

Digital Resilience Toolkit

internet
matters.org

Advice for parents of teens (14+ year olds)

Help children become more digitally savvy
and get the best out of their online world

What are they doing online?

□ Most teens turn to **video content** first for all types of content that are important to them

1 in 10

12-15s who go online have 'gone live' on a social network



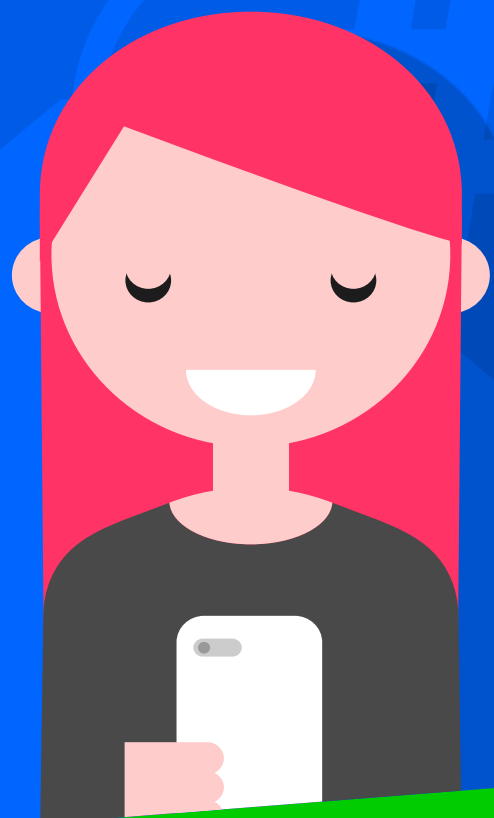
What are they concerned about?



1 in 8

12-15s with a social media profile say there is pressure to look popular all of the time

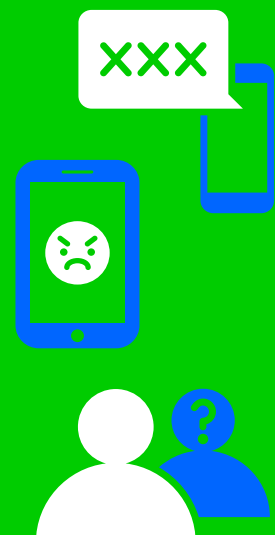
Source: Ofcom Children's and parents' media use and attitudes 2017



What challenges can they face?

At this age your child might be starting to date and growing their network of friends through social media.

As they increase their exposure and consumption of the online world, there is the potential that it may affect their body image, or how they form their identity on and offline and potentially be exposed to cyberbullying and sexting.



Have conversations about sex and relationships in the online world

- Discuss how the changing nature of relationships can affect trust
- Get them thinking about their feelings around being pressured to send images online or offline
- Encourage them to stand their ground and not to follow the norm among friends if they feel uncomfortable
- Share your views on sexting and reinforce the fact that it's always a bad idea in the long run

Discuss managing their online identity and critical thinking

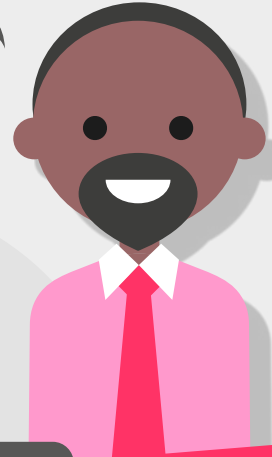
- Help them critically assess what other people say about them online
- Remind them about the dangers of body shaming and making trivial comments on social media posts
- Teach them to question the importance of seeking comments and likes on social media
- Get them thinking about possible sub-text associated with some comments

Talk about the time spent online and health implications

- Talk about what you consider as appropriate
- Encourage them to spend time away from their device to help create a healthy norm
- Get them thinking about the health implications this can have on their sleep and memory

How do I get them prepared to deal with these challenges?

□ **First step** □
Having open and honest conversations □



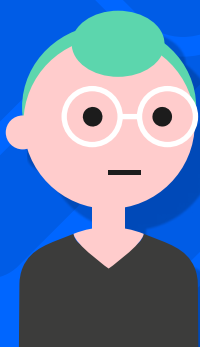
□ **Second step** □
Have an open door policy □

Encourage them to talk to you if they feel concerned or worried about an issue

- Reassure them that you're here to support them and not judge if they have an issue they feel embarrassed to share
- If they feel they can't talk to you make sure they know that they can talk to a specialist organisation like [Childline](#) or another trusted adult



Even with the best intentions, there may be times that a child gets off track and is affected by something they've experienced online. Like falling off a bike, it's the recovery and getting back on the bike that often matters more than the fall.



□ **What happens if things go wrong?** □

Assess the situation and find ways to deal with it together

- Try and understand what has gone on and who is involved
- Don't overreact, show your support and make a point to give them the confidence that you will deal with it together
- Depending on the situation seek advice from specialist organisation or your GP to give them the best chance to recover and regain their confidence
- Agree a course of action together with your child so they feel supported