Digital Resilience Toolkit

Advice for parents of 11–13 year olds

Help children become more digitally savvy and get the best out of their online world

What are they doing online?

Research shows that the average age a child gets a smartphone is aged 10 and 11

51% of 12-year-olds have social media accounts

Only 1 in 8 12-15s who have seen something worrying or nasty online have reported it

Source: Ofcom Children's and parents' media use and attitudes 2017

What challenges can they face?

At this age they are socialising online for the first time and building friendship groups which means they could face issues such as online peer pressure and cyberbullying.

They may be exposed to content that is inappropriate for their age, especially if they are using devices that aren't protected by the correct parental controls.

Children at this developmental stage are more impulsive and so may not be fully conscious that they are creating a digital footprint that will affect them as they grow older.
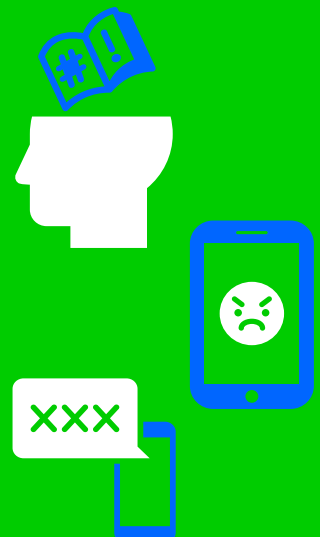
How do I get them prepared to deal with these challenges?

1. Have conversations about their online world

- Talk to your children about **what they're doing online**, what apps they're using and how you expect them to behave online

- Talk to them about what the things they **value offline, such as kindness** and how that should translate online

- Explain to them **why it's important for you to keep an eye on their social media** so they can understand that just like riding a bike, you need training wheels to learn safely before riding independently

2. Discuss digital footprint

- Remind your child that **everything they post online will be recorded** and this could affect them in later life

- **Use the t-shirt test** - if they wouldn't feel comfortable wearing it on a t-shirt, don't post it online. This applies to photographs, comments and videos

- Talk to them about the **consequences of what they post** - something that might seem seem funny now might not be funny down the line

3. Finding their identity and source

- At this age, children will be wanting to identify with a certain group so ensure you've talked to them about **checking the sources of their information**

- They will also be looking to identify with friends who share interests, make sure they have the **correct settings on the platforms** they use so they're talking to children their own age and who they know in real life

- Remind them that if they do come across something online that's left them confused or upset, it's perfectly normal as they may not have been **emotionally mature enough to see it**

## 4. Use Stop, Speak and Support to deal with challenges online

- Talk to your child about the importance of **speaking out if they come across cyberbullying online**

- **Familiarise yourself with Stop, Speak and Support** introduced to empower them to support their peers online and take a stand against cyberbullying

- Remind your child that they can always **come to you or a trusted adult** if they've been upset by something online

5. Talk about resilience:

- If your child has been affected by a comment they've received online, ask them to think about the intent behind it

- Calling everything bullying can dangerous - as being a victim can be disempowering. Teach them to **spot the difference between banter and bullying**
  - Do this by asking them to consider the context of how a comment was made

- Help them understand the difference between 'messing up' and bullying

- **Discuss the impact words** can have on another person's emotional and mental wellbeing and remind them of the importance of being a good digital citizen

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Even with the right controls and settings, there's still a small chance children can come across something they shouldn't.
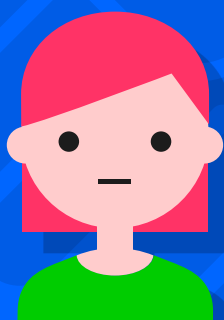
"What happens if things go wrong?"

- Try and understand what has gone on, where it has happened, who is involved and if there are any settings you can apply to stop it happening again

- Show your support and make a point to give them the confidence that you will deal with it together

- Talk it through openly and validate their feelings and emotions about what they've experienced

- Depending on the situation seek advice from specialist organisation or your GP to give them the best chance to recover and regain their confidence