



Pol-Ed[®]

Keeping Children Safe
Information for Parents and Carers

Hate crime

A hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity. It is also a hate crime if a person is perceived as having one of these characteristics. Hate crime can happen in person, online or through social media and can have a lasting impact on both individuals and communities.

At home:

- Encourage respectful conversations about differences and challenge stereotypes when they arise.
- Help children understand that hateful language, even if described as a "joke", can cause harm.
- Remind them that if they experience or witness a hate crime, it should be reported and not ignored.

Conversation starters:

"What kinds of things help people feel included?"

"Have you met anyone interesting or different from you recently?"

"What do you think makes a good friend?"



Bullying

Bullying is not a one-off disagreement or falling out between friends. It is behaviour that is ongoing, repeated and unwanted, and is intended to hurt, upset or intimidate another person.

Bullying can happen face to face or online and does not have to be physical. It can include name-calling, social exclusion, spreading rumours, intimidation or sharing harmful content online.

Parents and Carers can:

- Look out for changes in mood, confidence, friendships or a reluctance to attend school or activities.
- Encourage children and young people to talk about their friendships regularly so concerns can be identified early.
- Remind them that bullying is never something they should deal with alone.

Conversation starters:



Staying safe online

Being online is an important part of young people's lives, but it can bring risks. Spending long periods online can affect sleep, wellbeing and daily routines. Sharing personal information, passwords, images or location details can increase the risk of scams, fraud and unwanted contact. Young people can also be groomed online by people they know, people they do not know, or even people of a similar age. Criminal groups may use social media, messaging apps and gaming platforms to build trust before exploiting young people.

Support children to develop healthy online habits by:

- Agreeing appropriate screen-time limits and encouraging devices to be put away before bedtime.
- Show them how to use privacy settings and reduce blue light on devices in the evening.
- Take an interest in the apps, games and platforms they use.
- Regularly discuss who they communicate with online and what information is safe to share.

Conversation starters:

"What's the funniest thing you've seen online lately?"

"What apps or games are people into at the moment?"

"If I joined your favourite app today, what would I need to know?"



Safety on public transport

Using public transport can help young people travel independently and confidently. Planning journeys in advance, knowing where they are going and letting someone know their expected arrival time can help them stay safe. Young people should remain aware of their surroundings and avoid becoming completely distracted by their phones or headphones.

Discuss simple safety strategies with children, such as:

- Sitting near the driver or other passengers if they feel uncomfortable.
- Trusting their instincts if something does not feel right.
- Contacting a trusted adult if plans change.
- Encourage them to keep their phone charged and to know what action they could take if they felt unsafe during a journey.

Conversation starters:



"What would your plan be if you were running late getting home?"

"Do you prefer sitting with friends or listening to music when you travel?"

Road Safety

Road safety is a shared responsibility. While drivers should pay attention, distractions inside a vehicle can affect a driver's awareness and they may not always see a pedestrian immediately.

Young people can also be distracted by mobile phones, headphones, conversations or rushing to meet friends, increasing the risk of harm near roads.

Encourage children to:

- Stay alert when walking near traffic and to avoid using phones when crossing roads.
- Make eye contact with drivers before assuming it is safe to cross and never presume that a vehicle has seen them.
- Spend a few extra seconds checking properly as this can make a significant difference.

Conversation starters:

"What's the funniest thing you've seen someone do while distracted by their phone?"

"Where is the hardest place to cross a road around here?"



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Safety conversations are often most effective when they happen naturally, such as during car journeys, mealtimes or walks. Regular, open discussions can help children recognise risks, make safer choices and feel confident seeking support when needed.

Family Hubs

Family Hubs are local one-stop shops offering advice, support and signposting for young people and families. They bring together health, education, parenting, welfare and youth services, including early intervention to help keep young people safe. Family Hubs are available to parents and carers of children aged 0–19 (or up to 25 for those with special educational needs or disabilities), pregnant people, and young people aged up to 19 (or 25 with special educational needs or disabilities).

Most Family Hubs can be contacted in one of four ways:

Visit in person during opening hours.

Email the Family Hub service.

Telephone the hub directly or contact the district's Family Hub team.

Self-refer online through your local authority's Family Hub or Families Together website.

Find your local hub online www.gov.uk/find-family-hub-local-area

Officers who engage with schools

Police officers may work closely with schools to help keep children and young people safe, prevent crime, and build positive relationships between young people and the police. The main purposes of this is to:

Safeguarding children and young people

Crime prevention and education

Building trust and positive relationships

Supporting schools with incidents

Early intervention

Partnership working

