherapist's advice