

Parent & Carer Companion Guide

Navigating Negativity

Introduction

As the world becomes more reliant on technology, it's important for children to grow up understanding how the online world works and what positive interactions look like. Digital Matters is designed to help children navigate online issues in a way that allows them to take risks and explore consequences without harm.

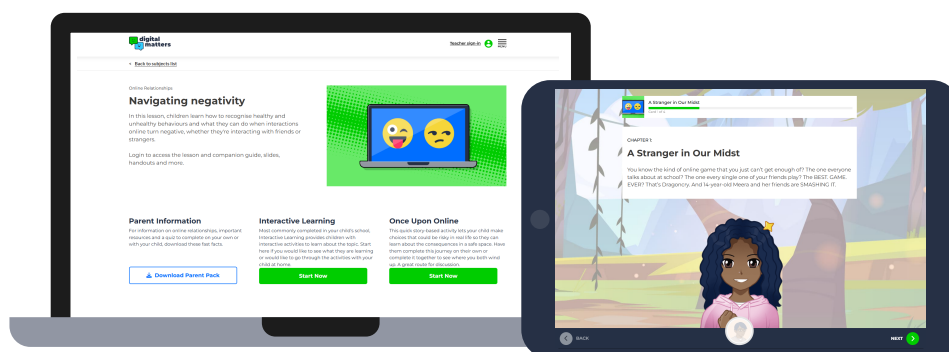
The app is divided into two sections that help your child develop their understanding of each online safety topic.

The first is **Interactive Learning**, which is designed for use in the classroom. It features a range of quiz-based questions to encourage children to think about and discuss key points in the module.

The second is **Once Upon Online**, a story-based activity where your child has to make choices to move

the story forward. Users receive instant feedback on how their decisions impact the characters, helping children to understand that what they do online has real world consequences. The story allows them to make choices just to see where they go without putting themselves in harm's way.

Digital Matters is a great way to explore online safety in a realistic and engaging manner.



Take Home

As a part of the lesson, your child's teacher may assign take-home work to consolidate their learning. Teachers may choose from the following activities or may have their own activity for children to do.

Option 1: Your child might show you a printout of their Once Upon Online journey. With your help, they may be asked to consider what other choices the characters may have made and how those choices would have led to different results. Because the Once Upon Online story only allows children to select one of two choices, it's important to discuss other possibilities. It's unlikely that in real life children will only have two choices.

Option 2: Your child may share their Once Upon Online journey printout with you. There are also a selection of reflection questions for children to consider once they complete their journey. They can then discuss their journey and these questions with you. At home, you may want to do the journey on your own to see what ending you get and to compare the choices you each made. You may also wish to complete the journey a second time with your child and discuss the potential outcomes for each decision point.

Online Interactions Fast Facts

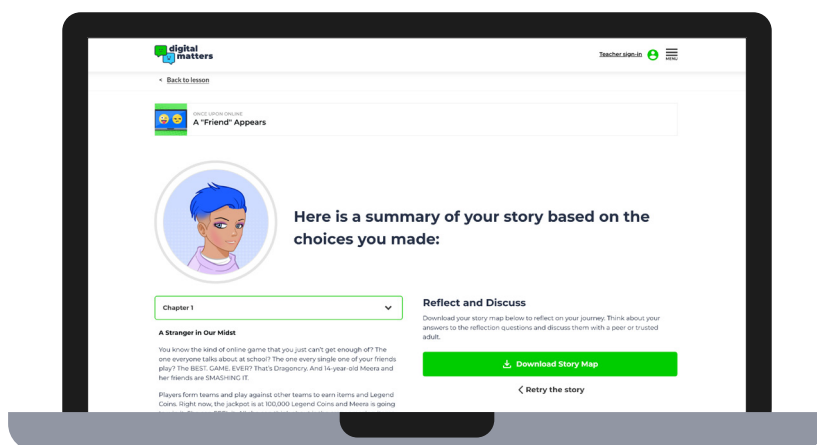
When discussing online interactions with students, the following statistics may be useful:

- 1 in 5 UK children aged 9-12 say they've been contacted by a stranger online.
- Around 6 in 10 say they play games online against others.
- 39% of 9-10-year-olds and 66% of 11-12s say they use messaging apps like WhatsApp and Snapchat, which have age minimums of 13 years old.

Source: Internet Matters Pulse, November 2025

- Many children use online games to talk and connect with friends outside of school.
- 32% of 10-12-year-olds play games with or against someone they don't know, people from contacting them
- 30% report using the in-game chat to talk with people they don't know.
- Over 1 in 10 uk children say that someone has said something nasty/hurtful to them through an online game.

Source: Ofcom Children and Parents Media Use and Attitudes report 2025



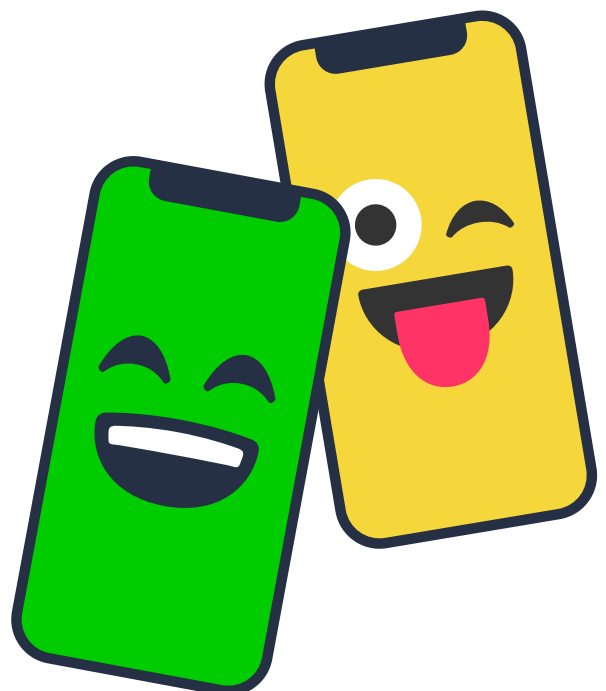
Online Interactions Quiz

How much do you know about online interactions?

Keep your child's engagement with the lesson going by competing against each other on the quiz below. Who can score the highest?

Once finished, check out the answers at the end of the document to see how you did before learning a little more about each one.

1. Which of the below is a POSITIVE and HEALTHY online behaviour?
 - a. complimenting someone's gameplay
 - b. liking a photo of someone's art
 - c. politely disagreeing
 - d. all of these
2. True or false? Talking to strangers online is always harmful. T / F
3. If a child is uncomfortable speaking to their parent or carer about unhealthy online behaviours, where else could they go?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. What does 'flaming' mean?
 - a. personally attacking someone's appearance
 - b. stopping someone's messages
 - c. sending someone repeated messages to annoy them
 - d. sending aggressive messages to one person online
5. How might negative behaviour affect someone online?
 - a. they might not want to go online
 - b. it might bring friends closer together
 - c. the behaviour might build confidence
 - d. none of these



Recommended Resources

This list of resources will help you learn more about managing children's interactions with others online so that you can be prepared for any issues that might come up.

Internet Matters

[Online grooming advice hub](#)

Advice on how to help children navigate their online worlds safely when it comes to interacting with strangers.

[Privacy & identity theft advice hub](#)

As children communicate with strangers online, it's important for them to be aware of the dangers and how they might be targeted, putting their privacy at risk.

[Social media advice hub](#)

Advice on how children interact with social media, including tips on how to interact appropriately with people online.

[Online games advice hub](#)

Advice on how children play games with others, including guidance on the types of games they play and tips for keeping them safe.

[Online scams: Facts & advice](#)

Explore how scammers target children in online spaces, including games, and how it might not always be for financial gain.

[You, your games and your friends](#)

A guide for young people, designed to help them recognise if something isn't right online and when it's time to get help.

[BBC Bitesize: Relationships](#)

Advice on healthy relationships, including some information on online relationships.

[CBBC: Help me out - relationships](#)

A resource that provides general information about positive and negative relationships, which can be used offline or online.

[Mind: Online mental health - how can I keep relationships healthy online?](#)

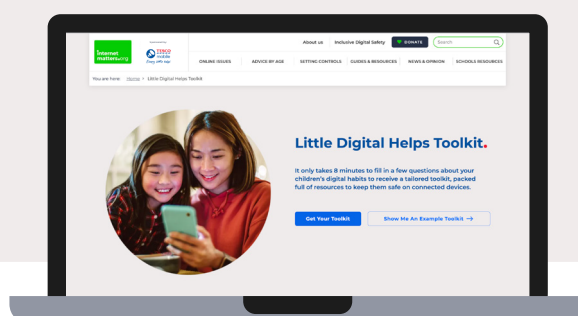
Although not necessarily directed towards children, this resource offers good advice when it comes to online relationships and mental health.

Little Digital Helps Toolkit

Stay on top of your child's online safety

Fill in a few questions about your children's digital habits to receive a tailored toolkit, packed full of resources to keep them safe on connected devices.

[CREATE YOUR TOOLKIT](#)



Answers to the online interactions quiz

See how you did on the online interactions quiz. Discussing the answers with your child will help them to consolidate the information they learnt from the lesson. These conversations are vital to keeping your child safe online.

- 1. The answer is d - all of these!** Positive behaviour should never tear someone down or make them feel unsafe. When you disagree with someone online, it can be easy to behave negatively because they are behind a screen and their reaction can't be seen. However, using positive and neutral language to engage in conversation about the disagreement is far more effective and positive.
- 2. The answer is false!** While there is always going to be risk associated with communicating with others online, this will not always lead to harm. Offline, the same principles apply – not everyone you speak with is going to have your best interests at heart, but plenty will. Because we can't see who we're talking to online, there is a concern that they are dangerous. However, this just means you should approach online conversations with caution. Use positive language and healthy behaviours to communicate, keep personal information private and know how to report or block people who make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.
- 3. Answers may vary** but could include getting advice from:
 - **Childline:** Children can speak with a counsellor for advice and support.
 - **CEOP:** If a child is involved in sexual exploitation online, you can report this behaviour here.
 - Speaking with the Designated Safeguard Lead, Head of Year or other trusted teacher.
- 4. The answer is d - sending aggressive messages to one person online!** Flaming is a negative and unhealthy online behaviour that targets one person. These messages are usually aggressive and offensive. If your child is flamed online, they should block the user and report the messages to the platform. Most will not accept this type of behaviour. If your child knows the person who is flaming them (e.g. they are from school), then it is important to make the school aware of the bullying to ensure the behaviour doesn't continue offline.
- 5. The answer is a - they may not want to go online!** Just like bullying behaviours offline might keep children from wanting to go to school, unhealthy and negative behaviours online may keep them off their favourite games or platforms. Have regular conversations with them to check in on their online lives, and take action if you notice their behaviour has changed without apparent reason.