

Talking to your child about online sexual harassment: A guide for parents

On 16th December 2021, the Children's Commissioner for England Dame Rachel de Souza launched a guide for parents and carers on online sexual harassment and how they can support children to stay safe online. A copy of the guide can be downloaded from the following link:

[Talking to your child about online sexual harassment: A guide for parents](#)

"The things I wish my parents had known..." draws together advice from 16-21-year-olds on how parents should manage tricky conversations around sexual harassment and access to inappropriate content, including pornography.

An overriding message is that parents should start these challenging conversations early. Their focus groups suggest broaching topics before a child is given a phone or a social media account, which is often around the age of 9 or 10. The guide focuses on issues such as:

- Easily accessed online pornography
- Pressure to send nude pictures
- Sexualised bullying
- Editing pictures and body image
- Peer pressure

We hope that this guide will serve as a useful starting point to raise awareness and understanding of online harassment, and to complement messages central to the new RSE curriculum.

This is the latest in a series of wider projects from the Children's Commissioner addressing online harms, culminating in a recent roundtable with tech companies, holding them to account for the effects of services they provide as part of our contribution to the government's new Online Safety Bill. This work has been hugely bolstered by the support of ministers Nadhim Zahawi MP, Secretary of State for Education, Nadine Dorries MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.