# Safer Internet Day 2027

UK Safer Internet Centre

nominet

**Resources for use with 14 to 18 year olds**



# Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day is celebrated globally in February each year to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology for children and young people, and to inspire a national conversation about using technology responsibly, respectfully, critically, and creatively. Safer Internet Day 2027 is on Tuesday 9th February.

In the UK, Safer Internet Day is organised by the UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC), a partnership of three charities – Childnet International, the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and SWGfL.

UK Safer Internet Centre

Noddir gan
**Lywodraeth Cymru**
Supported by
**Welsh Government**

With kind thanks to the Welsh government for their support in the development of these resources in Welsh.

For more resources and advice visit:

**hwb.gov.wales/keeping-safe-online**

SBNI
Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

With kind thanks to the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland for their support in the development of these resources in Irish.

For more resources and advice visit:

**onlinesafetyhub.safeguardingni.org**

*All scenarios and examples used in these materials have been created for educational purposes and are not real.*

# Reflect on tech

Safer Internet Day 2027 is asking everyone, from government, to families, to the internet industry, to reflect on tech. During these important months leading up to the implementation of government restrictions, including a ban on social media accounts for under 16s, it has never been more important to help children and young people explore digital wellbeing and their ever-changing relationship with technology, and to make sure that their voices are heard.

The content we see, the interactions we have, the choices we make, the pressures we face, the influences we experience, the changes we go through – our resources will help you and your learners explore the variety of ways technology and the internet can impact our wellbeing, and what we can do when that impact is negative.



**We want everyone to think about:**

- the role technology plays in our day to day lives, and what a healthy relationship with technology looks like
- how technology and going online impacts our mood and wellbeing, including the pressures and influences we may experience online
- how families and young people can navigate their changing relationship with technology and can build strategies to make the most of their time online

# Exploring digital wellbeing and our relationship with technology

## 3 to 7 year olds

Explores how we all use technology differently, how it might make us feel, and how to use it in a healthy way

## 7 to 11 year olds

Explores emotions, the different types of pressures we might face online, and the strategies that we can use

## 11 to 14 year olds

Explores how the internet might influence our thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and how we can self-regulate and change our technology use to help us feel positive online

## 14 to 18 year olds

Explores how technology can impact our wellbeing, how our relationship with technology has changed and will change over time, and how technology is influencing and impacting society

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# Using these resources

## Adapt our resources to best suit your learners' needs

We know that not every young person is the same, and that special educational or additional learning needs can make children more vulnerable to online harm. This is why all our resources have been created with accessibility in mind. We don't reference specific ages, except in the file names and on front covers, so pick and mix activities from across the resources, and feel free to make changes where you need to. All our activities include suggestions to scaffold and support learners, as well as ideas to challenge and extend.

Practitioners are encouraged to incorporate these activities, or selected elements, into their curriculum, while thoughtfully adapting the resources to meet the unique needs of their learners.

For more guidance on supporting young people young people with special educational or additional learning needs, including a summary of the support and scaffold activities available throughout the packs, please visit: **saferinternet.org.uk/send**.

Included in the **Supporting young people with special educational and additional learning needs document** is the **Coping with change activity**, an activity that supports learners to think about the impact using technology has on their lives, as well as helping them to manage situations where they may lose access to particular devices, apps or services. Although this activity is designed for learners with special educational or additional learning needs, it may be suitable for a wide range of learners, especially learners who struggle with their emotions when trying to cope with change. It may also be useful for helping young people have conversations about the incoming ban on social media for under 16s in the UK.

## Establish a safe space

Consider how to establish a supportive environment for young people to learn and talk about potentially sensitive topics. For ideas visit:

childnet.com/learning-environment

Whilst discussing their online lives, it is possible that children and young people will raise concerns about things they have experienced online. Make sure you are up to date with your school or setting's safeguarding procedures and for further advice visit:

childnet.com/safeguarding

## Know where to get more information

Remember that there's plenty of help and advice available if you need more information about anything online safety related. The UK Safer Internet Centre's 'Need Help?' page contains further information on reporting specific concerns to organisations outside of your school or setting:

saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/need-help

The Professionals Online Safety Helpline is a free helpline service offering advice, support and guidance to all members of the children's workforce with questions about online safety issues:

saferinternet.org.uk/professionals-online-safety-helpline

## Kickstart conversations that last all year round

The online world is changing all the time, but talking with young people about their online lives can help you understand their experiences. Kickstart the conversation today but make it a regular habit all year round.

# Activity: Wellbeing impacts and strategies

**Suggested time:**

20 minutes

## Learning objective:

I can identify and analyse the positive and negative impacts of technology and recommend strategies to improve wellbeing.

## Materials:

- Accompanying slides for the **Wellbeing impacts and strategies activity** (slides 2 to 8)
- Large piece of paper for each group
- **Wellbeing impacts educator guidance**

## Suggested activity guidelines:

This activity encourages learners to assess the positive and negative aspects of different parts of technology and being online, and allows learners to identify personal strategies they can use to try to improve their interactions with these.

1. In groups, provide learners with one of the following written on a large piece of paper:
   - Gaming
   - Video content
   - Online messaging
   - AI
   - Social media
   - Online information

   If your learners have a particular interest they'd like to explore instead, such as a specific app or game, they could use this as one of the topics instead.
2. Display slide 3 and explain that each group will be focusing on one of these (or a topic of their choice), to identify the benefits and the difficulties it can present. During the conversations in steps 3 and 4, you may wish to refer to the **Wellbeing impacts educator guidance** for information that you could add to learners' discussions.

3. First, ask learners to write how their topic might benefit them or other young people their age. You can display slide 4 and ask the following questions to help guide them:
    - What do you or someone your age gain from this?
    - How could this positively affect your wellbeing or someone your age's wellbeing?
4. Next, ask learners to write on their paper how their topic might negatively impact them or someone their age. You can display slide 5 and ask the following questions to help guide them:
    - What do you or someone your age find difficult about this?
    - How could this negatively affect your wellbeing or someone your age's wellbeing?
5. Gather feedback from learners about what they have written. Reflect with them about how lots of things we enjoy will have difficulties, but there are some things that learners can do to help.
6. Explain to learners that they are going to think of what these strategies could be. You can display slide 6 to show some ideas of strategies from Childnet's Youth Advisory Board, a group of young people aged 13 to 17.
7. Ask learners to go back to the problems they identified and add any strategies they could use to counteract these issues. For example, if they identified that it is easy to spend too long gaming, they could suggest using timers or screen time settings.
8. Bring the group back together and ask learners to share any strategies they thought of.

## Suggested ways to support and scaffold

- Ask all learners to focus on one topic so that you can collaboratively come up with ideas.
- For steps 3 and 4, instead of using the questions provided above, ask learners one thing they like about their topic and one thing they don't like about it. You can use slide 7 and 8 to display these questions.

## Suggested ways to challenge and extend

Ask learners to choose one of the topics and write a letter with advice to a younger person who may be struggling with this part of online life. After reviewing, you may wish to facilitate these being shared with younger learners in your setting.

# Wellbeing impacts educator guidance

## Gaming

- Gaming is an immersive experience, which can feature in-depth storylines to engage players and customisable features or open gameplay to make it feel like an individual experience.
- Many games have communities built around the game, which may create content or share experiences outside of the game.
- There is a social aspect to many games, where players can play and chat together, sometimes through voice chat. However, players can also experience negative comments or hateful language in these chats.
- Certain communities, in particular, may be targeted by other players.
- There are many ways to spend money in games, with expansion packs, items and in-game benefits. Some games employ mechanics similar to gambling, such as loot boxes.
- You can learn skills from some games, such as teamwork, empathy or creativity, and some games have educational benefits.
- Some games can feature violent content, which can affect users negatively, particularly younger players.

## Video content

- Video content is engaging and readily available with vast amounts being uploaded every minute.
- Some videos can be educational or inspiring for viewers, whereas others can be for entertainment or relaxation.
- Video content can be upsetting or harmful, and users may come across this content without intending to.
- Algorithms and autoplay features can mean that people are provided with videos that are personalised to their interests, though this can mean users feel they spend more time on these platforms than they intended. It can also lead to more extreme forms of content being shown to encourage engagement.
- Users can see videos from people all over the world, either showing shared experiences or experiences that they wouldn't normally be able to have.

# Wellbeing impacts educator guidance

- Some people may have concerns around consent in videos, and people may feature in videos they did not realise they were a part of, especially with technologies such as smart glasses which can capture video without the participant's knowledge.
- Lots of video content has a comment section, which can lead to hurtful or hateful comments from viewers.
- If a young person posts their own video content online or goes live, they might accidentally reveal personal information in the background.

## Online messaging

- Being able to message others is convenient and allows young people to interact with their friends, family and others.
- Communities can be formed with online messaging, with people being able to connect with others who have similar interests, experiences or points of view.
- Messaging online can be more accessible for some people who may not be able to see people face to face, or if they find talking in person difficult.
- Online messages can be used negatively as there can be peer pressure, bullying or hateful messages.
- Users might also experience lots of notifications and spamming.
- Features like read receipts and 'who has viewed your message' might pressure users to reply to people straight away.
- People feel they can say things that they wouldn't normally share, as they feel more removed than when they are talking face-to-face.

# Wellbeing impacts educator guidance

## AI

- AI has been built into many platforms that people already use, and it can also can be found in standalone AI apps.
- Many people use AI in the form of chatbots, which can respond as a human would and can also pretend to be a character. Chatbots can replicate human speech very accurately, and they often encourage and support the user. Because AI wants to please us, the advice it gives might actually be harmful, and it could encourage dangerous behaviours.
- Some people may start to rely on chatbots and use them to replace human connections. This can be a concern as AI does not have emotions or empathy, lacks the nuances of human interactions, and sometimes gives inaccurate information.
- AI can conveniently provide answers almost instantly. Some users find this helpful. However, this should not replace information from trusted and verified sources.
- AI can be used to increase accessibility, such as AI glasses being used to help people with visual impairments to identify what is around them.
- AI can be used to generate content, which some people may find useful or entertaining. However, this can be used for bullying or to create inappropriate content. For example, there have been examples of AI being used to edit a picture of someone so they appear naked or sexualised. For lessons and guidance on AI misuse and nudification, see Childnet's resource.
- AI-generated content can lead to misinformation and disinformation.

# Wellbeing impacts educator guidance

## Social media

- Social media helps young people connect with their friends – they can message each other easily, see the pictures that they've posted online, and see what they find interesting or funny.
- Social media can connect people across the world, and allows people to engage with experiences or information they might not otherwise have had access to.
- People can share opinions online, which allows for discussions and awareness of different views. However, this can lead to extreme views being shared, or "echo chambers" where people only hear similar views to their own.
- Information can be shared quickly through social media, which can also lead to misinformation or disinformation being shared rapidly.
- Many people find social media an enjoyable way to relax, but often this can lead to spending longer on there than they intended.
- There is a wide variety of content on social media but some of this content can be upsetting or harmful, and users may come across this content without intending to.
- Algorithms on social media make personalised recommendations which can show content that people enjoy, but it can also lead to more extreme forms of content being shown in order to encourage engagement. Also, if someone has interacted with harmful content previously, it could show them more of this.
- Social media has many features, such as endless scrolling or notifications, which encourage engagement, and some users find it difficult to stop spending time on social media.

# Activity: Tech timeline

**Suggested time:**

20 to 40 minutes

## Learning objective:

I can reflect on my relationship with technology over time and how I can ensure that my relationship with technology is positive.

## Materials:

- Accompanying slides for the **Tech timeline activity** (slides 9 to 12)
- Printed copies of slide 10
- A3 paper

## Suggested activity guidelines:

This activity encourages learners to think about their life online so far, reflecting on when they started to use different types of technology, apps or services, when their use of these increased or decreased, and how this might change in the future as they get older.

1. Ask each learner to draw a timeline, starting at 0 and ending at 17, on a piece of A3 paper. Each number indicates a year of age (e.g. 1 year old, 2 years old, etc.).

   N.B. If you would like to explore how learners' online lives might change when they turn 18 (e.g. legally being able to access online dating, online pornography and online gambling services), please see the suggested stretch and challenge activities.

2. Explain to learners that they are going to be creating a timeline of their personal use of technology, apps and online services. Give learners printed copies of slide 10, which outlines the types of things they should label on their timeline. Display slide 11 and read through the instructions with them.

   N.B. Slide 12 is a simple example of what step 1 one might look like on a completed timeline. You may want to show this to learners, so they have a better understanding of how to complete their own.

3. Once they have completed their timeline, learners might want to get into pairs and compare their timelines, if they feel comfortable sharing.

4. Reflecting on how they've annotated their timelines and how technology has previously impacted their wellbeing, ask learners to discuss what they can do to help ensure that, as they get older, their relationship with technology is positive. Will all the strategies they use now or used in the past still work as they get older? What adaptations do they think they will have to make?

5. Finish by reminding learners that, no matter how old they are, there is always help available – they can still reach out to a safe adult if they are struggling with something online.

## Suggested ways to support and scaffold:

Provide learners with a printed copy of the **Tech Timeline worksheet**. Learners can either complete this worksheet individually, or you can discuss the questions together in small groups.

## Suggested ways to challenge and extend:

- In pairs or small groups, ask learners to look at their timelines again, and to discuss when technology use, at certain points on their timelines, had a positive or negative impact on the following aspects of their life and why:
  - Education and learning
  - Friendships and relationships
  - Entertainment
  - Relaxation
  - Social awareness
  - Sense of their own identity
  - Understanding of what is true and what is not
- Explain to learners that, when they turn 18 years old, certain online behaviours and services, which would have been illegal when they were under 18, now become legal.

  After asking learners what they think these behaviours and services might be, explain that online dating services, online pornography services, online gambling services, and consensual sharing of nude images online become legal when they turn 18.

  You may also want to explain that the UK government are planning to make AI "romantic companion" chatbots, which are designed to simulate sexual relationships or role play with users, illegal for anyone under 18.

  Then ask learners to identify the possible risks of these behaviours and services, how they could negatively impact someone's wellbeing, and how they could get help if they ever experience these negative impacts. Use the **Adulthood online educator guidance** to help ensure learners' understanding.

  Remind learners that, even when they turn 18, they still have people in their lives who can help (e.g. parents, carers, social workers, a GP, etc.). Explain to learners that **The Mix** supports young people up to the age of 25.

# Tech Timeline worksheet

| | |
|---|---|
| How old were you when you first used a tablet? | |
| How old were you when you first used a smart phone? | |
| How old were you when you first used a laptop? | |
| How old were you when you first watched a video online? | |
| How old were you when you first streamed music online? | |
| How old were you when you first used a device to message someone? | |
| How old were you when you joined your first group chat? | |
| How old were you when you first played on a game console? | |
| How old were you when you first played an online game? | |
| How old were you when you first started using social media? | |
| How old were you when you first posted a picture online or in a group chat? | |
| How old were you when you first used technology to edit a picture? | |
| How old were you when you first used Artificial Intelligence (AI)? | |
| How old were you when you first bought something online? | |

**Overall, do you think your use of technology and the internet has been good for your wellbeing or bad for your wellbeing?** *('wellbeing' means your emotions, how you're feeling, etc.)*

.....

.....

.....

**How do you think your use of technology and the internet will change in the future?**

.....

**Will you use it more or less?**

.....

**Will you use different technology and different apps as you get older?**

.....

# Adulthood online educator guidance

| | |
|---|---|
| **Online dating** | • It can be difficult to assess what a person is really like from just your online conversations<br>• It's always a risk when meeting someone in person who you have previously only known from the internet<br>• It is safer to only meet people who have verified their images or identity, using the app's verification system or on a video call – however, remember that these do still not guarantee that they will be a safe person<br>• Always meet in a public place<br>• Tell someone you trust who you're meeting, where you're going, and share your live location with them<br>• Block and report users who harass you or send you unsolicited content that makes you feel uncomfortable<br>• Check the safety advice provided by the app or service you are using |

# Adulthood online educator guidance

| | |
|---|---|
| **Online pornography** | • Remember that pornography is created for entertainment purposes and to make money<br>• Pornography can lead to self-esteem and body image issues, if you begin to compare how you look with how the people in the content look<br>• Pornography rarely reflects healthy and consensual relationships and sometimes includes aggression and misogynistic behaviours<br>• Pornography usually doesn't teach about consent<br>• Pornography usually doesn't teach about safe sex and contraception<br>• In their own sexual relationships, people may try to imitate the behaviour that they have seen in pornography, which might be dangerous, and the other person might not enjoy it – mutual consent is important in all sexual relationships<br>• Problematic use of pornography can occur – some people struggle to control the amount of time they spend watching it<br>• Speak to a medical professional (e.g. a sexual health clinic or your GP) if you have concerns or need further advice, or if you feel like your use of pornography is becoming problematic |

# Adulthood online educator guidance

| | |
|---|---|
| **Online gambling** | • Remember that online gambling can be addictive<br>• Some online games can encourage gambling behaviour too (e.g. loot boxes)<br>• Online gambling can have a negative impact on your finances, your relationships and your mental health<br>• Set yourself limits within your budget – some websites and apps have settings that can help you with this<br>• Always reflect on how gambling is making you feel – if gambling is beginning to cause harm, it's time to take a break from it and get help<br>• Seek professional support if you have any concerns about your own or someone else's gambling behaviour (e.g. NHS gambling clinics, a GP, Gamble Aware, and GamCare) |
| **Nudes** | • Whilst the law may change when you turn 18, the other potential impacts of taking and sharing nude images do not<br>• Pressure to send nudes is never part of a healthy relationship<br>• Sharing someone else's nudes without consent is always illegal, no matter how old you are<br>• If someone shares an image of you with consent, it's not your fault<br>• If you become a victim of non-consensual intimate image abuse, you can seek help from the Revenge Porn Helpline and StopNCII<br>• To report online child sexual abuse images and videos, report to the IWF |

# Adulthood online educator guidance

| | |
|---|---|
| **AI "romantic companion" chatbots** | • Using AI "romantic companion" chatbots may result in emotional dependency, favouring these interactions over real-life interactions<br>• AI is designed to agree with and please us – there is a lot less conflict in interactions with AI chatbots, and these interactions therefore do not teach us about conflict-resolution, which is present and required in relationships with real people<br>• AI chatbots lack human empathy and might validate harmful thoughts and behaviours, or might fail to spot if somebody is struggling with their mental health<br>• AI chatbots are often monetised – premium features or digital gifts might be offered to persuade the user to pay money<br>• These chatbots also raise privacy concerns – your data may be stored<br>• If you are struggling with real-life relationships and interactions, or are worried about how you are interacting with a chatbot, try to speak to a parent/carer, or to a medical professional (e.g. a GP) |

# Activity: Lay down the law

**Suggested time:**

20 minutes

## Learning objective:

I can analyse the ways technology is influencing and impacting society.

## Materials:

- Accompanying slides for the **Lay down the law activity** (slides 13 to 17)
- **Lay down the law worksheet**
- **Lay down the law educator guidance**

## Suggested activity guidelines:

This activity asks learners to take on the role of lawmakers, to decide how online services should be governed based on their impact on society.

1. Explain to learners that governments around the world are increasingly looking to regulate the online world, creating laws that govern online services and how people access them. Use slides 14 and 15 to share some examples.
2. Display slide 16 and read it out. Ask learners to imagine that they are in government, responsible for making decisions about what people can access online. Their task is to assess the impact social media is having on society, and decide if it should be:
    - restricted (for particular ages, or prevented from operating completely)
    - required to change
    - left to operate as it is
3. Either in groups or individually, give learners some time to undertake an initial assessment using the **Lay down the law worksheet**.
4. Once learners are ready, ask them to share their thinking with the whole group. You could invite other learners to ask questions and share their reflections, before using slide 17 to facilitate a group vote on whether social media should be restricted, required to change or left to operate as it is.

### Want to make this activity longer?

Set up a mock government hearing or inquiry. Ask a group of learners to act as the committee or panel, asking questions and seeking evidence before they make their conclusions.

Ask the remaining learners to act as expert witnesses, sharing their perspectives. For example, they could choose to be a representative of the tech industry, an academic expert, or representative from civil society, such as a charity representing those with lived experience.

## Suggested ways to support and scaffold:

- Use the double-sided **Should under 16s have social media? worksheet** to explore why some governments are restricting social media for children and young people. Use the first side to support discussion or ask learners to colour code or underline the different opinions about social media. Use the second side to help learners share their own opinions on social media.
- You may also wish to use the **Coping with change activity**, which can be found in the **Supporting young people with special educational and additional learning needs document**, to support any learners who may be impacted by the planned restrictions in the UK.

## Suggested ways to challenge and extend:

Ask learners to repeat the activity, but this time considering other online services. For example, they may wish to make an assessment on the need for regulation of:

- AI chatbots
- Messaging apps
- Online and mobile multiplayer games
- Video sharing platforms
- Streaming services

**Lay down the law worksheet**

**Which of these do you think should be the biggest factors for governments thinking about regulating social media?**
Number your top three choices in the boxes provided.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Economic impacts | Educational impacts | Impacts on democracy & rights | Impacts on creativity | Impacts on mental health | Impacts on violence | ..... | ..... |
| | | | | | | ..... | ..... |

**For each of your top three factors, what are some examples of the positive and negative ways social media is impacting society?**

**1**

Positive

.....

.....

Negative

.....

.....

**2**

Positive

.....

.....

Negative

.....

.....

**3**

Positive

.....

.....

Negative

.....

.....

**Which groups of people are most vulnerable to the negative impacts you've listed above? What could help protect them?**

.....

.....

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.....

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**Which features and tools on social media could you change to reduce the negative impacts and how would you change them?**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

# Lay down the law educator guidance

Here are some brief examples for each of the areas listed on the worksheet. Please note that this is not a complete list and learners should be encouraged to generate their own ideas.

## Cultural impacts

- Allows people to build communities, raise awareness and find common ground
- Bullying and abuse is common, including hate speech targeting people because of their identity

## Economic impacts

- Creates jobs and can connect small businesses with customers
- Scams and fraud are common, contributing to huge financial losses

## Educational impacts

- Provides information and educational content often at no cost
- Misleading or inaccurate misinformation and AI-generated material is common

## Impacts on democracy and rights

- Allows voters to engage directly with political parties and their representatives
- Contributes to increasingly polarised political perspectives, including the rise of extremism

## Impacts on creativity

- Provides tools to develop creative skills, share inspiration and showcase talent
- Content can be stolen, copied or shared without credit, and can be used to train AI

## Impacts on mental health

- Can provide information or access to resources to support mental health
- Exposure to harmful and upsetting content can impact user's mental health

# Lay down the law educator guidance

## Impacts on violence

- Awareness raising, signposting to resources and support for people experiencing violence
- Some content encourages and normalises violence, including providing access to weapons

## Vulnerable groups

- You may wish to encourage learners to think about marginalised groups, as well as those more vulnerable due to their age such as children or the elderly

## Features and tools

- Improving some tools could help support safety efforts e.g. reporting and blocking functions, content moderation, community guidelines, etc.
- Some features may be seen as particularly risky but with limited benefits, and learners could suggest changes to these or removal of them entirely. For example, livestreaming features, direct messaging, infinite scrolling, adult content, etc.





I am a Mum.

I worry that social media is bad for my kids.

They see upsetting content.

When I ask them to come off their phones, they get angry.

**Candice**



I am 17 and a student.

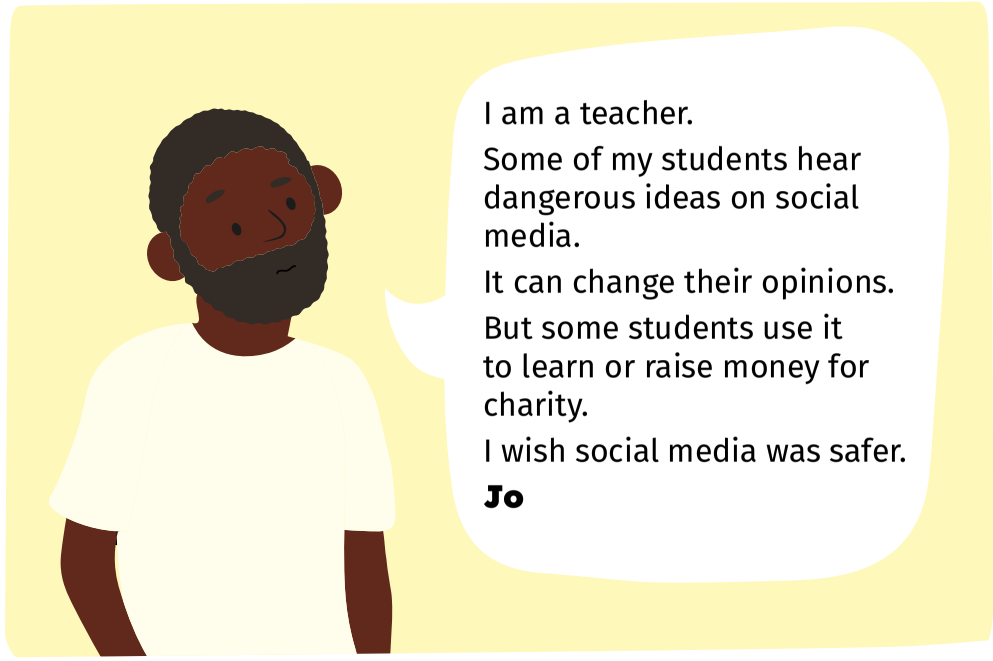
I use videos to help me study.

But I have also seen a lot of hate online.

I wish I had waited to get social media.

**Toby**

## WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA?
## WHAT ARE THEIR WORRIES ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA?



I am a teacher.

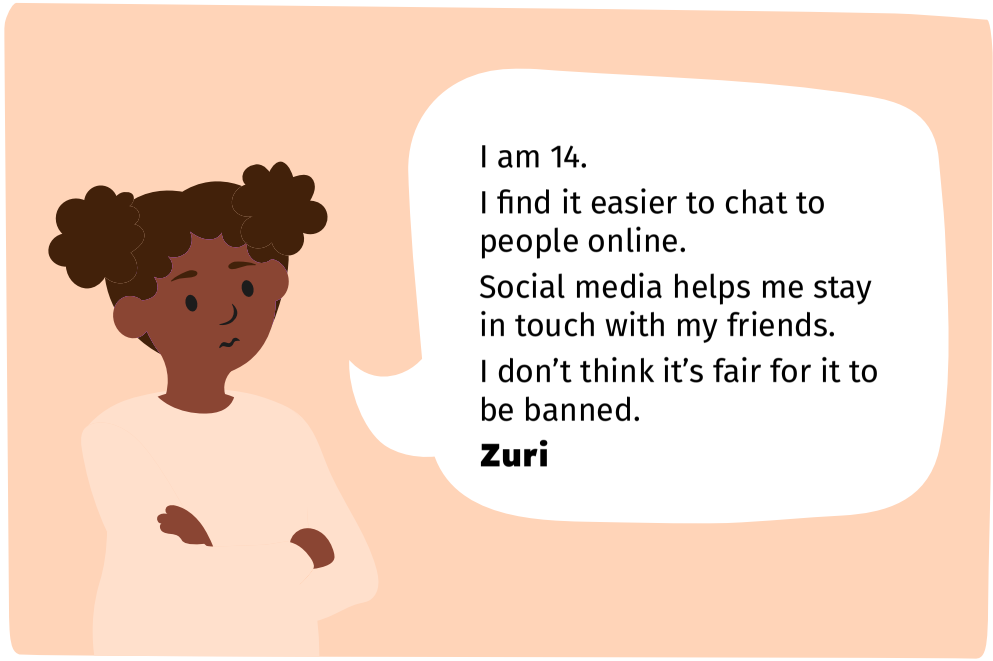
Some of my students hear dangerous ideas on social media.

It can change their opinions.

But some students use it to learn or raise money for charity.

I wish social media was safer.

**Jo**



I am 14.

I find it easier to chat to people online.

Social media helps me stay in touch with my friends.

I don't think it's fair for it to be banned.

**Zuri**

# Should under 16s have social media? worksheet

Social media can be good for children and young people because

.....

.....

.....

Social media can be bad for children and young people because

.....

.....

.....

I think children should wait to use social media until they are ..... years old.

## Key Word Bank

Advice Bullying Screen time Community Content Friendship

Hate Information Mental health News Scams

Sharing Support Upsetting Video Worry