



Pornography

Talking to young people about pornography online

Online pornography can be images or videos online of naked adults, adults having sexual intercourse, or showing sexual behaviour. Pornography, both online and offline, can influence how they think about sex, relationships and their own body image.

It's important that we talk to children about the sexualised content they see, including online pornography, to help them interpret and critique this information and to help them develop healthy and positive attitudes towards sex, relationships and their own body.

Tips for parents and carers

Have age appropriate conversations

Young people may feel embarrassed, curious or confused. How adults respond matters, and it is important to stay calm even if you feel shocked or concerned.

You can explain that there are some things online that are for adults only and that if they ever see anything that worries them online that they should come and tell you. Make sure they know to always tell you if anyone ever shows them a picture of a naked person, or if anyone wants to take a picture of their private parts.

The **NSPCC Pants Rule** is a great way to start a conversation about private parts of our bodies.

It is helpful to acknowledge curiously without encouraging viewing. Curiosity about bodies and relationships are normal, but to explain that some of what online isn't a good way to learn about relationships or sex. It is important to link this to values such as respect and consent.

Give your child strategies for dealing with anything inappropriate online

It can help to give your child strategies for dealing with any online content they are not comfortable with – such as turning off the screen, closing the laptop lid or turning over the tablet or phone and then coming to speak to you.

Make sure your children know they can turn to you, even if they have viewed something on purpose

If they do tell you they have seen something inappropriate, don't panic. Reassure them they've done the right thing, turning to you. It may help to practice what you would say if you found out, or if your child told you, that they had seen something pornographic online. Be prepared that it may prompt questions about sex and relationships, and it is important to answer questions in an age appropriate way.

It is also important to ask the young person about how they feel, which creates an open conversation without judgement. It also gives an opportunity to build a healthy



understanding of real relationships and how what is shown in pornography often ignore feelings, communication and boundaries.

Make use of parental control tools

With young children, we recommend that you make use of parental control tools available. These can be applied at device level or the platform and from your internet service provider. See our guides for setting up parental controls.

Be aware that parental controls are never 100% effective, but they do help limit the chances of your child being accidentally exposed to pornographic content.

Remain non-judgemental

Be aware that young people may need extra support if they are showing signs of distress after seeing content, if they are experiencing repeated or compulsive viewing. If there is a change in behaviour, mood or relationships. If concerned, consider seeing advice from your SSW.

Foster respect

Young people learn from adults, which is why it is important to avoid jokes or comments that objectify people, to show respect in your own relationships and to reinforce positive messages about body image and consent.