

Bullying, wellbeing and mental health

AGES 5 TO 7

At this age, the approach should be teaching children about how we should treat other people in the real world as well as online. Children must understand how their actions can affect another person positively or negatively and how their interactions and submission of information online may impact negatively upon themselves.

It is useful for children to think about the trustworthy people that they can go to if they are upset about the way they are treated online.

Your child's well-being is the reason that you are interested in their online safety. Use this notion to reinforce the reasons for the choices you make for your child. When you restrict screen time, talk about how this is for their physical health (so they do other activities) and mental health (because staring at a screen can affect sleep and well-being).

Maintaining open communications and using devices in shared areas help your child to be happy and healthy while still being able to enjoy the online world.



Did You Know?

48

is the average number of likes children say they need to get on a photo before they feel happy. (UK Safer Internet Centre, 2016)

Top tips:

- Teach and establish behaviours for how we should treat others and be treated ourselves online.
- Ensure your child has several trustworthy people they know they can go to for support (not just you).
- Teach your child how to save evidence of inappropriate behaviours from others such as saving messages.
- Stress the importance of protecting personal privacy, particularly as your child gets older and is statistically more likely to come into contact with strangers online.





Our children live in a fun and exciting place, where they can now communicate with others anytime, anywhere. Unfortunately, this also has drawbacks and stresses from social interactions and bullying can now be experienced at home. Recent studies have found that social media companies have inconsistent approaches to tackling cyber bullying and promoting strategies for well-being and mental health. With this in mind, you can't rely on social media giants to protect your child.

AGES 7 TO 11

At this age, children should start to consider the specific features that differentiate cyber bullying from face-to-face bullying as well as the overlap between the two. Cyber bullying can be more relentless as it can continue 24/7.

As children get older, they are more likely to come into contact with strangers online. Talk about why strangers may feel less remorse about bullying behaviour and why this makes it even more important to protect children's personal privacy on social media. Less secure children may be more susceptible to peer pressure to behave a way that makes them more vulnerable to bullies and then less likely to seek help. It's important to keep the lines of communication open and to seek support from school or specialist agencies if you are worried about your child.

Ensure that your child knows how to take screenshots and save messages as evidence to show to a trusted adult. Encourage children to speak up for others or report bullying that they witness.

Talk about the known impact of screen time on sleep and, therefore, on their ability to function well the next day. This has an impact on joining in with other activities and doing well at school.

Children are reaching an age where fitting in and being seen in the best light is important. You can help by recognising the pressures they are under from peers and social media and how this might make them feel left out or different at times.



27%

of children who spend over three hours a day on social media present symptoms of mental ill health. (EPI Social and mental health, 2017)

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