# Parent & Carer Companion Guide

**SELF-IMAGE AND IDENTITY MODULE**

Introduction to Positive Self-Image 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 platform is designed to help children navigate online issues in a way that allows them to take risks and explore consequences without harm.**

The platform 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 this section to help introduce your child to the topics at home.

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.**
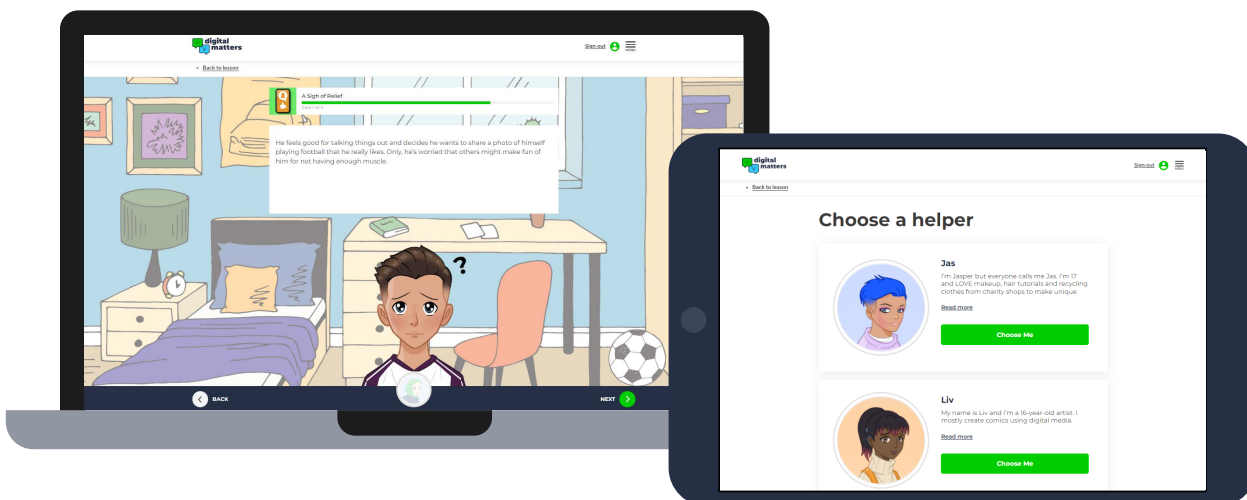
# Take Home

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.

# Self-image & social media

## Fast facts you need to know

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

- 42% of children aged 6-17 say c**elebrity or influencer endorsement** is a big factor behind shopping decisions

- On a real sponsored social media post with the #ad hashtag, 41% of 12-17s thought the influencer was **promoting the product** because they liked it

- 89% of children aged 8-17 feel **pressure to be popular** on social media platforms

- 38% of 13-17s say that being online helps them **feel better about themselves***

- Young people are concerned about the **impact of idealised lives** celebrities and influencers share online**

- During Covid-19 lockdowns, there was a 6% increase in young people viewing content about bulking up the body and purchasing **potentially dangerous products** online to help with this***

*Children and parents: media use and attitudes report 2022 (Ofcom)*
**Our Voice Matters: young people's views on the Online Safety Bill*
****Locked down and online (Cybersurvey 2020-21)*
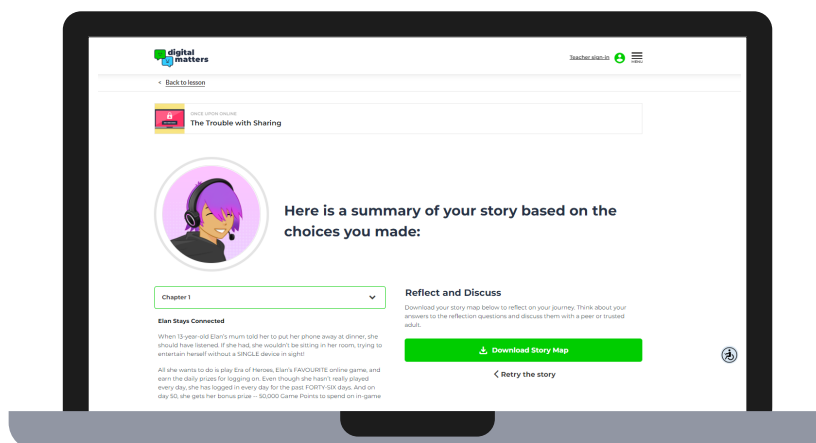
# Positive Self-Image Quiz

## How much do you know about self-image and identity?

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. How could someone's negative self-image affect their online identity?

   a. they might not show their true identity

   b. they might feel like they need to change something about themselves

   c. they might feel pressured to look or live like their favourite online creators

   d. all of these

2. Kai is really self-conscious about their tall height; they don't like standing out. What is this an example of?

   a. self-image

   b. identity

3. What are some ways content creators change their online identities? Choose all that apply.

   a. editing photos and videos

   b. getting paid to promote products

   c. persuading their followers to take an action

   d. dressing or acting differently than they do offline

4. If someone is struggling with their self-image online, what is the best thing they could do?

   a. talk to a trusted adult (parent/carer, other family member, teacher, counsellor, etc.)

   b. edit their photos or videos to make themselves feel better

   c. stop going online

   d. delete all their social media apps

5. Discuss with your child: Who do they watch or follow online? Why? Do they do anything that could make someone feel negatively about themselves? What actions could your child take if they ever feel pressured online by the content creator?

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# Recommended Resources

This list of resources will help you learn more about managing your child's self-image so that you can be prepared from any wellbeing issues related to identity and self-esteem that might come up.

## Internet Matters

### Tips to promote positive body image
Empower children to challenge the idealised images found online and in media with expert advice and tips for developing a positive body image.

### Online Identity Series
Child psychologist and Internet Matters ambassador Dr Linda Papadopoulos leads this series for parents and carers to help children and young people build an online identity that reflects them positively as they become more active online.

### Self-harm hub: advice and guidance
Digital self-harm takes many shapes and could include posting images and selfies to provoke negative response. Additionally, idealistic content can lead children to take extreme measures. Our advice hub can help support your understanding.

### Help children with positive self-image and identity
Online safety expert and Kidscape CEO Lauren Seager-Smith explores how to help children love and embrace themselves to foster a positive self-image.

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### BBC Own It: Your online identity
Explore a variety of videos and resources for children to help them learn about and build self-esteem and confidence online.

### Childline: My body
Articles and advice to help children learn about self-image and health, including how to stay active, how to feel positive about their appearance and ways to build self-esteem.

### Understood: The importance of positive self-esteem for kids
General information about self-esteem, including how kids build it, so you are prepared to support their needs and development.

### Young Minds: Self-esteem
A guide to help support young people with the pressures and obstacles they may face that could affect their self-image, complete with different useful resources.

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# Answers to the Positive Self-Image Quiz

See how you did on the self-image quiz. Discussing the answers with your child will help them 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!** If someone feels negative about some part of their identity, they might not want to show that part of themselves to others. They may also feel the need to change that part of themselves, possibly by imitating those content creators they look up to online. That's why it's important to talk regularly with your child about their online lives, not just when an issue comes up; this will help guide them when something does happen.

2. **The answer is A - self-image!** Simply put, someone's self-image is how they feel about their identity. While there is a lot more that goes into it, this explanation is a good starting point for children at this age. So, Kai's identity is they are tall; their self-image is negative because they feel self-conscious about this part of their identity.

3. **All answers are correct here!** When we see videos or posts from people online, we have to remember that they are showing a version of themselves, which might not be a true reflection of who they are. They might edit their content to look a certain way, share products they don't actually use because they are getting paid and so much more. Therefore, it's important to talk to children about these things, reminding them that what they see online is only a small part of the story.

4. **The answer is A - talk to a trusted adult!** There are different actions someone can take if they are struggling with their self-image, but the best place to start is by talking. Parents and carers can make this so much easier on children by regularly talking about their digital lives just as they would ask them about their school day. If it's normal to talk about online safety, a child is more likely to open up when something goes wrong and feel like the adults in their lives will know what to do. Deleting apps or taking breaks are only temporary solutions that don't tackle the bigger picture around mental wellbeing.

5. Talking about those your child follows will help you gain insight into their online interests. They will also learn to think critically about what they see to help support their mental wellbeing. You can gauge their understanding of self-image while providing them clear action to take when they need support.

**internet matters.org**