

Parent & Carer Companion Guide

ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS MODULE

Introduction to Healthy Behaviours Online

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. The Digital Matters app 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. As a parent, you can also make use of the Interactive Learning section to help introduce your child to the topics.

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.

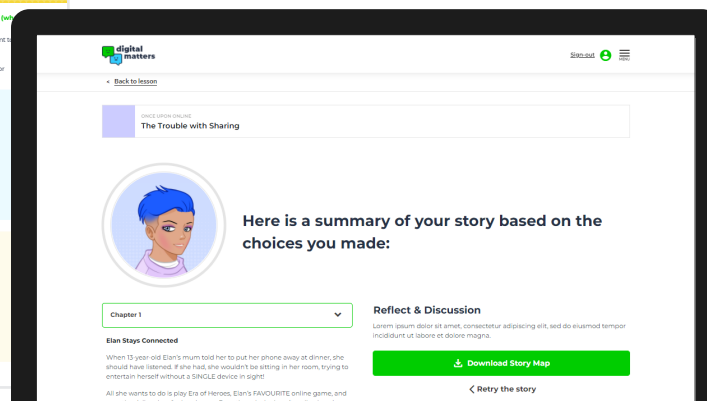
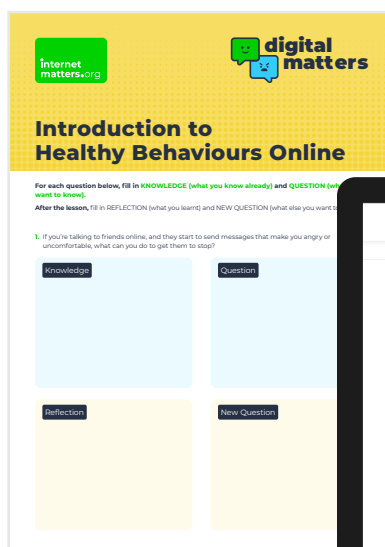
Online Relationships

Fast facts you need to know

Use these facts to have informed conversations about the topic with your child:

- $\frac{1}{3}$ of children aged 12-15 report being approached by a stranger online who wants to be their friend
- 57% of children aged 5-15 play online games against someone they know
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of children in this group report playing online against people they don't know
- children report spending off-time online because their friends are doing the same; it's a way to stay connected
- boys are more likely to chat to people they don't know online than girls (81% vs 66%)
- only 41% of children contacted by strangers say they have reported or blocked these people from contacting them

Source: [Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2020/21 \(Ofcom\)](#)



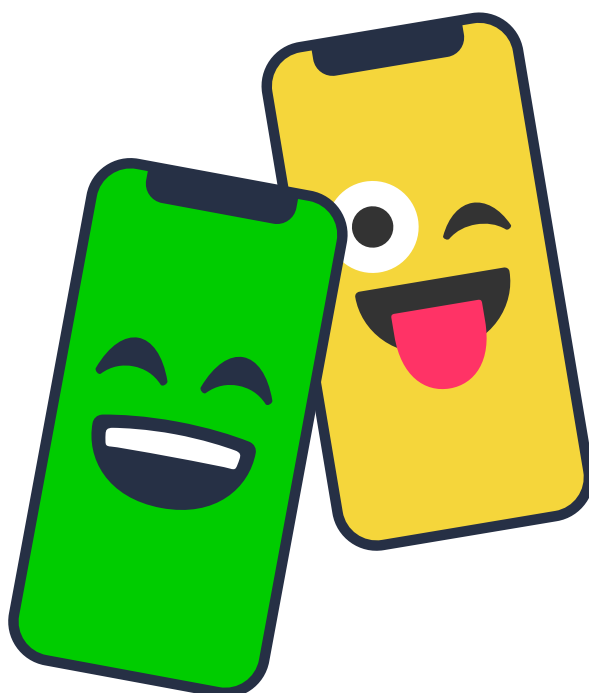
Online Relationships Quiz

How much do you know about online relationships?

Keep your child's engagement with the module 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. disagreeing with understanding and manners
 - 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 friends 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 personal information online so that you can be prepared for online relationship issues that might come up.

Internet Matters

[Exploring the relationship between vulnerable children and online](#)

Some vulnerable children are up to seven times more likely to meet particular dangers over the internet than their non-vulnerable peers. View the online report.

[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.

[Managing online stranger danger and digital relationships with kids – a parent's story](#)

Learning how to interact online can be a steep learning curve for children taking their first steps into the online world. Mum of four Laura Hitchcock shares her experiences helping her children navigate stranger danger and digital relationships.

[Tackling online hate and trolling](#)

This guide covers the negative behaviours of hate and trolling. Learn how to support your child if they are affected by or demonstrate this behaviour.

[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.

[Childnet: Healthy Relationships](#)

This lesson and accompanying talking heads films explores the topic of healthy relationships 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.

Answers to the Online Relationships Quiz

See how you did on the online relationships quiz. Discussing the answers with your child will help them to consolidate the information they learnt from the module. 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 health 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.
 - **Childnet:** Children can explore different topics and learn where to get advice or support from.
 - **CEOP:** If a child is involved in sexual exploitation online, you can report this behaviour here.
 - Speaking with the Designated Safeguard Lead, Head Teacher 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 may be 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.