



IMMANUEL COLLEGE

PARENT RESOURCES

How to Have Meaningful Online Safety Conversations with Your Child

Below we've shared why it's crucial for parents to foster open conversations with their children about online safety and how to create a supportive environment where kids feel comfortable discussing their digital lives.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT ONLINE SAFETY?

The internet is now an integral part of our children's daily lives. Whether they are at home, at school, or on the go, they are constantly exposed to digital content. While the internet provides incredible opportunities for learning and social interaction, it also comes with risks that can impact a child's wellbeing and safety.

As a parent, creating an open and judgment-free space where your child feels safe discussing their online experiences is essential. If they encounter harmful situations, early intervention and support can help prevent long-term emotional or psychological harm.

WHAT KIND OF RISKS MIGHT CHILDREN FACE ONLINE?

Children may be exposed to various risks while online, including cyberbullying, inappropriate content, online grooming, and harmful trends on social media. For example, recent social media influencers have promoted harmful ideas, such as misogyny and violence, which can influence young minds.

Online bullying is also a significant concern, with nearly 1 in 5 children in the UK experiencing it. Because many of these risks occur in digital spaces that parents may not always monitor, it's important to foster trust so children feel safe speaking up.

WHY MIGHT CHILDREN HESITATE TO TALK ABOUT NEGATIVE ONLINE EXPERIENCES?

Many children hesitate to share their concerns for several reasons:

- Fear of retaliation from bullies or online predators.
- Feelings of embarrassment or shame, particularly in cases of online grooming.
- Worry that telling a parent will result in losing access to their devices.
- Fear of being blamed, for example, being told, "I warned you not to use that app."

These concerns can create barriers to communication, which is why it's crucial for parents to adopt a supportive and understanding approach when discussing online safety.



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HOW CAN PARENTS ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ONLINE EXPERIENCES?

Start by making digital discussions a regular part of family life. Instead of interrogating your child about their online activity, try asking open-ended questions like:

“What’s the latest trend on TikTok?”

“Have you seen anything online recently that made you feel uncomfortable?”

“What do you think about this video/game?”

These types of questions encourage your child to share their thoughts and experiences without feeling judged or fearful of consequences.

It’s also important to focus on education rather than punishment. If a concern arises, instead of immediately restricting device access, explain why certain safety measures are necessary. For example, discuss how parental controls help protect them rather than making them feel like they are being restricted.

WHAT TOOLS CAN PARENTS USE TO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN SAFE ONLINE?

There are many tools available to help parents create a safer digital environment for their children. Some key resources include:

- Parental control apps like [Qustodio](#) or Net Nanny, which allow you to monitor and manage your child’s internet use.
- Online safety hubs such as the [NSPCC](#) or [Internetmatters.org](#), which offer guides and tips on how to protect children online.
- Wellbeing apps like [Smoothwall Pulse](#), which provide children with a discreet way to express their feelings and reach out for help if they encounter something distressing online.

By combining open communication with proactive safety measures, parents can create an environment where their children feel supported and empowered to navigate the online world safely.