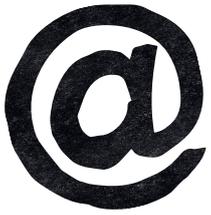


Online Sexual Bullying

Advice for Parents and Carers of 9-12 year olds



The thing that is happening online but nobody talks about

Childnet has produced this guidance to help parents and carers and their children talk about the important issue of **online sexual bullying** – specifically when this is happening between children of **around the same age**.



What is online sexual bullying?

At its simplest, it is any unwanted sexual comments or actions that occur online. This is something that children may be seeing and impacted by, even if they are not directly involved.

Here are some examples:

- Editing photos to make them sexual
- Bullying someone online because they are different to others of the same gender
- Posting photos of parts of other children's bodies to embarrass them
- Making "jokes" about someone's sexual orientation

It is hard for young people to know what to do

When it is other young people doing or saying these things it can be very hard for a young person to know what to do or how to challenge it. They may not even

realise that what they are experiencing is not ok until it has been occurring for a while or until it happens to them or someone they know.

What did our research tell us?

It is hard for them to talk about

We found that one of the biggest concerns for parents and carers is their child keeping something worrying that happens to them online to themselves. There may be many reasons why children are reluctant or slow to talk to their parents or carers about these issues.

- Too embarrassed
- Worried about what would happen next
- Worried about being targeted by those involved
- Worried about getting in trouble
- Don't see it as something serious

Start a conversation

It is important to talk to young people about their lives online. Here are some ways that you can create a safe environment for those conversations:

- Regularly make time to listen and be available for a chat, just the two of you, with no agenda and no distractions.
- Ask open questions about your child's friends and the time they spend online. Include the online world in the conversations you have about relationships and growing up.
- Let your child know that they can come to you with any problem they have, and you will be there for them. They may need regular reassurance.
- Use a distancing technique – ask about what other young people at school go through or deal with online, so they don't have to talk about first-hand experience.

How do young people want you to help?

Our research showed us that lots of you talk to your children about their lives online but find this a more challenging topic. Young people have told us they do want to talk about this issue and how they would like you to support them.

Young people have told us that they want you to...

Be

- Curious about their online lives
- Available
- Honest
- Open to listen and learn
- Reassuring
- Patient

Avoid

- Overreacting
- Judging or blaming them
- Getting emotional or angry
- Assuming you know how they feel
- Threatening to or taking away their access to the internet

Further information...

For more information about how you can help to support your child with the issue of online sexual bullying and harassment:

childnet.com/OSHparents

For general advice around online safety and how to talk about it with young people:

childnet.com/resources/lets-talk-about-life-online

<https://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online/parents-and-carers>

PROJECT

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