

Keeping Children in Our Care Safe Online



A guide for

Foster Carers and adults who work in fostering

- Identifying the **top six online safety issues relevant to Children in Our Care**
- The Good Ideas are based on the experience of carers and social workers
- There are useful resources to help address the online issues

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Fostering Team and Carers of the
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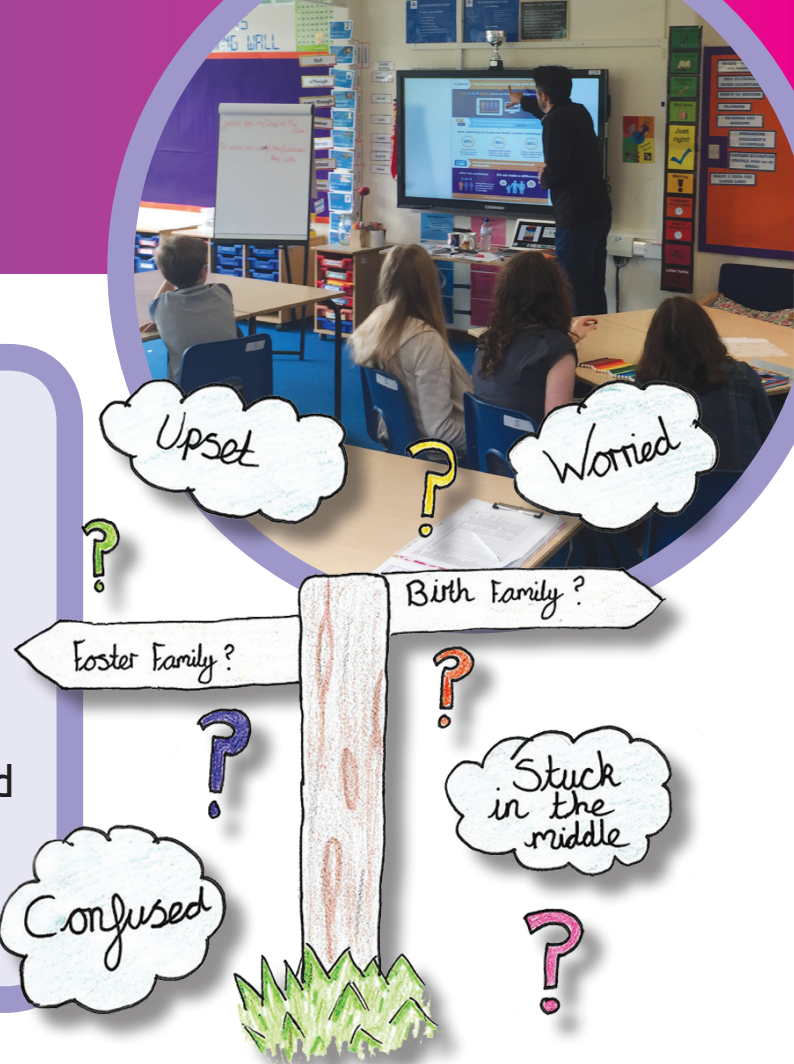


TechSafe

powered by excite-ed™

TechSafe have produced a series of online safety information apps with children in school and community settings.

They are packed with useful information and resources to support adults to keep children and young people (CYP) safer online.



These apps are all **free** to download from Google Play or the App Store





Issue 1. Contact with my Birth Family

This is a sensitive and emotive issue unique to each child. It can be an agonising and conflicting issue for CYP. Keep this in mind as you plan and review agreements. Always consider the CYP's context. Best practice should aim for transparency and trust.



Issues	Good Ideas	Resources to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media is another way of a birth family contacting children and young people (CYP) • This contact can be unsettling for CYP • When siblings are in care and video call contact is allowed for one child but not the other it can be distressing • It can bring further risk & danger • Contact can exacerbate a child's mental health issues • The influence of parents on CYP can cause disruption and/or a breakdown of the fostering relationship • Contact can cause a breakdown of trust, facilitate manipulation, prompt excuses, cause deception, secrecy & guilt tripping • Families may ask for pictures and record conversations • Allegations can be made against the placement • It can cause split loyalty for the CYP between their carers and birth family • There is a risk of carers information being disclosed to the birth family • Families sometimes give tablets & phones to CYP prior to placement and tell them not to tell carers • Contact is not necessarily a bad thing as it promotes the CYP's wider family network eg: when siblings split up • Guarding your own privacy as a carer is important • Use of location services can be high risk • Blocking is ineffective – parents will buy another phone • Unplanned/unsupervised contact with CYP • There are risks of abuse associated with access to Facebook, photo albums and other social media sites when privacy is not used 	<p>How can contact be controlled/managed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help CYP understand why contact is restricted • All parties should be involved in the contact plan for everyone to know what the common agreement is and what the boundaries are • If inappropriate contact happens consider reviewing the contact plan arrangements • Stay curious to be aware and alert to this inappropriate contact happening • Assess and note changes in your child's behaviour • Consider keeping open contact by writing to their parents instead • Involve the social worker in the contact with their family • Support CYP to have a good relationship with their social worker, explaining why they are in care • Use parent controls and privacy settings on all devices, social media and gaming apps • Good communication is vital to build positive relationships and understand the child's feelings to avoid them making inappropriate contact with their birth family • It can be isolating for the CYP in care so work as a wider network around the child • Assess your CYP's online identity for risk and make it less easy for the CYP to be found online using privacy settings and controls • Teaching digital resilience – CYP want to control their use • Partner with CYP to monitor their social media use • Don't charge electronic devices in bedrooms at night • Set times for access to WiFi at home depending on age of CYP 	<p>Guide to Setting parental controls</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/</p> <p>Parental Control Apps</p> <p>https://www.techradar.com/news/the-best-free-parental-control-software</p> <p>https://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-parental-control-apps,review-2258.html</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/sharenting-tips-for-parents/</p> <p>Social Media tips</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/social-media/</p> <p>Tracking and Location sharing</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/tech-guide/guide-to-tech-using-tracking-and-location-settings-on-kids-devices/</p> <p>Privacy and identity theft</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/privacy-identity/</p> <p>Setting up children's devices safely</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/guidance/e-safety-checklist-getting-your-kids-tech-devices-set-up-safe/</p> <p>What kind of online safety parent carer are you?</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/digital-resilience-toolkit/digital-resilience-toolkit-type-parent/</p> <p>NSPCC Share Aware</p> <p>https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/</p> <p>NSPCC Social Media Guide</p> <p>https://www.net-aware.org.uk/#</p> <p>https://www.bbc.com/ownit</p> <p>Online Safety guides</p> <p>https://www.vodafone.com/content/digital-parenting.html#</p>

Issue 2. Engaging my teenager with online safety

Issues	Good Ideas	Resources to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teens know more about their tech than us • Teens think they know everything when they are naive • It's tough to keep up with the pace of change in digital tech • Teens spend too much time online • There is a lack of confidence in adults v over-confidence in teens • There is a growing disengagement in face to face interaction • Many teens are using a fake age online to use social media • Trust is challenging - especially with a short term placement • Teens are not realising that images they post go worldwide • Some teens play the carer and CSW off against each other • Many lie about what they are doing online • Drumming up large bills gaming can be an issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard as it is, keep communicating • Get to know how your YP uses their tech – what are they into? • Talk about tech, show an interest, ask them to show you, help you with tech • Have a home internet use agreement including conduct in the home and that the purpose is to keep them safe and not spoil their fun • Use tech in a communal area eg: gaming consoles • Regularly check parental controls have not been amended • Adopt a 'Safer Carer' policy approach to online safety in each placement • Find out age limits for different social media • Check who they are talking to online – do they know them face to face? If not how can they prove they are genuine. • Monitor spending for online purchases • Not shutting YP down – keep things open • Use PEGI to research game content • Show an interest in what they are doing even when you are not interested • Teaching and training them online safety • Teach them what adults are worried about • Get them to teach us about online safety – empower them • Use real online safety issues to start discussions • Build up trust so that they can talk to you knowing that you don't want to ban them but negotiate. That your motivation is to help them stay safe • Use tech in front of carers as a natural part of family life 	<p>https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/14plus/ https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/digital-resilience-toolkit/digital-resilience-toolkit-14year-olds/ https://www.bbc.com/ownit</p> <p>Tracking and Location sharing https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/tech-guide/guide-to-tech-using-tracking-and-location-settings-on-kids-devices/ https://www.commonsemmedia.org/research/social-media-social-life-2018</p> <p>Online reputation https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-reputation/</p> <p>Mental Health https://www.internetmatters.org/hub/question/social-media-obstacle-childs-mental-health/ https://parentzone.org.uk/dove-self-esteem-project</p> <p>Online Bullying https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/stop-speak-support-parent-advice/</p> <p>Building confidence and self-esteem https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9HocoOVVUDY</p> <p>Self-harm https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/self-harm/</p> <p>Age restrictions advice https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/blog/age-restrictions-social-media-services</p> <p>Gaming content https://pegi.info</p> <p>Exploitation and Grooming https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-grooming/ https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/Concerned-about-your-child/</p> <p>Online Pornography https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-pornography/</p> <p>Removing harmful online content https://www.iwf.org.uk</p> <p>Advice for tackling Teen Loneliness on Tech https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/tackling-loneliness-with-technology-expert-tips/</p> <p>ThinkuKnow – National Crime Agency support for parents https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/</p> <p>Online Safety guides https://www.vodafone.com/content/digital-parenting.html#</p>



Issue 3. When I am gaming

Issues	Good Ideas	Resources to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How long they play for It can be addictive and cause poor concentration due to lack of sleep which can affect school performance It can cause social isolation through lack of contact with others & limited social interaction will impact on social development When gaming dominates CYP neglect homework, other jobs & other activities When children are of greatly differing ages in the home which increases the risk of younger children becoming exposed to inappropriate gaming content There can be financial loss and exploitation through game purchases including gaming apps. Playing online with strangers/people claiming to be children Playing with strangers risks sexual exploitation by grooming CYP playing violent games aimed at an older age range Being bullied or threatened when playing Meeting the gamer stranger in real life Self-harm risk, including suicide The impact the game has on the child and their behaviour which can often become aggressive and rude CYP can be drawn into the character of the game which has a negative influence on their behaviour, values and relationships CYP believes they're playing with their friends but in reality the child gives the other player personal info first which is then used against them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always stay curious & interested Set time limits Use parental controls to ensure CYP can only access age appropriate games Use Wi-Fi restrictions at night Play in a communal area to monitor interactions, content and behaviour Use a verbal code online with a player to confirm it really is their friend Save pocket money to purchase games and in game purchases Keep up to date with the latest popular games using reliable gaming info sites Keep devices out of bedrooms at night Check who CYP are playing with – use a friends only approach (not friends of friends unless you know them face to face) Play as well – if you're an interested gamer Have game/device/screen free day when you play other games together Earn time to play a game 	<p>TechSafe Gaming app Family Gaming Info https://www.askaboutgames.com BBC Own It! https://www.bbc.com/ownit Game ratings and info https://pegi.info In game purchases https://pegi.info/page/game-purchases Guide to Setting parental controls on gaming devices https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/entertainment-search-engines/ Roblox Parental Controls https://corp.roblox.com/parents/ NSPCC Share Aware https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/ Online Bullying https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/cyberbullying/stop-speak-support-parent-advice/</p> 

Issue 4. Online safety issues with children who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Issues	Good Ideas	Resources to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These CYP are highly challenging, testing the patience & knowledge for carers • The type of SEND affects how you handle and manage situations • It is very challenging when dealing with CYP with undiagnosed SEND • Their emotional maturity is most often different to their actual age • Their vulnerability has to be treated on a case by case basis • Past experiences can influence vulnerability due to child's previous journey and experience of why they're in care • Safety measures can be easily side lined • There is a high risk of Radicalisation • CYP are less able to recognise online dangers (ASD, ADHD) • Their level of understanding can be hard to gauge • There are addictive tendencies • There is a higher risk of exploitation, scamming, bullying, • Does the child with SEND recognise when they are being exploited? What methods can be used to help them recognise this? • When they are given attention understanding that strangers/friends may actually be manipulating them • Managing understanding between CYP who do and don't have SEND • The vulnerabilities of the child with SEND who deals with situations unpredictably • Structure, routine, boundaries for going online are needed in the new placements • Issues become more pronounced when enter placement • Don't let children take control – they can be fast to access or hack sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always stay curious & interested • Supervision is key • Use parental controls with restrictions in place on all devices • Recognise their ability and apply appropriate control measures • Relationship building carer/child to allow for trust and transparency • Training at their level • Restricting the age when they start having a phone. • Accept that it may be inappropriate for them to have a phone if they are unable to use it responsibly due to the nature of their educational need • Consider trying a recycled mobile with Wifi and parental controls • Carers should resist the pressure to allow their CYP to have the digital tech and apps their peers have • Carer charges CYP's phone at night • Use tech in communal areas eg: gaming consoles • Play games with educational outcomes • Have tech rewards and consequences • Provide more creative/visual awareness programs to educate children • With a Section 20 work with your Social Worker on agreements with birth parents, regarding phones and tablet presents for CYP so all are aware of the risks • Review regularly how motivation techniques are working regarding online safety and time 	<p>Developing Digital Resilience Toolkit</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/digital-resilience-toolkit/</p> <p>Guide to Setting parental controls</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/</p> <p>http://www.childnet.com/resources/star-toolkit</p> <p>Guide to online safety for children with learning disabilities</p> <p>https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2016-11/Internet-Safety-web-2016.pdf</p> <p>https://parentzone.org.uk/article/learning-disabilities-autism-and-internet-safety</p> <p>https://www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/learning-disabilities-autism-and-internet-safety-a-parents-guide/</p> <p>https://parentinfo.org/article/learning-disabilities-autism-and-internet-safety</p> <p>NSPCC Social Media Guide</p> <p>https://www.net-aware.org.uk/#</p> <p>NSPCC Share Aware</p> <p>https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/</p>

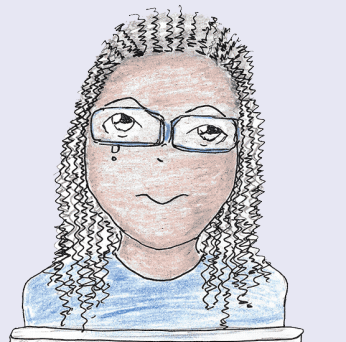


Issue 5. Approaches to online safety with Care Leavers

Issues	Good Ideas	Resources to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition to adulthood- YP need to understand the need to take responsibility for their own actions online • Advisors are needed for longer – no one is keeping an eye on them long enough • They are vulnerable to inappropriate contact with their birth family • They can legally access inappropriate sites • There is a risk of addiction to gambling, porn & gaming, being scammed, duped, exploited • The need for people to show YP things they should be doing to stay safe online • Many want to show they are older than they are • Knowing how to control their money online • Looking at their credit rating – the only way to obtain a loan • The risk of getting into debt • Using debit cards for travel without traceability • Risks of downloading apps linked to their money • Laundering using their account by others as they are vulnerable • Cash flipping – identifying scams • The associated vulnerabilities of sending selfies and nudes • Understanding that sexting with an under 18 girlfriend, boyfriend, friend is illegal • Mental Health issues and how they engage with social media online • Having a phone contract to be able to access a lot of things • A care leaver doesn't need to ask to make decisions as they're an adult – but they are still vulnerable • Stalking, online harassment, peer pressure • Coercion using social media • Peer pressure to use certain sites to 'fit in' • Lack of maturity – they think they know everything & won't listen to anyone • Is there a difference in girl/ boy online issues? Eg: body image, coercion through gaming • Accepting friend requests from strangers • Feeling they know more than their carers • They exhibit a sense of entitlement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication • Include in their Post 16 Pathway Plan - online safety training from an older care leaver • Ensure they have good online education before they leave care • Research to be able to give them facts and statistics • Work on it together • Ask care leavers to help you manage your parental controls for younger children in the house to encourage a sense of responsibility and raise their awareness of the importance to protect themselves online • Provide digital security awareness • Learn to manage using cash from a young age • Take responsibility for their own money by using a card at their earliest age supported by carer • Online banking training at an early stage • Help them to think about who is watching their posts • Learn from other's mistakes 	<p>Work with your local finance education provider.</p> <p>When writing your YP's Pathway Plan – ensure online safety training provision is included</p> <p>Guide to Setting Parental Controls https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/</p> <p>Radicalisation advice https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/radicalisation/ https://educateagainsthate.com</p> <p>Exploitation and Grooming https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-grooming/</p> <p>Online Pornography https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/online-pornography/</p> <p>Removing harmful online content https://www.iwf.org.uk</p>



Issue 6. Managing online safety with children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Issues	Good Ideas	Resources to help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carers don't understand what they are saying or who to or what they are searching when online Vulnerable to radicalisation Misinterpretation can lead to conflict with other children Can be bullied due to lack of English skills Cultural differences – some things are acceptable in some cultures and not in others Have difficulty expressing welfare concerns Social media groups – can't monitor what is being discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food is a common language – discuss issues over meals Fostering team give specific EAL online safety support to carers Have interpreter present at online safety training and to express concerns Use body language and visuals to communicate approval/disapproval Learn some basic online safety words in their language Use Google Translate Use visual images to explain risks Include online safety in discussions when liaising with the network around the child to know what is going on with them as fully as possible Do YP disappear when calls come in? Follow this up if they do. Encourage YP to communicate in English and improve language skills 	<p>Radicalisation support</p> <p>https://www.internetmatters.org/issues/radicalisation/</p> <p>https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/dedicated-helplines/protecting-children-from-radicalisation/</p> <p>https://educateagainsthate.com</p> <p>EAL tips</p> <p>https://www.parenta.com/2015/01/06/6-tips-to-support-children-with-english-as-an-additional-language-in-your-setting/</p> 



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