

webwise<sup>ie</sup>

Parents' Guide to

# A Better Internet



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# Introduction

In every aspect of development, from learning to cross the road, ride a bike or swim, parents teach, guide and support their children. It should be no different when it comes to their online lives. This booklet has been developed to support you as you support your child to be safer online.



The internet is an integral part of the lives of children and young people; it is important that we get involved with what they are doing online. This means not just talking to our children about what they do online but also listening. It is important that we talk openly and regularly about our concerns and agree boundaries around internet use in our homes.

While the internet undoubtedly presents fantastic opportunities for children, it is equally clear that there are valid concerns about the risks they face online including accessing inappropriate or harmful content and cyberbullying.

Research from the National Advisory Council for Online Safety National Survey of Children, their Parents and Adults regarding Online Safety 2021 provides valuable insights into how children and young people in Ireland access and use the Internet.

Most children are positive about the internet and are confident that they have the skills to navigate the digital environment, but they also report a range of negative experiences online including cyberbullying and online aggression and encountering inappropriate content.

Most children feel safest at home, most also report that their family tries to help them and that they are listened to when they have something to say. However, in relation to the digital world, only 19% of children report telling a parent about issues that have upset them online. This contrasts with 53% of parents who say they talk to their child when something bothers them on the Internet. Comparing children and parents accounts of exposure to online risks, the

report shows that there is a consistent underestimation by parents of the risks to which their child has been exposed.

Children view the home environment and their family as having an important role in helping them to stay safe, but in terms of the digital environment there is a gap between children and parents' perceptions of children's online experiences. As parents our natural desire is to keep our children safe. **The best online safety strategy, regardless of age, is to talk to your child and to engage with them about what they are doing, to listen to what they have to say, and to learn about risks they may encounter, and the benefits and opportunities they get from using the internet.**

This booklet will help you, as a parent, to help your children have a positive experience when they are online. It will give you information and advice and, as a result, you will be able to talk with confidence to your children, including teenagers and young adults, about the benefits and risks they need to be aware of. Much of the information published in this booklet has been adapted from the Webwise Parents hub. Visit [webwise.ie/parents](https://webwise.ie/parents) to find more supports including video interviews with experts, talking points on topics that are difficult to discuss with your child, explainer guides for new apps and technologies, and lots more.

# Internet Safety

## Top Tips for Parents

Check out our top internet safety advice to make sure going online is a positive experience for you and your child:

### No.1

#### Discover the internet together

Be the one to introduce your child to the internet. For both parent and child it is an advantage to discover the internet together. Try to find websites that are exciting and fun so that together you achieve a positive attitude to internet exploration. This could make it easier to share both positive and negative experiences in the future.



### No.2

#### Agree with your child rules for internet use in your home

Try to reach an agreement with your child on the guidelines which apply to internet use in your home. Here are some tips to get started:

- Discuss when and for how long it is acceptable for your child to use the internet
- Agree how to treat personal information (name, address, telephone, email)
- Discuss how to behave towards others
- Agree what type of sites and activities are OK or not OK
- Follow the rules yourself! Or at least explain why the rules are different for adults.

### No.3

#### Encourage your child to be careful when disclosing personal information

A simple rule for younger children should be that the child should not give out their name, phone number or photo without your approval. Older children using social networking sites like Instagram or TikTok should be encouraged to be selective about what personal information and photos they post to online spaces. Regardless of privacy settings, once material is online you can no longer control who sees it or how it is used.



### No.4

#### Talk to your child about making friends online

The internet can be a positive meeting place for children, where they can get to know other young people and make new friends. However, it is important to talk to them about some key considerations around connecting with other people online. Remind them that a friend they make online may not be who they say they are. Set guidelines around friend requests, how to decide whether to accept the request and what information is ok and not ok to share. Remind them that they should come to you or a trusted adult if a person they only know online asks to meet in person or to share personal information. For parents of younger children it is best to connect with people they know in real life and regularly check in on who they are communicating with online.

### No.5

#### Teach your child about evaluating information and being critically aware of information they find online.

Most children use the internet to improve and develop their knowledge in relation to schoolwork and personal interests. Children should be aware that not all information found online is correct, accurate or relevant. Show your child how to check information they find by comparing it to alternative sources on the same topic. Show them trusted sites they can use to compare information.



**No.6****Don't be too critical towards your child's exploration of the internet**

Children may come across adult material by accident on the web. Also, a child may intentionally search for such websites; remember that it is natural for children to be curious about off-limits material. Try to use this as an opening to discuss the content with them, and perhaps make rules for this kind of activity. Be realistic in your assessment of how your child uses the internet.

**No.7****Remember the positive aspects of the internet outweigh the negatives**

The internet is an excellent educational and recreational resource for children. Encourage your child to make the most of its potential. To be able to guide your child it's important to understand how children use the internet and what they like to do online. Let your child show you what websites they like and what they do on them, play their favourite online game, or explore their favourite videos with them.



## Internet Safety

### Advice for Parents of Young Children

It is never too early to think about your child's safety online. If you are a parent of a young child who is just starting to discover the online world, there are a few things to consider:

#### **Talk about internet Safety with your Child**

Have a conversation with your child on some of the important things to watch out for when going online for the first time. Young children will not be aware of the dangers, so it is very important to talk with them about who they talk to and about sharing personal information online.

#### **Use Parental Controls**

Most internet technologies have built-in controls that allow you to limit

the amount of time your child can spend online, restrict their access to adult content, and switch off functions like shopping and chatting. Filtering controls are particularly useful at preventing young children from accidentally encountering content that might bother them.

#### **Disable In-App Purchases**

Many apps and games give their users the option of buying additional game functionality, additional points/bonuses, and a host of other extras. Children can easily make purchases without even realising. You can disable in-app purchases using your phone or device settings.

#### **Activate Safe Search**

Help minimise the risk of your child coming across inappropriate content in response to search queries by activating 'safe search' in your search engine.

#### **Agree on what to do when things go wrong**

We recommend that you speak to your child about what to do if they come across something on the internet that bothers them. This could be closing the laptop lid or turning off the screen and coming to get you.

#### **Set Up a Family Email**

Set up a family email address that your children can use when signing up to new games and websites online.

#### **Play it Safe**

For young children we recommend that parents choose safe and appropriate games for their child to play online. Most games have a rating you can check to see if they are age appropriate. You should also check if a game allows for player interaction and if there is a safe chat mode.

## Time Online

The internet and digital devices provide great opportunities for children and young people, however a common concern for parents is the amount of time their child spends online, and how to strike a healthy balance. This can be a tricky issue for many families to manage, but here are some useful pointers to help you set achievable expectations that work for your family.

It is important to remember that children often welcome time-off from social media and games and can welcome clear guidelines and boundaries in this area.

### How much is too much?

Unfortunately there is no magic number. Children use their devices and computers for lots of different reasons – to learn, to play, and to socialise. The most important thing is to agree clear rules on technology use and set a good example.



### Helpful Pointers:

**No.1 Agree a clear set of rules** with your child on technology use in the home. Talk to your child about when and where you think it is appropriate to use screens. Agree times when technology is allowed and when they are not allowed in the home. We suggest dinner time, homework time (unless you are using it to help with your homework) and bed time is a good start to the not-allowed list.

**No.2 Lead by example.** Modelling behaviour is the most powerful way you can influence your child's behaviour.

**No.3 Restrict the use of computers and devices in the bedroom.** Depending on the age of your child you may want to set a curfew or ban devices from the bedroom completely.

**No.4 Buy an alarm clock** for your child's bedroom and **charge their phones and devices in your room or downstairs at night time.** This can be a helpful way of giving them a break from the internet.

**No.5 Stick to the rules.** To avoid confusion about the rules on technology use, stick to the boundaries that you have agreed with your child, and remember

to set a good example. Review the rules with your child as they get older.

**No.6 Chat to your child** about what they do online and **encourage them to use their time online for learning, creativity and education.** Take time to help them search for appropriate content.

**No.7 Encourage your child to have a healthy balance.** Experts say time spent online should not affect sleep, exercise or time with family. Doing activities together as a family will help implement guidelines around technology use and offer fun alternatives.

**No.8 Finally, join in!** Why not set aside some time to play your child's favourite computer game, watch their favourite videos, or explore their favourite websites and discover the online world together!



## Children & Social Media



### What is the Right Age to Start?

Deciding at what age to allow your child to start using social media is a common dilemma for parents.

Most social media platforms and messaging and streaming services have a minimum age requirement. **The majority of these services require users to be 13 years-old +, while some are set at 16 years-old.** Therefore technically, children under the age of 13 should not have a social media account. However, most social media platforms do not have robust age-verifications in place making it relatively easy for underage users to sign-up with a false age.

### What is the Digital Age of Consent?

The digital age of consent is the minimum age a user must be before a social media and internet companies can collect, process and store their data. In May 2018, the EU adopted a new set of Data Protection Regulations. The GDPR introduces substantial changes to European data protection law.

The new regulations require member states to set a digital age of consent. Ireland has adopted 16 as the digital age of consent. The requirements of the GDPR also state that the processing of data of children under the age of 16, in respect of online services, shall not be lawful without parental consent.

### What are the Key Things to Think About?

We know that some parents give permission to their underage-children to set up accounts on social networking services and it's easy to get past their age checks.

Ultimately, you need to decide if your child is equipped to deal with the social pressures that arise from social networking. The pressure to 'fit in' and/or to 'be popular' can be intense. Romance, group dynamics, and bullying can contribute to creating choppy waters that even adults find difficult to navigate.



## Social Media Advice

If your child is using social media, there are a few things you should talk with them about. Here are a few conversation starters:



### No.1

Ask your child to show you their favourite social media platforms and encourage them to talk about what they do on it. Keep the conversation on a positive footing and show an interest in discovering how it works, and what your child likes about it. Children can see social media as a parent-free zone but maintaining positive and ongoing engagement with your child about their social media use can help to ensure that they feel comfortable coming to you if something goes wrong for them online.



### No.2

In order to open up the channels of communication with your child over their social networking use, don't be too critical of their online experience or habits to date. Remember, it can be easy to stumble upon inappropriate content online.



### No.3

Sometimes a child won't tell a parent about a bad experience they have had online because they fear that you might deal with the problem by taking their device away. However, if they feel they can talk about their online habits with you, without judgement, or the threat of being disconnected, it will lead to more honesty in the long run.



### No.4

Ask your child what privacy settings they have set up on their profiles. Encourage them if they are 'public', to amend the setting to 'private' so that only friends can see what they post. Also let them know that even with the tightest privacy controls, content posted online can be easily copied and shared with audiences without their consent. Make sure that your child knows how to use the reporting tools available on the platforms they are using and remind them that if something upsets them online that they can talk to you about.



### No.5

It is a good idea to talk to your child about who they follow and communicate with online. Online platforms and services use algorithms to present us with content based on our personal information, search history, and who we follow and interact with. Encourage your child to think about how this might influence the content that they see in their social media newsfeed, and what the potential benefits and drawbacks are. Why not spend some time helping your child to find content and to curate a positive newsfeed?



### No.6

Remind your child about the importance of safe online communication. Be sure to emphasise that they should NOT reply to any unwanted or unsolicited messages. Although it may seem obvious, some scam artists or predators use messages to draw responses from young people and then target them. Talk to your child about the difference between friends they do know in real life and online friendships and encourage them to review their online friends regularly so that they are only sharing information with people they trust and are in control of who can contact them.





# How to Manage Your Online Reputation

With children documenting and sharing huge chunks of their lives online, managing their online reputation and creating a positive digital footprint has never been more important. A digital footprint is the mark you leave behind when you go online. It includes your online interactions, information and content you post and share, including content posted and shared by others.



## Starting the conversation...

### No.1 Check your settings!

Encourage your child to regularly review the privacy settings on apps and platforms they are using. Many social networks are set to public by default meaning anyone can see your child's posts, pics, videos etc. We recommend using a 'friends-only' setting. Remind your child to delete old and unnecessary content and deactivate or delete old social media accounts.

### No.2 There is a limit to the effectiveness of privacy settings

Explain to your child that anything that appears on a screen can be copied and shared regardless of the privacy features of the services they are using. Nearly all devices can save what is displayed on screen by pressing a couple of buttons. It is just as easy to capture what is displayed by taking a photo of the screen using a camera or camera phone.

### No.3 Know your rights!

Remind your child that their personal information belongs to them, and they have all the same rights as adults to the protection of their personal information under the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) including privacy, the right to be forgotten, and the right to information. For more information on rights online visit the Data Protection Commission (DPC) [www.dataProtection.ie](http://www.dataProtection.ie)

### No.4 Think before posting

There is no way to guarantee what you post online will stay where you intend. Once we post something, it can be difficult to control where it goes. The best advice parents can offer their children is to **THINK** before they post. Encourage your child to: Ask themselves... is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Illegal? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind? Remind your child, if something does go wrong online you are there to help and support them.



# Seeing is Believing?

From helping with school work to learning about favourite hobbies or interests, the internet is a fantastic source of information for everyone including children and young people. With so much information available it can be a challenge to work out what information is accurate and reliable, and what is not.

Always encourage your child to try to **Stop, Think, Check** that what they are seeing, reading or hearing is accurate and reliable. Here are some simple tips:

**No.1**  
**Check the source:** Check the source of the information that you are seeing, hearing or reading – is it a credible/reliable source? If you are unfamiliar with the site, look in the about section or find out more information about the author. Check another source to see if you can find the same information on other reputable news and media outlets?

**No.2**  
**Look beyond the headline:** Encourage your child to read more than just the headline of an article. Many false news stories use sensationalist or shocking headlines to grab attention, but a headline or social media post does not give the full story.

**No.3**  
**Remember, the camera can lie:** Don't assume that a picture or video is reliable. Images that have been altered, or even used out of context, can make it easy to draw the wrong conclusions.

**No.4**  
**Just because information goes viral does not mean that it is accurate:**

Remind your child that false or misleading information can be designed to provoke a strong reaction and therefore increase the likelihood that people will be prompted to 'share' it. Social media and messaging platforms make it really easy for information to be shared quickly to many people.

**No.5**  
**You are who you like?**

Online algorithms are designed to give users news and information that reflects the previous choices they have made, for example content we have read, videos we watched, posts we have liked or people we have followed. Encourage your child to think about how their choices online can influence their newsfeed, and remind them to have a critical eye when viewing content online.

## Additional Resources

**Be Media Smart** Information is everywhere and sometimes it can be difficult to judge how accurate or reliable information is. For more information, advice and tips, visit [bemediasmart.ie](http://bemediasmart.ie)

**Facts Matter** Facts Matter is an introductory guide for adult literacy and adult education practitioners who wish to build their students' knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence in critical thinking, media and digital literacy.

[www.nala.ie/publications/facts-matter-a-guide-to-building-critical-media-literacy-in-todays-world/](http://www.nala.ie/publications/facts-matter-a-guide-to-building-critical-media-literacy-in-todays-world/)

# Dealing with Cyberbullying



## What is Cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying or online bullying is something you should talk about with your child before it happens. Opportune times might be: when your child starts using social media for the first time, when they are moving from primary to secondary school, and regularly thereafter.

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of internet and mobile phone technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. Cyberbullying does not require face to face contact, it can occur at any time (day or night).

Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyberbullying. For example, a child may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Be clear on what constitutes online bullying. The procedures published by the Department of Education say "placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour"<sup>1</sup>.

Cyberbullying can happen to anyone. It's always wrong and it should never be overlooked or ignored. You know your child better than anyone else. It means you are best placed to identify and deal with any cyberbullying they may encounter.

<sup>1</sup> *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, Department of Education and Skills, September 2013.

## What if my Child is Being Bullied Online?

Praise your child for coming to speak to you about the problem. Sometimes that first step of asking for help is a difficult one. Try to stay calm and not overreact. Reassure your child by reminding them that many people have had similar experiences.

The first thing to do is to listen. Listen supportively, try not to interrogate your child. If they come to you looking for help, they have demonstrated trust in you. Be careful not to damage that by losing your cool or taking action that they are uncomfortable with. At the same time you should make it clear that in order to help them you may have to talk with their teachers and the parents of other children involved.

Once you have established that bullying is taking place, you should get in touch with your child's school or youth organisation. If the cyberbullying is very serious, or potentially criminal, you should contact your local Gardai.

Schools have a particular responsibility to address bullying. Talk with your child's teacher if the bullying is school related. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. All schools must have an 'Anti-Bullying' policy. You should familiarise yourself with your school's policy, so you know the steps to be taken if required.





### Talking to Your Child

Encouraging your child to talk to you about cyberbullying is key to maintaining an open and positive environment which can help you deal with the situation. Responding by barring internet use or taking away their mobile phone or other device can damage trust and may also put you out of the loop if cyberbullying happens again.

Help your child to build his/her confidence and self-esteem in other areas. This can be supported through your child engaging in out of school activities, such as sports, music or art activities. If your child is very distressed it's important that they have someone with whom they can speak. A professional counsellor might be able to help. Childline offers a listening support service for children.

Encourage your child to be kind and respectful online, and to be a good friend by reporting cyberbullying if they witness it.



### What Advice Should I Give my Child?



#### Don't Reply:

Young people should never reply to messages that harass or annoy them. The bully wants to know they have upset their target. If they get a response it feeds into the problem and makes things worse.



#### Keep the Messages:

By keeping nasty messages your child will be able to produce a record of the bullying, the dates and the times. This will be useful for any subsequent school or Garda investigation.



#### Block the Sender:

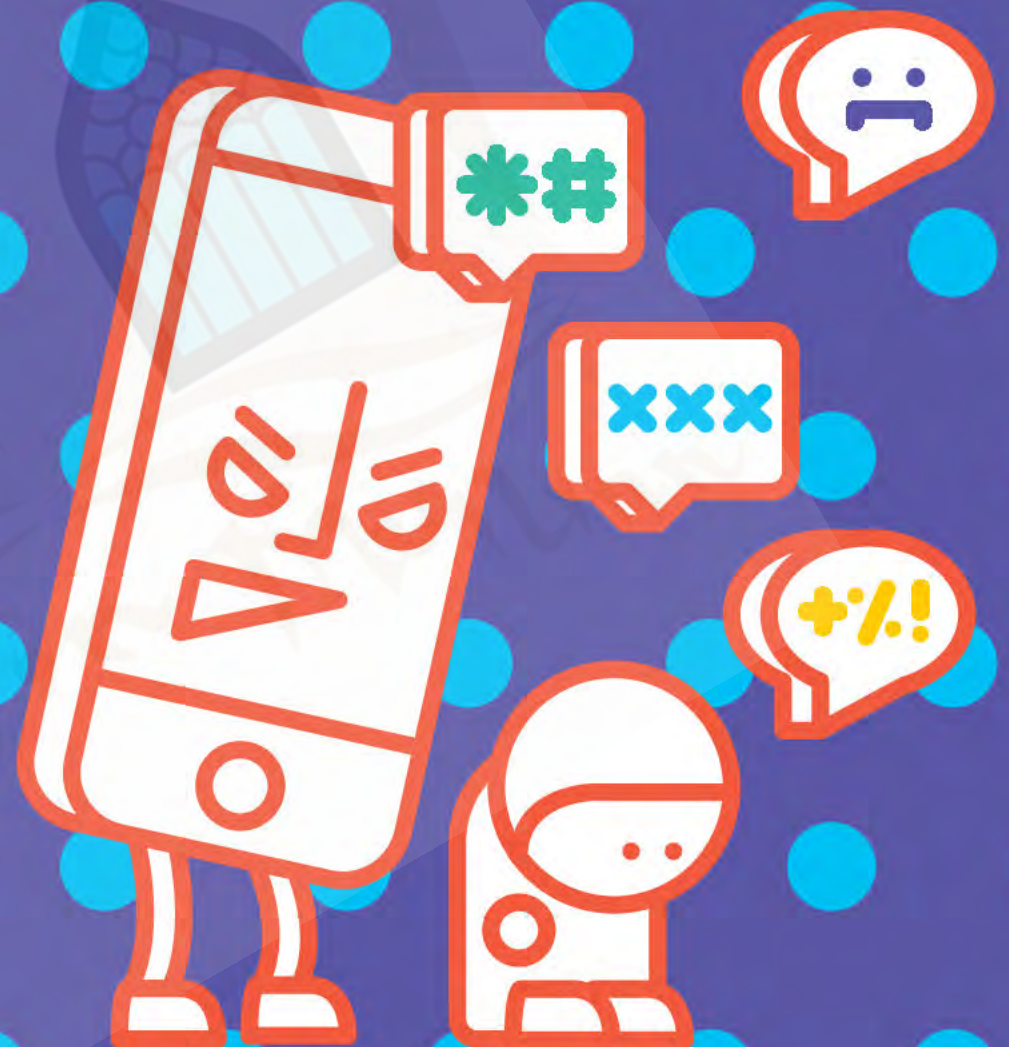
No one needs to put up with someone harassing them. Whether it's messaging apps, social networking or playing games, children can use the technology block anyone who is bothering them.



#### Report Problems:

Ensure your child reports any instances of cyberbullying to websites, apps, or other service providers using their reporting tools. By using these, your child will be passing important information to people who can help.

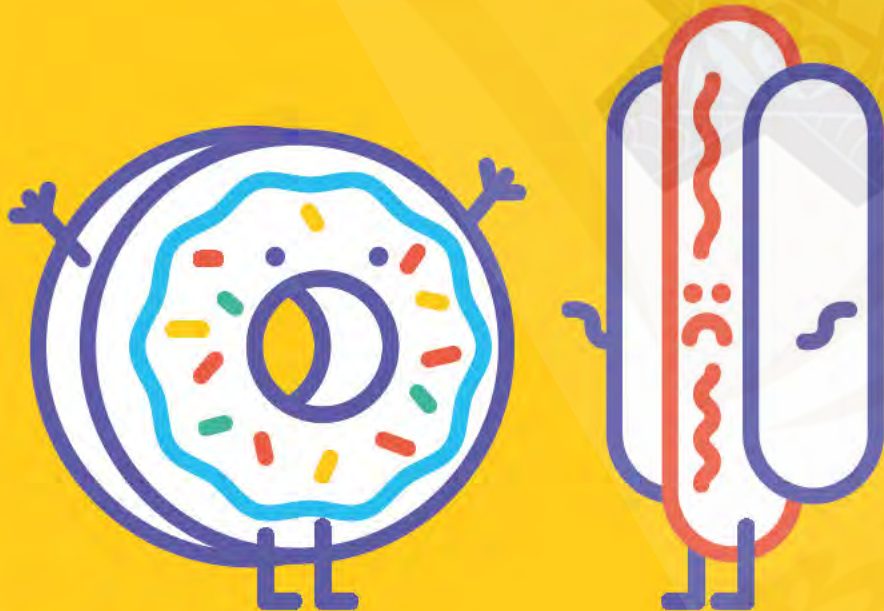
Children need to understand the emotional damage cyberbullying, and all other forms of bullying, can cause. All forms of bullying hurt, all cause pain and all should be stopped. By stressing this to your child – and by emphasising the importance of not standing by while someone else is being bullied – it will encourage them to be more responsible and considerate internet users.



## Image Sharing & Inappropriate Content

The reality of life today is that, whether accidentally or on purpose, your child will come across pornography on the internet. It is easy to find. Even if you don't go looking for it, it can find you. It is also true that children are encountering it at a younger and younger age.

Parental controls and filters can reduce the chances of your child stumbling across porn but a determined teen can find a way to bypass these protections.



### Young Children & Porn

Children can be confused by the imagery that porn exposes them to. When they encounter it they may want to watch more of it to try to teach themselves or to learn something from it. Often they won't understand the messages that are being communicated. It can be traumatic and can make them anxious.

Explain to your child that there are some things that are for adults only and that if they ever see anything on the internet that bothers them, they should come and tell you. Be direct and tell them that if they ever see pictures of a naked person, they should come and tell you.

Talk to your child about how to react if they encounter porn or any online content they are not comfortable with. Good strategies are: turning off the screen, closing the laptop lid or turning over the tablet or phone.

### Teenagers & Porn

Learning about sex is part of growing up. If children do not feel they can ask questions at home or at school, they might go looking for answers online.

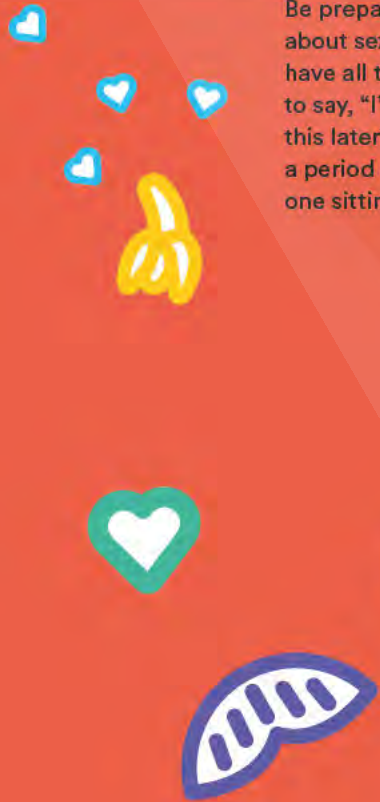
The conversation you have with your teen has to be based on the notion that pornography is not real. It's fantasy. Children and teens can have difficulty understanding this. Without your intervention there is a chance that porn can become their template for physical intimacy. They can also see it as a blueprint for relationships in general.

You need to talk with your child to counter the effects of watching porn. Talk to them about what physical intimacy is in the context of a loving and respectful relationship so that they understand that what is represented on porn sites is not a reflection of real-life relationships.

The most important filter you can give your child is the one between their ears so that they can be critical of the things they come across and develop healthy attitudes and relationships.

Your chat about porn is a good opportunity to talk about consent. Porn gives very misleading messages on the need for consent in intimate relationships. Your child can end up confused or misinformed about the importance of this issue.

Be prepared that talking about porn can lead to questions about sex and relationships. Don't feel under pressure to have all the answers or to respond straight away. It's ok to say, "I'll have a think about that and talk to you about this later". It's a good idea to talk to about this topic over a period of time and not try to cover off everything in one sitting.



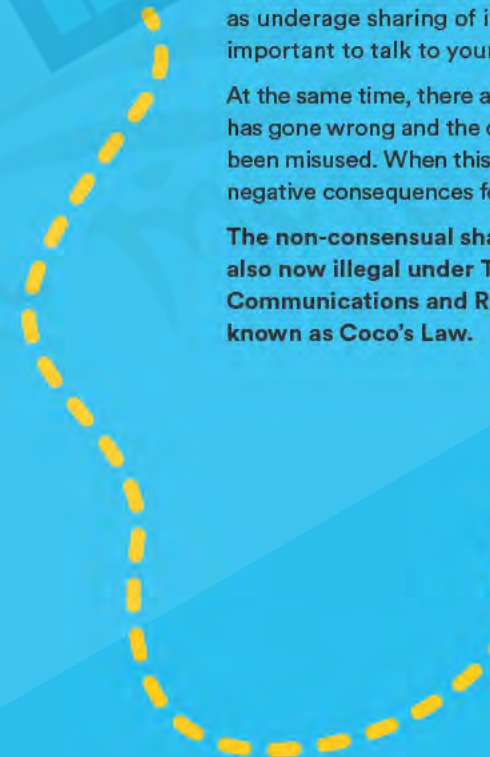
## Talking to your Child about Sexting

For many parents of teens, sexting, the sharing of intimate images, can be a big concern. Talking to your child can be the best way to ease concerns and ensure your child is informed on engaging in healthy, safe and respectful relationships.

There are many reasons why a young person might get involved in sexting; Sexual expression, Communication, Attention/affirmation, Social and peer pressure, Impression management, Coercion/blackmail and revenge, experimental, etc. It also must be said that sexting doesn't necessarily lead to harm. However, as underage sharing of intimate images is illegal it is important to talk to your teen about potential risks.

At the same time, there are plenty of cases where sexting has gone wrong and the content shared in confidence has been misused. When this happens there can be serious, negative consequences for the well-being of those involved.

**The non-consensual sharing of intimate images is also now illegal under The Harassment, Harmful Communications and Related Offences Act 2020 also known as Coco's Law.**





It's important to make your child aware of the risks of sharing online and how to protect them from these risks. Here are a few important talking points for parents:

- Help your child to understand the consequences they could face for sending or forwarding nudes. Make sure they understand that taking, possessing or sending sexting images can be a criminal offence. It can also result in sanctions at school.
- Talk to your child about what to do if they are asked to send images of themselves.
- Remind your child that once an image is sent, they have no control over what happens the image.
- A big part of teenage life is making new friends on and offline. Unfortunately, Irish teens have become victims of webcam blackmail and online extortion. Children should be reminded that not everyone we meet online is who they say they are. It can be easy to create fake profiles and pretend to be someone else on a social network. This is sometimes referred to as 'catfishing'.
- Discuss the importance of being respectful to others online. Children may not understand how harmful sharing intimate images of others can be. Explain that it is a violation of trust and can result in serious harm to the person in the picture and sharing intimate images without consent is also now illegal under *Coco's Law*.
- Peer pressure can play a big part in why teens act and behave in certain ways. You can rehearse different scenarios with them to help them be comfortable with saying no.



## What to do if Intimate Images of your Child are Shared Online?

Firstly, reassure and support your child, this can be a very distressing time for them. It's also important to try and get all the facts before taking action. If intimate images have been shared online without their permission there are a number of actions to consider taking:

The non-consensual sharing of intimate images is now an offence under *Coco's Law*. In addition, if your child is under 18, it is a criminal offence to possess, produce, distribute, transmit, disseminate, post, publish, show or make available by any means sexually explicit material (image, video, pseudo-photograph, drawing, etc.) of a child (person under 18 years of age). It is a criminal act and you should report it to Gardai. You can report it to [Hotline.ie](https://www.hotline.ie), who can help those affected with reporting and removing the content online.

Do you or your child know who has shared the image? If so, contact them and ask them to remove and delete the image(s). You should also check if they have shared the image(s) with anyone else or on any other sites/services.

If possible, keep any evidence of where the image has been shared and who has shared it.

Regardless of age, most social networks also have a policy against intimate image abuse and will remove intimate images if they have been shared without permission. Reporting can normally be done within the network/app settings although it varies across social networks and apps.

This can be a stressful, upsetting time; it may be helpful for your child to talk to a professional or school guidance counsellor about what has happened.

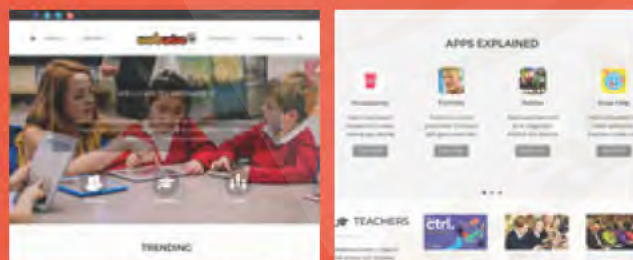
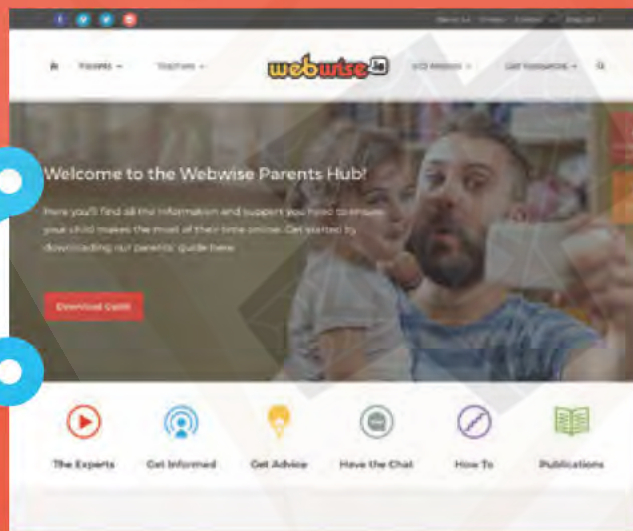


# Where to get more Information and Advice



## Webwise Parents Hub

The Webwise Parents Hub is the key internet safety online access point for parents in Ireland. It provides free advice, information, and resources to ensure that your child makes the most of their time online. Get advice from experts in parenting, education, technology and psychology, access Explainer Guides to popular apps and platforms, How To guides, downloadable resources, and much more. [webwise.ie](http://webwise.ie)



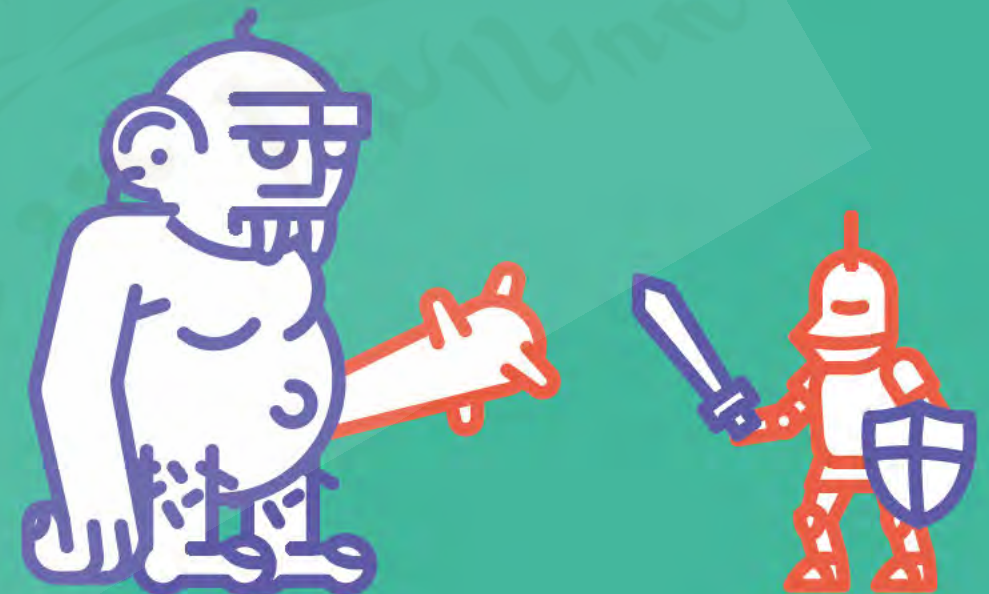
## The Irish Safer Internet Centre (SIC)

The Irish Safer Internet Centre is a partnership of four leading organisations with a mission to make the Internet a better place for children and young people, under the co-ordination of the Department of Justice, Cybercrime Division.

The consortium was appointed over a decade ago by the European Commission as the Safer Internet Centre in Ireland, and is one of 31 Safer Internet Centres in Europe and an integral part of the INSAFE-INHOPE network.

Webwise, Childline, the National Parents Council, and Hotline.ie are the partners in the consortium.

*The Irish SIC vision is a positive and inclusive digital world where children are safe and protected.*



## Helplines: Listening, Supporting & Empowering



Childline, the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children's listening service, and the National Parents Council Primary's helpline both give youngsters and parents a means of talking through their queries or worries with trained staff.

### Childline

Childline is a free and confidential telephone, online and mobile service dedicated to Ireland's under 18s.

It provides teenagers and children with an open and non-judgemental listening service, staffed by professionally trained volunteers.

Totally confidential, Childline takes thousands of calls, emails and texts every week from children all over Ireland who can contact its volunteers anonymously. The service aims to empower, protect and support young people whatever their situation.

Irrespective of a child's problem, even if they just want someone to talk to, Childline's volunteers are ready to listen. It's free. It's non-judgemental. And it's confidential.

### Contact Childline

Call **1800 66 66 66** — 24hrs a day

One to One live chat 10am–4am every day.

Log on to [www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

Text 'Talk' to **50101** — 10am–4am every day

Text 'Bully' to **50101** — 10am–4am every day

Text 'Help' to **50101** — 10am–4am every day

### NPC Primary Helpline

Being a parent is not easy. But help is out there.

The National Parents Council Primary Helpline is a confidential telephone service for parents worried about any aspect of their child's education.

Its trained officers listen, give advice and support in a range of different areas.

Open from Monday and Tuesday between 10am and 4pm, and from Wednesday to Friday between 10am and 5pm, the helpline will deal with any questions or issues you may have.

In the past, worried parents have asked about bullying, school safety and homework issues, and the NPC's trained personnel are ready to take your call whatever the subject.

To contact the NPC, call **01-8874477** or email [helpline@npc.ie](mailto:helpline@npc.ie).

### Report Suspected Illegal Content Online

If you come across content online which you suspect to be illegal like child abuse imagery, always report it to [www.hotline.ie/report](http://www.hotline.ie/report), even when in doubt about someone's age. Always remember: just because you click away it doesn't mean it's gone. Break the cycle of abuse and victimisation, one report at a time.

Hotline.ie (est 1999) is the national centre of expertise combating illegal content online and has been working to reduce the prevalence of criminal content online whilst breaking the cycle of abuse, exploitation and contribute to the prevention of repeat-victimisation.

To report, go to [www.hotline.ie/report](http://www.hotline.ie/report), in four simple steps you can securely and confidentially make a report. You can





remain anonymous or leave your contact details should you wish to receive a report acknowledgement or to be contacted about your query.

Hotline.ie's operational procedures are approved and overseen by the Department of Justice. Hotline.ie's highly skilled and internationally certified Analysts assess every report received and, where content deemed illegal under Irish law is found, action is taken against it. Hotline.ie works closely with law enforcement and international counterparts to ensure such content is removed from the Internet irrespective of where in the world it may be hosted.

While Hotline.ie was set up to combat child sexual abuse imagery and sexual exploitation (e.g. child grooming), you can also report other issues like instances of online racism and incitement to hatred, intimate imagery shared online without the person's consent (also known as intimate image abuse) and financial scams. By reporting to Hotline.ie you can break the cycle and ultimately contribute to a safer digital world.

### Awareness Raising

Webwise is the Irish internet Safety Awareness Centre. It is part of the PDST Technology in Education, which promotes and supports the integration of ICT in teaching and learning in first and second level schools. The PDST Technology in Education is a section of the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). The PDST is a support service of Teacher Education Section, Department of Education and is managed by Dublin West Education Centre.

## Where to find help

### General

#### Barnardos

Barnardos works with vulnerable children and their families in Ireland and campaigns for the rights of all children.

Get in touch: [barnardos.ie](http://barnardos.ie) — 1850 222300

#### Childline

Childline offers a phone service, a text support service (text 'Talk' to 50101) and an online chat service to help support young people. There is also a special text service for young people experiencing bullying (text 'Bully' to 50101).

Get in touch: [childline.ie](http://childline.ie) — 1800 666666

#### Data Protection Commission (DPC)

The Data Protection Commission (DPC) is the national independent authority responsible for upholding the fundamental right of individuals in the EU to have their personal data protected.

Get in touch: [www.dataprotection.ie](http://www.dataprotection.ie)

## Where to find help Mental Health & Well-being

### National Parents Council Primary – Supporting Parents Supporting Children

NPC the national representative organisation for parents of children in primary school. NPC provides a Helpline and Information Service and Parent's face to face and online training courses.

**Get in touch:** [npc.ie](http://npc.ie) — 01 887 4034  
or helpline: 01-887 4477

### SpunOut

SpunOut is a youth-focused website. It aims to promote general well-being and healthy living amongst young people.

**Get in touch:** [spunout.ie](http://spunout.ie)

### Teen-Line Ireland

Teen-Line Ireland is a free phone-support service for teenagers who need someone to talk to.

**Get in touch:** [teenline.ie](http://teenline.ie) — 1800 833634

### Aware

Aware offers depression and related mood-disorder support services in the forms of local support groups, a helpline and various education courses.

**Get in touch:** [aware.ie](http://aware.ie) — 1890 303302

### Headstrong

Headstrong is a non-profit organisation that supports young people's mental health in Ireland through advocacy, research and service development (through the Jigsaw projects).

**Get in touch:** [headstrong.ie](http://headstrong.ie) — 01 4727010

**Get in touch:** [www.mymind.org](http://www.mymind.org) — 076 6801060

### Your Mental Health

This website, developed by the HSE, aims to improve awareness and understanding of mental health and well-being in Ireland.

**Get in touch:** [yourmentalhealth.ie](http://yourmentalhealth.ie)

## Where to find help Eating Disorders

### The National Office for Suicide Prevention

The National Office for Suicide Prevention oversees the implementation of *ReachOut*, coordinates suicide-prevention efforts and speaks with agencies and individuals active in suicide prevention.

**Get in touch:** [nosp.ie](http://nosp.ie) — 01 6201672

### Pieta House

Pieta House is a residential centre for the prevention of self-harm or suicide in Lucan, Co. Dublin. It has outreach centres and centres of excellence around Ireland.

**Get in touch:** [pieta.ie](http://pieta.ie) — 01 6010000

### ReachOut

ReachOut aims to provide quality assured mental-health information and inspiring real-life stories by young people to help other young people get through tough times.

**Get in touch:** [ie.reachout.com](http://ie.reachout.com) — 01 7645666

### Samaritans

Samaritans offers support for people struggling to cope, including those contemplating suicide, through a helpline.

**Get in touch:** [samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org) — 1850 609090

### Bodywhys

Bodywhys supports people affected by eating disorders. It offers confidential support and information services for people affected by eating disorders.

**Get in touch:** [bodywhys.ie](http://bodywhys.ie) — 1890 200444

## Where to find help Gender & Sexuality

### The Switchboard

The Switchboard offers listening, support and information.

**Get in touch:** [theswitchboard.ie](http://theswitchboard.ie) — 01 8721055

### BeLonG To Youth Project

BeLonG To supports lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people in Ireland.

**Get in touch:** [belongto.org](http://belongto.org) — 01 8734184

### Transgender Equality Network Ireland (TENI)

TENI seeks to improve conditions and advance the rights and equality of trans people and their families.

**Get in touch:** [teni.ie](http://teni.ie) — 085 1477166

### LGBT Helpline

The LGBT Helpline provides a listening support and information service for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people as well as their family and friends.

**Get in touch:** [lgbt.ie](http://lgbt.ie) — 1890 929539

## Where to find help Internet Safety

### Hotline.ie

Provides the primary national web-reporting portal where members of the public can securely, confidentially and anonymously report suspected illegal content online.

**Get in touch:** [hotline.ie/report](http://hotline.ie/report)

### Webwise

Department of Education and the European Union's Connecting Europe Facility.

**Get in touch:** [webwise.ie](http://webwise.ie)

### Be Safe Online

A single online access point has been established as part of the gov.ie portal which provides pathways to information on online safety.

**Get in touch:** [gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online](http://gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online)







An Roinn Oideachais  
Department of Education



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