

Oversharing online

Parent Guide

How to help your child know what and when to share online

What is oversharing?

Sharing things is a **key part of life online**. There are plenty of things that are great for your child to share online with their friends. Many young people use social media to **express** who they are, **update** what they are doing or **post things** they feel particularly proud of.

But some things are **not appropriate to share online**, and could even be **dangerous**. Examples of this are **passwords, personal information** like your **location or home address**, or content that could be **hurtful** to others.

What your child shares also depends on **who they're planning to share it with**. Something suitable to share with a friend may not be **appropriate to share publicly**.

What are the risks?

Your child might not be aware that something they have put online **could harm themselves or others**. It isn't always obvious, so it's **important to discuss** what is and isn't appropriate.

For example, if your child posts a picture of themselves in their **school uniform**, this could tell anyone who sees the picture **where your child goes to school**. Your child should also be mindful **not to post pictures of their friends or others without their permission**, as doing so could **reveal personal information they haven't agreed to share** – or simply embarrass them.

Make sure that your child understands that once something has been posted online – even if among friends – that image, post or message is **no longer in their control**. Even if they delete it in the future, others could have **already shared it or taken a screenshot**.

Encourage your child to **think carefully** about whether they will **feel comfortable** in the future about something they are planning to share.

What else should I do?

Make sure that your child understands **privacy settings** on the devices and platforms they use. **The Children's Code**, introduced in September 2021, goes some way to **protecting data privacy**, for example, by ensuring that social media sites **set all accounts for under 16s to private by default** – but these default settings **can be switched off**. Talk to them about why these settings are important, and how they protect them online.

While you should always be mindful of your digital footprint, many social media platforms allow you to **request images to be removed**. Organisations, such as the NSPCC and CEOP, can also support you in removing certain types of images online, for example naked images.

The most important thing is that you **keep up a conversation with your child and always encourage them to come to you** if they feel concerned about something that they've shared online.