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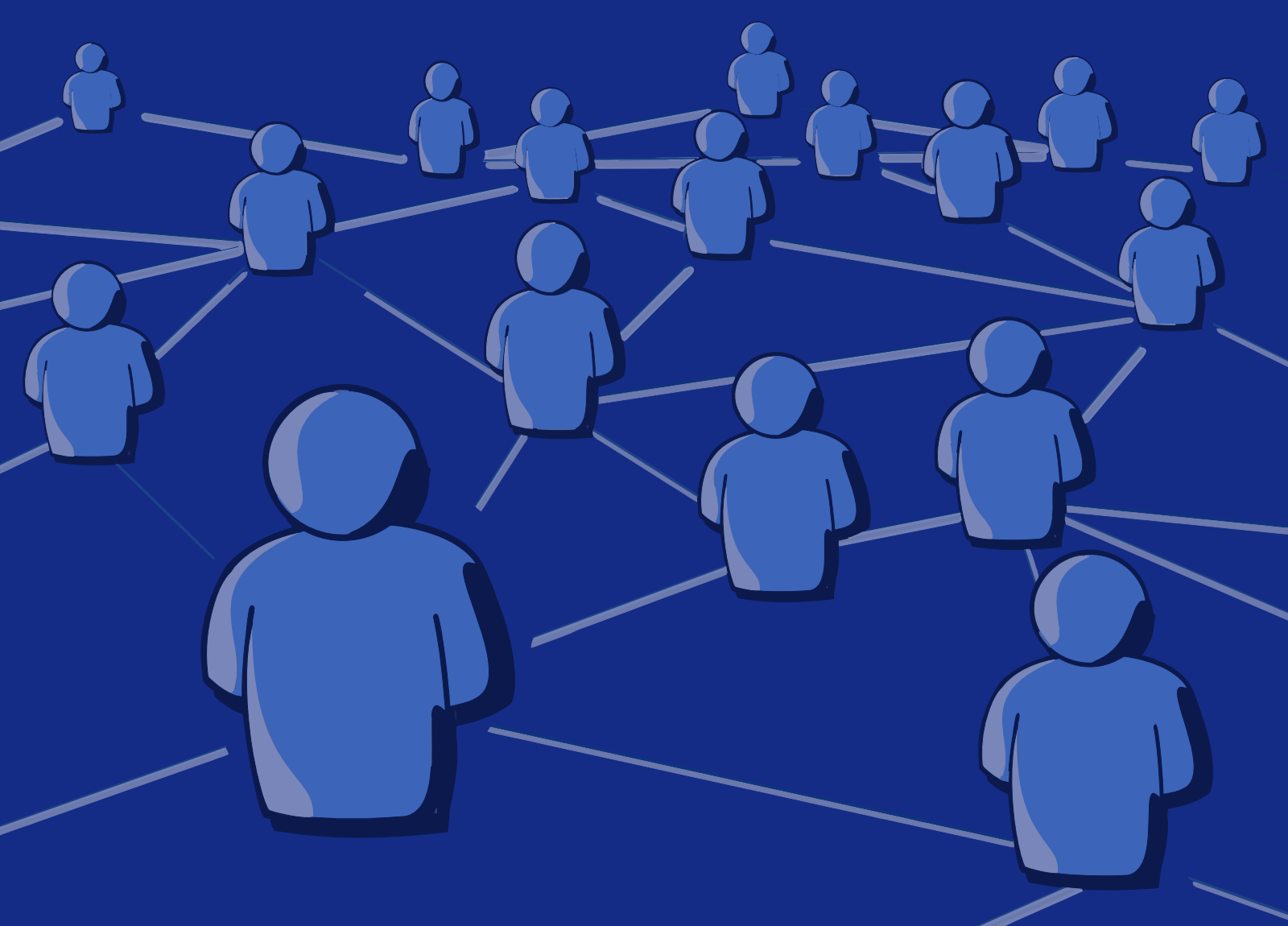
Parents' toolkit for teens' digital education

HOW TO BE SAFE ONLINE

Online safety matters

While teens use digital technology for many positive purposes – learning, connecting with friends, seeking health information, and self-expression – it's vital that they learn to assess online content, practice respectful online behaviuor, and understand how to protect themselves from potential harm.



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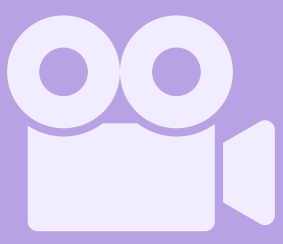
There are 4 main kinds of online risks for teenagers

Content risks

These risks include seeing material that's upsetting, disgusting or otherwise uncomfortable.



Contact risks

These risks include adults posing as children online, strangers who persuade teenagers to send them photos or videos of themselves or meet them in real life, and online scammers.

Conduct risks

Conduct risks include behaving in inappropriate, hurtful or disrespectful ways or being the victim of this kind of behaviour.

Contract risks

Contract risks include signing up to unfair contracts, subscriptions or terms and conditions that teenagers aren't aware of or don't fully understand.

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Supporting teens online

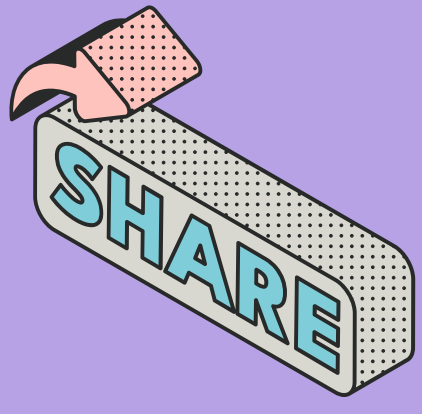
SAFETY CHECKLIST

Stay involved

Keep talking and stay interested in what they're doing. Don't be afraid to bring up challenging issues like inappropriate content, sexting, pornography and cyberbullying.

Talk about online reputation

Let them know that anything they upload, email or message could stay around forever online. Remind them they should only do things online that they wouldn't mind you, their teacher or a future employer seeing. Get them to think about creating a positive digital footprint.



Keep their information private

Your child can set privacy settings on most social networking sites so that only close friends can search for them, tag them in a photograph or share what they've posted. Talk to them about their personal information, how it can be misused and how they can also take ownership of it.

Show you trust them

If you can afford to, give them a small allowance that they can use for spending online so they can download apps, music and films for themselves, from places you agree together.

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Don’t give in to pressure

Remind them how important it is not to give in to peer pressure to send inappropriate comments or images. Address them to relevant services to help deal with it.

Stay safe

Use safe settings on all mobile devices but be aware that if your child is accessing the internet using public WiFi, filters to block inappropriate content may not be active.

Be responsible

Talk to your teenager about being responsible when they’re online. They often feel they can say things online that they wouldn’t say face-to-face. Teach them to always have respect for themselves and others online.

TEACH SOME SIMPLE RULES

- Make sure they know how to **block abusive comments** and report content that worries them.
- Teach them to **respect others online** and think about comments before they post them and discuss how easily comments made online can be misinterpreted.
- **Don’t arrange to meet people in real life** that they’ve only talked to online.
- Advise them to **use secure and legal sites** to download music and games to avoid risks associated with streaming content from unauthorised sites.
- **When using the internet for homework**, make sure they use information appropriately
- **Check attachments and pop-ups for viruses** before they click or download anything.

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Resources

1. [Online safety tips for parents of teens - Internet Matters]

2. [Online safety for teens (14+): Guidance for parents and carers - Internet Matters]

3. [How to talk about tough topics - Internet Matters]

4. [10 tips teens can stay safe online - Unicef]

5. [Resources for 11- 19 year olds - UK Safer Internet Centre]

6. [How To Be A Good Digital Parent Toolkit - Family Online Safety Institute]