

Supporting your child online

Parents need to discuss the consequences of a negative digital reputation with their children. In order to protect their reputation, both online and offline, young people need to consider how they manage their own and others' messages and images.

- Talk to your children about managing personal information on social networking sites. Encourage them not to put any personal information on their profiles. This includes their phone number, personal email address, home or school addresses, or the name of their school.
- Remind your children that much of what they do online can be made public, and may go beyond the group of friends they intend it to reach. A good general guide is for kids not to post photos that they would not want strangers to see.
- Encourage your children to be careful when they post photos and to consider how what they post might be viewed by others.
- Talk to your children about the potential social, academic, employment and legal implications of posting inappropriate material of themselves or others online. Encourage them to think about who might see the content and what the impact might be, now and in the future.

Remind them to take care with others' digital reputations. They should not post images of others without their permission and should take care with comments about others.

Digital reputation

All internet users have a digital or online reputation, no matter what their age. This reputation is the opinion or view that others have about the user, based on what they say and do online.

For their privacy and safety, it's important for your children and all young people to be aware of where and how their personal information is available on the internet, who can access it, what others are doing with their information and the impression they are leaving for others to find.

Managing the risks

It is imperative that your children are aware of and understand all of the features and terms of use of social networking sites—in particular, how to set their profile to 'private'.

It's also valuable to help them understand that any information they provide online or via SMS can be shared more broadly than they might think. Even if their profile is set to private, they can't control what their friends will do with the information that they post. Encourage your children to think carefully before sharing images or messages online or on their mobile phone.

Help them understand that they may be committing a criminal offence when taking and/or sharing sexual images of themselves or others who are minors. Creating and/or distributing sexual images with minors may constitute the production and/or distribution of child sexual abuse material.

As an adult, be very cautious if you have intercepted any content that may constitute child pornography. Do not interact with the information, forward or share it in any way. Immediately seek guidance from your local police.

