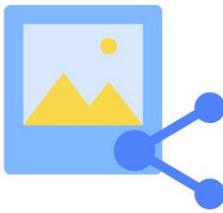
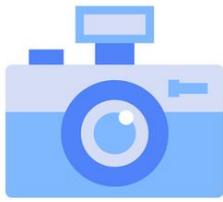
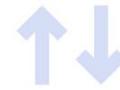




Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



A family guide to talking about sharing photos and videos

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.

Introduction

Whether it's Instagram or Snapchat, YouTube or TikTok, social media is becoming increasingly visual. More and more photos, videos, memes and GIFs are being shared online and on apps than ever before. It's very likely that the people in your family, especially the children and young people, are seeing visual content on their computers or phones every day – and that they will want to create and share it as much as the next person.

This guide explains the positives about sharing photos and videos and why people do it. It also covers the potential risks and includes advice on how to help children and young people use visual content in a safe and positive way.

What are the positives of sharing photos and videos?

There are plenty of good things about sharing photos and videos online. One of them is how it helps us maintain our relationships with family and friends, and feel part of an online 'community'. Other reasons include being able to:

- share entertaining or thought-provoking content
- reach different audiences and people across the world, perhaps those with shared interests
- raise awareness about a cause or news story.

Why do people share photos and videos of themselves, in particular?

Remember, people don't necessarily have to share or re-post photos or videos of themselves – they could just share content they see on other people's social media accounts. However, a lot of people do like to share photos and videos of themselves so that they can:

- share memories, experiences and lifestyles
- get noticed or build a 'following' (to get likes/views/comments), which often makes them feel 'validated'
- express themselves and define their identity
- boost their confidence or get approval from their peers or people they admire, such as influencers

- educate or inform others about a cause they're passionate about
- advertise a product, service or brand if they're trying to build a following as an influencer or, increasingly for some older teenagers, if they have a business.

'Going live' and why do people do it?

Going live is quite different from sharing already-edited photos and videos. It involves broadcasting a live video to an audience over the internet and is particularly popular with 'influencers' or those who are trying to build a large following. However, anyone can live stream – you just need an internet-enabled device and an app which lets you broadcast. Some people like it because:

- as it hasn't been edited, the video can feel more 'real' to viewers
- the person live streaming can respond to comments or questions in real time, increasing engagement
- it can be an effective way to draw attention to a particular event or something out of the ordinary.

What are the risks of sharing photos and videos?

Though it's potentially risky for **anyone** to share photos or videos online, it's particularly important to be aware of the risks involved with children and young people under the age of 18. These involve:

- **unknowingly sharing personal information** – photos and videos not only show someone's gender and approximate age, but can reveal other details such as where they live or work (for example, if your child posts a photo in their school uniform, they're giving away clues as to where they study)
- **unknowingly sharing location** – data showing someone's location may be stored within the photo or video when it's posted, meaning people can see where they are
- **contact from others** – photo- and video-sharing can take place one-to-one and in small groups. But if a person has a public profile for

all users to see, what they share can provoke unwanted comments/reactions or even contact from strangers

- **sending nudes** – sharing nudes and semi-nudes, or ‘sexting’, involves sharing nude or semi-nude images or videos of yourself or others. For children and young people there are various reasons and motivations behind this behaviour. In some situations, children and young people may be groomed or coerced into sending nudes or semi-nudes, which is an abusive form of image sharing.

Nudes or semi-nudes may also be shared within consensual relationships. Sometimes it’s as a result of pressure from others (for example, a boyfriend or girlfriend or as a dare by friends), or because they’re curious about sex and relationships. This can still expose them to risks, particularly if the image is shared further, including embarrassment, bullying and increased vulnerability to blackmail and coercion and sexual exploitation.

It’s illegal for anyone under 18 to create, possess or share nude images/videos, which makes handling incidents complex. For more detailed information on this issue please see [A family guide to talking about sexting](#), and this short film [Let’s talk about sexting](#)

- **copyright infringement** – sharing the photos and videos owned by others (particularly commercial productions such as films, TV shows and sports broadcasters, as well as artists) without their permission can breach copyright law. Many social media platforms and video sharing sites may automatically remove copyright infringing content, or the owner of the content may request that a user takes down infringing content from their account.

It’s also important to remember that, once a video or photo has been posted to the internet, it can very easily be copied or shared. This can make permanent removal of visual content very difficult. Other risk factors to consider include:

- **a person’s online reputation** – people may pass judgement on what they see on someone’s social media account(s), especially if the content or the comments it receives are perceived as negative. Things that are posted for a ‘bit of fun’, or without much forethought, can seriously damage someone’s reputation in the short or long term

- **misunderstandings/distortion of messages** – photos can sometimes be misleading or misunderstood. Other people can also easily copy and edit photos to change the message they convey
- **people edit the content** on their social media accounts, so keep in mind the reality may be quite different. Photos, videos and live streams may not reflect accurate information or what someone said or did.

How can I talk to my child about sharing photos and videos?

It's important you talk to your child about this topic, even if they don't interact with online visual content on a regular basis. Consider these pointers to start the conversation, and remember to approach it in a calm and measured way.

- **Think before you post** – encourage your child to consider what happens after they share a photo/video. Remind them that others may be able to take a copy and share it elsewhere online or edit a copy to change what it shows.
- **How does their behaviour affect others?** – is your child behaving positively and respectfully online? Or are they posting content that could be deemed inappropriate, offensive or hateful? Children should be conscious of how their actions affect others, including the possible impact of the photos and videos they share.
- **Build a positive online reputation** – encourage your child to use the internet as a platform for showcasing their skills and qualities. Photos and videos are an opportunity to demonstrate artistic and creative talents, photography skills, sporting achievements, and other hobbies, interests or experiences. As young people move from school to further education or work, potential employers or universities might search for them online. Posting positive content is a great way to ensure that others will be left with a good first impression.
- **Talk about peer pressure** – people can take and share photos and videos on social media instantly and this is one of its appeals. However, children and young people sometimes find themselves in social situations that may put pressure on them to take and send a

photo/video (for example, as a 'dare') that they find difficult to say no to. Talk to them about strategies they could use to manage these tricky situations positively.

- **Teach them to show respect** – remind your child that they should ask permission before sharing photos and videos of others. They should also respect others' decisions, especially if they say no. More information about consent is available in the resources listed below.
- **Consider your own sharing habits** – as a parent/carer, are you setting the right example? Are you asking permission when sharing photos/videos of them that could affect your child's reputation or reveal their personal information? It's always worth modelling the behaviour you'd like to see in your child, so that they grow up knowing that these healthy boundaries are normal.

How can I help my child share photos and videos safely?

Along with talking to your child, there are a number of practical things you can do to ensure they're using visual content on social media and the wider internet safely.

- **Check their privacy settings** – use these to manage who can see their photos and videos. Checklists for using privacy and account settings on popular services can be found in [Keeping Safe Online](#).
- **Consider what personal information is being shared** – photos, videos and live streams can sometimes reveal more personal information than intended. Encourage your child to always check their photo/video before sharing to make sure they're happy with what it shows, as well as who they'll be sharing it with.
- **Check geolocation and geotagging settings** – ensure you and your child know where to find these options in the apps they use, as well as the camera settings on their device. Turning these off is a good way to ensure that location details are not shared online.

- **Help your child to block and report** – remind your child that if they see anything offensive or upsetting online, or are worried about the behaviour of someone else, they should report that content or user to the platform and the bilingual [Report Harmful Content](#) service. Encourage them to always tell a trusted adult if they're worried or upset by anything online.

For more resources and information about sharing photos and videos online visit:

- Hwb – [Sharing images](#) playlist
- Hwb – [A parent and carer's guide to sharing information and images online](#)
- Hwb – [Online safety guidance](#) for parents and carers
- UK Safer Internet Centre – [Safer Internet Day 2019 resources](#)
- O2/NSPCC – [A parents' guide to being Share Aware](#)

Help and support:

[Meic](#) – A confidential, anonymous, and free bilingual helpline service available to children and young people in Wales up to the age of 25.

[Childline](#) – A free, private and confidential service available to anyone under 19 in the UK. Whatever the worry, they are there to listen.

[NSPCC](#) – A national charity working to protect children and prevent abuse, the NSPCC offers a dedicated helpline with professional counsellors.

[CEOP](#) – The Child Exploitation and Online Protection website is where you can safely and securely report any concerns about online sexual abuse.

[Report Harmful Content](#) – A national reporting centre designed to help everyone report harmful content they see online.