# Debating Online Safety
# A Guide for Teachers

**TEAM**

**OPPOSING**
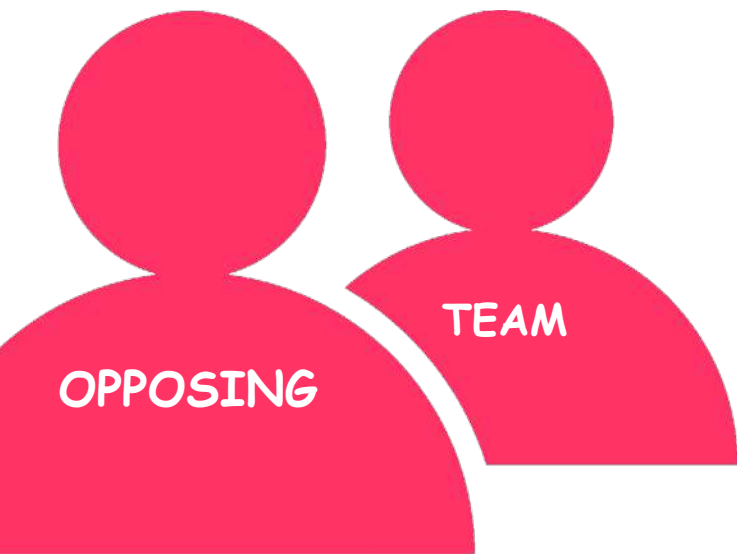
**This guide is designed for teachers of secondary schools to help stimulate important debates about online safety between students, teachers and parents.**

Research shows, almost without exception, that talking is an important part of preventing and dealing with problems that children face online.

60% of parents don't regularly speak to their children about online safety.
Cybersafe Opinion Leader Report (Sept 2013)

**TEAM**

**PROPOSING**

That's why we've created this guide to give you a helping hand to organise debates in your school and engage your secondary students in many of the important issues around online safety.

We've included example motions and sample topic guides on some of the tricky issues that young people may encounter on a daily basis. We've also included an easy-to-follow reminder guide to debating, as well as suggestions on resources you can use to help create an exciting and thought-provoking debate.
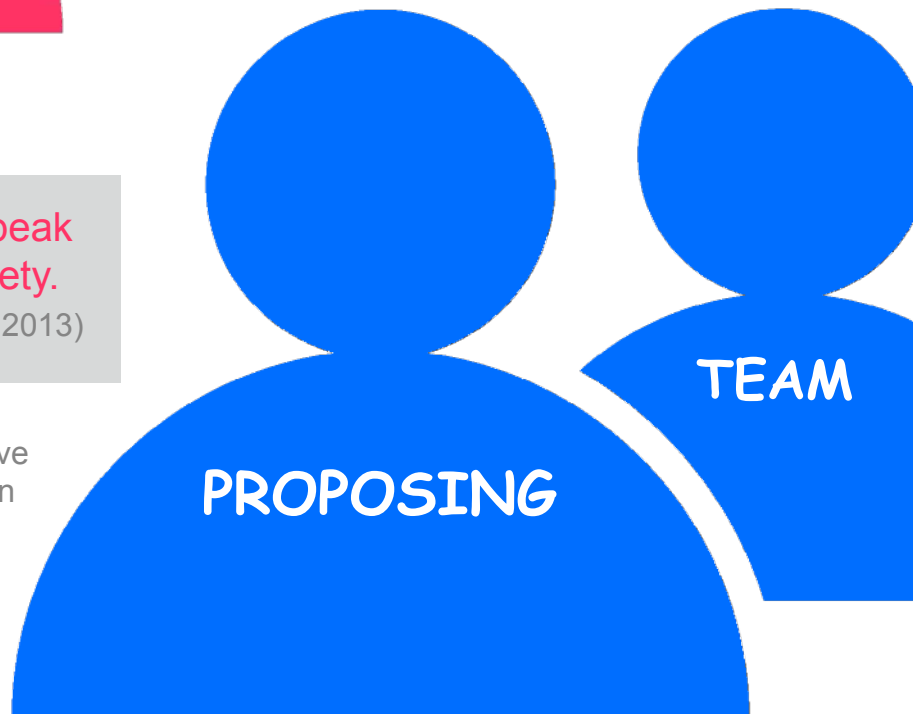
**Know online safety is important for your students, but not sure how to approach it?**

Internet Matters is a free online resource for teachers and parents in the UK. We'll show you where to find the most recent e-safety education resources - as well as give you information, advice and support on all the big e-safety issues.

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# Setting up a Debate

**Why debate online safety?**

## Because e-safety debates...

1. Helps students understand the risks they may face online by researching e-safety more thoroughly
2. Educate parents and teachers about the latest apps, technologies and trends
3. Are interesting to students as they encounter many of the topics on a daily basis
4. Can encourage participants to think from a teacher's or parent's perspective
5. Help make e-safety a more comfortable conversation with students and parents

## Tie it into the curriculum

Public speaking and debating skills can be applied to many areas across the National Curriculum at both KS3 and KS4. Relevant subjects include English, ICT, PSHE and Citizenship, among others.

For more information about running a debate and how debating can tie in to your teaching see the English Speaking Union's *Speech and Debate Handbook* (link avaliable if you're reading online).

## Getting parents involved

It can be difficult to get parents engaged in the subject of online safety. By using a debate to highlight the issues and inviting parents to attend, they'll have the opportunity to hear their own children's views on key e-safety topics, which is a great way to improve awareness.

Pupils involved with the debate can be encouraged to ask their parents' thoughts about the motions or assist with their research – parents could even take part in the debate to put forward an adult versus child perspective.

**Example motion ...**
Parents and teachers should not be friends with children on social media

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# Ideas for Debating Topics

## Issue topic examples

**Cyberbullying**
"Cyberbullying isn't as harmful as face to face bullying."

**Online pornography**
"Seeing pornography online at a young age negatively affects attitudes to sex."

**Sexting**
"There's nothing wrong with sharing images with people you know and trust."

**Privacy & identity theft**
"It's okay to share personal information with people you meet online."

**Online reputation**
"It doesn't matter what you post online as long as only your friends can see it."

**Online grooming**
"Chatrooms are fun and a great way to make new friends, and they shouldn't be monitored by adults."

## Tech topic examples

**Mobile and tablet apps**
"Anonymous chatting and networking apps don't encourage bullying in schools"

**Online gaming**
"Playing games online is harmless fun and there shouldn't be a limit to how long you can spend gaming."

**Controls**
"Firewalls and controls are a useful way to keep children safe online."

**Social networking**
"Social networking sites shouldn't be blocked at school because they're how you can make friends."

**Downloading**
"Everyone downloads from illegal sites so it's okay to do it."

**Chatting**
"Chatting with strangers online is perfectly safe because it's not the 'real world'."

## Suggested resources

- **Use the news**: Whenever an e-safety issue presents in the media, it is useful to stimulate debate by bringing it to life.
- **Use Internet Matters**: The Schools, Issues, and Technologies sections on Internet Matters are resources to help you introduce key online safety topics.
- **Use the internet**: The internet can make learning an exciting activity - encourage your students to use the internet to research their motions.
- **Use existing e-safety information**: Look to the Safety sections of the major social media sites, such as Facebook's Safety Centre, for the most current developments in online safety questions and debates.

## Example motion ...

Age restrictions on social media sites, like Facebook, should be reduced from 13 to 10 years old

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# A Reminder about Debating

**Debating definitions**

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**MOTION -** an idea formed by a small group of debaters
**PROPOSING TEAM** - three people: proposition speakers 1, 2, & 3
**OPPOSING TEAM** - three people: opposition speakers 1, 2, & 3
**CHAIRPERSON** - introduces the debate, the rules, and takes charge
**TIMEKEEPER** - a person dedicated to monitoring time spent by each team

Debating is like a giant game of verbal ping-pong between two teams trying to persuade an audience that they're right.

We've suggested a format for debating, which is flexible depending on how many student/teacher/parent participants you have, and how much time you have.

## Example motion ...
The positive aspects of online gaming far outweigh the negatives

## The debate format

Under guidance from the **Chairperson**, the **Proposing Team** and **Opposing Team** put forward the key arguments they have researched in depth:

**Proposing Team Speaker 1** makes a speech in support of the motion.
**Opposing Team Speaker 1** makes a speech against the motion.

Then it goes back to the other side:

**Proposing Team Speaker 2** gives a back-up speech for the motion.
**Opposing Team Speaker 2** gives a back-up speech against the motion.

Then the debate goes to the **Audience** and the audience asks questions of both teams. This is followed by a final summary:

**Proposing Team Speaker 3** sums up the case for the motion.
**Opposing Team Speaker 3** sums up the case against the motion.

Finally, the **Audience** then votes to accept or reject the motion.

For more information and guidance to handy e-safety teaching resources, visit:
internetmatters.org/schools

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