

SAFER CHATTING ONLINE

EQUIPPING YOUR PRE-TEEN FOR SAFER ONLINE CHATTING

Although pre-teens are below the age to join social media, there are other platforms that allow online chatting such as gaming devices and some apps.

There are many benefits to online socialising and chatting as part of a healthy lifestyle, including:

- The chance to connect with people from diverse communities over shared interests, and understand new perspectives.
- For people who would otherwise hesitate to speak their minds, chatting online can make it easier to interact and talk with others.
- Taking part in an online chat allows people to easily remove themselves from a conversation if they don't like what's being said.

However, taking part in online chats may expose our pre-teens to unwanted contact from strangers, inappropriate content, and inappropriate behaviour.

There are three key things our pre-teens need to know to keep themselves safe when chatting online:

1. Someone's online identity can be very different to their in-person identity.
2. What you share online stays accessible online so only share what you're happy for everyone to see.
3. When things go wrong, you can come to a trusted adult and Netsafe for free confidential advice and help.

Check in with your pre-teen about their online chats and how to stay safer.



Ask



Agree



Plan

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Use the discussion prompts and key messages below to check-in with your pre-teen and set them up for safer online socialising and chatting.



How do you know when someone is pretending to be someone they're not? How is this different online?



It's much easier online to pretend to be someone else.



Online visual cues can be deceptive.



What's the difference between internet friends and friends you've met in person?



Until you've met someone in-person, you don't know who they really are.



People can pretend to be someone you know or someone they're not.



Be cautious about what you share with internet friends.



What's OK to say or share online?



Share with care: Be careful what you share online - it's harder to take back online words, pictures or videos.



If you wouldn't say it or share it in-person, don't say it or share it online.



Don't accept chat requests or friend requests from strangers.



What can you do if someone online makes you feel queasy/ unsafe/ upset?



Talk to a trusted adult like _____



Contact Netsafe for free confidential advice and support.