

# Online abuse

Online abuse can happen across any device that's connected to the internet, like computers, tablets and mobile phones, and can happen anywhere online, including social media, messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming and live-streaming sites.

If your child was at risk, would you spot the signs?

Young people may not be aware that what's happening is abuse.

Parents are unlikely to be aware of what is happening.



## Possible signs a young person may be being abused online:

-  Spends a lot more or a lot less time online, texting, gaming or using social media
-  Seems distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting
-  Are secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone
-  Changes in eating or sleeping habits
-  Has lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet
-  Sudden behaviour changes such as becoming nervous, losing confidence, becoming distressed or withdrawn, or struggling to control emotions
-  Difficulty making or keeping relationships

## Types of online abuse

**Emotional abuse:** deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child

**Grooming:** when someone builds a relationship with a child so they can exploit, traffic or sexually abuse them. Groomers may pretend to be someone else, by sending photos or videos of other people or creating fake online profiles

**Sexting or sexual abuse:** pressuring a young person into creating or sending sexual content online, or exposing a child to sexual acts online



Find out more and get support

NSPCC  0808 800 5000



# What to do if you're worried about your child or a child you know

Remember, **you're not to blame.**

And **your child may be vulnerable or scared.**



## Talk to your child

Let them know they can talk to you about anything. Ask them questions about what's going on, tell them that you want to help them and keep them safe.

Try to get them to see the reality of their situation. Be open, honest and non-judgemental; remember they may be scared.

## Get help and support

Talk to other parents who have gone through the same thing. Talk to your child's school or another professional – see useful contacts below.

## Gather evidence

Do not delete any online posts or messages.

## When to tell the Police

If you have any concerns that your child is being abused online, you should report this to the Police – **do not confront the alleged abuser yourself**. Remember, your child is a victim and should be treated as such.

If your child stays away from home, you should report them as missing to the Police immediately. If you are worried about your child's safety, report these fears to the Police, to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP), or your child's school.

## Useful contacts

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Missing People Safecall (call or text) 116 000

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

CEOP [thinkuknow.co.uk/parents](https://thinkuknow.co.uk/parents)

Cambridgeshire Constabulary 101

**If a child or young person is in immediate danger call 999**

## Children's Social Care

Peterborough 01733 864180

Cambridgeshire 0345 045 5203

Out of hours emergency team 01733 234724