

# A straightforward guide to protecting your children from online hate, extremism, and fake news



The pandemic has meant that children are spending more time than ever before learning and socialising online. Parents are juggling new technology alongside working and navigating the risks children face online. This interactive guide focuses on the risks that online hate, extremism, and fake news pose and how parents and carers can minimize those risks.



**This guide has information, links and resources to help you:**

- Understand the risks and issues.
- Know where to get help.
- Find resources.
- Develop practical strategies.
- Start conversations.
- Build your child's digital resilience.

“ A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes. ”

Mark Twain

## Risks and Tactics

**Extremists** use the internet and social media to spread their ideology, hate, fake news, and conspiracy theories. They actively **target, exploit** and **groom children and young people**.

They know young people are using the internet much more, quite often by themselves, and so utilise these opportunities to exploit and recruit.

They frequently do this by exploiting our emotions, deeply held beliefs, and values and are increasingly using the social isolation, anxiety, and fear that many children are experiencing because of the pandemic.

A common approach they use is to spread misinformation to **generate anger** and **outrage**. Teaching our children not to **fall for this trick** is one of the most important things we can do to protect them from grooming by extremists.



Frequently used tactics includes memes, making alterations to photos, videos, and documents and using them out of context.

They make up quotes and social media posts for popular public figures. Especially ones that children and young people look up to and follow online. Their aim is to draw children into conversations and encourage them to share misinformation and hate.



Extremists often pick a genuine local issue or concern and use it to spread lies, fear and hate about the group they're targeting.

## Where to start?

The most important thing parents and carers can do is talk to the children and young people in their lives about what they enjoy doing online. Talk about what they think isn't so good about being online and how to make it better. Keep talking as your child grows up and becomes more independent online.

Find out what's their plan for when things go wrong or get them down. Consider having a **no blame rule**, so that they'll talk to you when things do go wrong. If they're worried about being told off or having devices confiscated they may decide to keep things to themselves and small issues could become big ones.



The more a stranger knows about your child, the easier it is to groom them and gain trust. Only share with trusted friends and family.



## Support, ideas and resources

Click on the topics below to learn more about how to keep your child safe and support their wellbeing online. Learn how to identify misinformation, talk to children about hate speech and spot the signs they could be being groomed by extremists or other online predators.

### Educate Against Hate

Messages of hate can take many forms. Extremist groups use them to recruit young people. Parents can find answers to common questions and resources to help protect their child from being groomed by extremists as well as ideas about how to talk to children about hate and extremism and where to seek help.



#### Fact

Know how to **fact check** and have a **link to a reliable fact checking site on your devices**.

### How to know what to trust

This guide from the News Literacy Project is great place to start.



### Conspiracy Theories



Conspiracy theories have grown significantly in the past year they have been fuelled by the confusing and unsettling nature of the pandemic and have resulted in people being drawn into extremists groups, committing violent and criminal acts. They can also be deeply disturbing and unsettling for children and young people who come across them accidentally online. The video in this link explains why they are dangerous.

### Common Sense Media



This website has the latest research, tips, and tools on what really keeps children safe online. Which privacy settings should you use? What are the ins and outs of parental controls? Get tips on everything from the basics, such as smart usernames, to the big stuff, such as appropriate sharing. Plus lots of resources and strategies to look after your child's wellbeing online. What are the pro's and con's of Roblox, TikTok, Instagram or how to talk to teens about online predators.

[Digital Resilience](#)

[Online Radicalisation](#)

[Fake News](#)

[The Fake News Quiz](#)

## Is someone you know becoming a stranger?



Act early

Kent and Medway Prevent Education Officers

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