

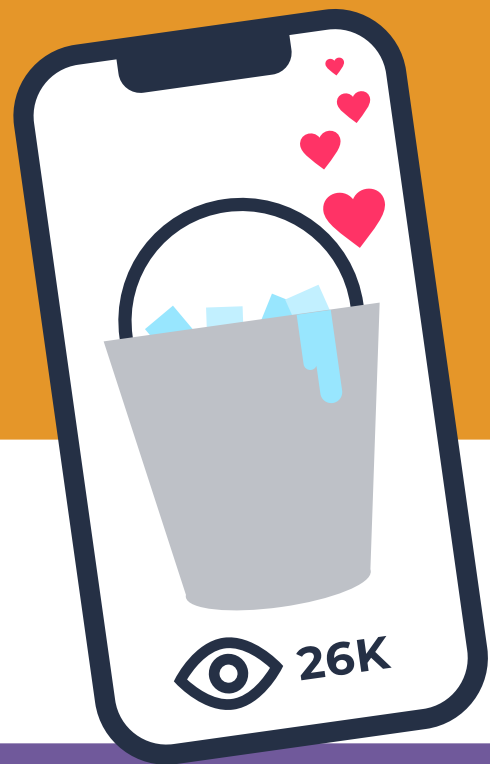
Are online challenges dangerous?

**BE
CHALLENGE
AWARE**

internet
matters.org

Popular online challenges or trends have raised money for charity while others have led to harm.

Learn about these challenges so you can help your child stay safe online.



Why challenges attract young people

- There is the **excitement of risk**;
- Young people are **naturally curious and adventurous**;
- It makes them feel like **they belong** - **because their peers are doing it**;
- **It may make them feel popular** - they get more attention, likes, views or comments;
- If **everyone is doing it**, to them it's OK.

Challenges are easy to do. They often involve ordinary objects you can easily find at home or skills that are easy to learn like dance steps.

Friends, family and influencers often nominate people to do it without thinking about the impacts on children and young people, and the risks this might bring to your child. It could be harmful if a group of 'friends' are manipulating and putting pressure on your child to do the challenge so that they can get entertainment out of it.

You may see or hear a warning about online suicide challenges which have encouraged young people to act in harmful ways. Take a deep breath! Most have been found to be hoaxes, untrue or exaggerated.

What if I think my child has taken part in a dangerous challenge?

At first, you may feel many emotions, but it's important to stay calm. Here are ways you can address it:

- Ask them to **tell you about** the challenge.
- **Check** they have not harmed themselves.
- **Explain** that some of these challenges are created to shock people and can lead to serious harm.
- Show them how to use **reporting and blocking features** to stop them from getting recommendations for harmful challenges.



How to prevent harm from online challenges



1

Avoid naming specific challenges. Instead, ask them what kind of online challenges they have seen online or heard about from someone. **Ask them to share their thoughts on how safe/unsafe they are.**

2

Talk about the signs that something could be dangerous. If it involves doing anything to their body, behaving an unsafe way in public or using products that children normally don't use, they should talk to you first.

3

Give them actions to take if they come across a dangerous challenge online. They should tell you, report the content and, if relevant, block whoever is sending them these challenges.

4

Show them **how to customise their social media feeds.** From hiding certain words to restricting types of content, they can use social media settings to make their experience safe for them.

5

Keep having **regular conversations** about your child's digital life and experiences.



More resources



Report harmful and illegal content to the **Internet Watch Foundation.**



For more online safety advice, go to **internetmatters.org.**



Search **'Be Challenge Aware'** at internetmatters.org for more guidance