

# HOW TO BE SAFE ONLINE

For 4 - 11  
Year Olds





Wondering how to stay safe online? Be SMART with a heart and follow our top tips for using the internet safely and positively.

**GET  
SMART**



S

## S is for Safe

Keep your personal information safe. When chatting or posting online don't give away things like your full name, password or home address. Remember personal information can be seen in images and videos you share too. Keep them safe to keep yourself safe.







## M is for Meet

Meeting up with someone you only know online, even a friend of a friend, can be dangerous as this person is still a stranger. If someone you only know online ever asks you to meet up, for personal information or for photos/videos of you then tell an adult straight away



**A**

## A is for Accepting

Think carefully before you click on or open something online (e.g. links, adverts, friend requests, photos) as you never know where they may lead to or they may contain viruses. Do not accept something if you are unsure of who the person is or what they've sent you.



**R**

## R is for Reliable

You cannot trust everything you see online as some things can be out of date, inaccurate or not entirely true. To find reliable information compare at least three different websites, check in books and talk to someone about what you have found.





## T is for Tell

Tell a trusted adult if something or someone ever makes you feel upset, worried or confused. This could be if you or someone you know is being bullied online. There are lots of people who will be able to help you like your teachers, parents, carers or contact Childline





## Be SMART with a heart

Remember to always be smart with a heart by being kind and respectful to others online. Make the internet a better place by helping your friends if they are worried or upset by anything that happens online.



How much time should I spend online?

It doesn't matter what you're doing with your time, there will be a limit when it's no longer sensible to keep using a device. The problem is that this limit is different for everyone.

Luckily there are special signs that you might recognise, from your body and the world around you, when you've been online for too long.

Signs you've been online too long

Do any of these sound familiar?

- I get a headache
- My tablet gets really hot
- The TV asks if I'm still watching
- I feel really grumpy and bored with the game
- The screen looks blurry after a while





## What should I do if I'm worried?

If you're experiencing signs you've been online too much, or you're worried about the amount of time you spend online, just remember: it all comes down to having a healthy balance of online and offline activities.

It's a bit like a healthy diet – in the same way you need lots of different types of food to help your body stay healthy, you also need lots of different types of activities.

The time you spend online should just be one small part of your day alongside other activities like going to school, eating meals, doing homework, playing sports, seeing friends, chatting with family and much more.





# ONLINE FRIENDS

What makes a good online friend?

Like an offline friend, a good online friend might be:

- respectful
- caring
- a good listener
- trustworthy
- fun
- honest
- thoughtful
- reliable

But nobody can be all of those things, all the time! Nobody is perfect and it's completely natural to make mistakes or have disagreements.

Mistakes don't have to be the end of a friendship though. There's a really simple thing which you can do to help make the situation right.

What should I do if an online friend wants to meet up?

Having online friends can be lots of fun – it's always nice to have people to talk to or play games with but it's really important that these friendships are positive and safe too.

First, think about...  
How do you know this online friend?





## I know them in person...

Great! The internet is perfect for staying in touch with our offline friends – especially if they live a long way away or in another country.

It's also a really exciting way to make plans with your friends, but make sure that you check with your parents or whoever looks after you before you agree to the final arrangements.

They will still want to know when and where you and your friend are meeting, so they can help you stay safe.






## I only know this person online...

Sometimes people make friends online who they've never met before in person. For some people these can feel like really close friendships – they may spend lots of time chatting together or playing games, they may talk about things that are important to them, and they may feel like they really trust their online friend. Unfortunately not everyone online is who they say they are and an online friend who you've never met before is still a stranger, even if you have been chatting to them for a long time.

This doesn't mean you have to stop talking to them or that you can't have fun online with them, it just means you have to be careful to always keep yourself safe. For example, you shouldn't share any personal information with them.



**SOCIAL  
MEDIA**

How old do I need to be to use social media?

Like lots of things online, there are special rules for using most social media services, which you agree to when you sign up. Often these rules are included as part of the 'Terms and Conditions'.

Nearly all social media services have a rule about how old you have to be to use them. **For lots of them you have to be at least 13 years old, although some services say older.**



# ONLINE BULLYING

What should I do if someone online is mean to me?

Not everyone online is always kind and friendly. People can say and do things which might upset or worry you –

but you should never have to feel that way.

Online bullying or cyberbullying is bullying behaviour that takes place online or using technology.

An argument between two friends is not cyberbullying, but repeated name-calling, exclusion or other unkind messages could be.

Bullying in any form, online or offline, is never okay.





**REPORTING**

## What does the report button do?

There are loads of fantastic websites and apps where you can play and chat with other people online.

It's important that places online where people spend time together are safe and fun for everyone. This means everyone needs to follow the rules and be respectful to others.

Luckily if something goes wrong online, there's always something you can do about it.



## How do I make a report?

The report button is a really useful tool, which you can find on lots of different games and apps. It is a way of telling someone that you've seen or heard something upsetting.

Look out for these symbols:





## What can I report?

You can report different things and for different reasons. For example:

- A player or user who has done something wrong.
- A post which doesn't follow the site rules or is upsetting.
- A comment on a post – for example, if someone is being unkind or bullying.





What happens to my report?  
All of the information in your report will be sent off to the safety team of the site or app you are using. The content you've reported will be looked at to decide if it breaks the site rules.

What happens next?  
If your report shows someone has broken the rules, the safety team can take action like:

- Deleting upsetting posts or comments.
- Giving users a warning about their behaviour.
- Suspending users accounts for a short amount of time.
- Removing users from the platform entirely.

If it doesn't, this should be explained to you and you may be given some other advice on what to do next.





# SHARING ONLINE

What do I need to know about sharing things online?

Whatever you're choosing to share, and whoever you're sharing it with, it's important you do so safely and positively





## What is personal information?

Personal information is all of those details about your life which should be kept private. They are details which could give away information about who you are or which could put you at risk if shared with a stranger.

Here are some examples:

- full name
- address
- telephone number
- birthday
- school passwords

Can you think of any others?



How long do the things I've shared stay online?

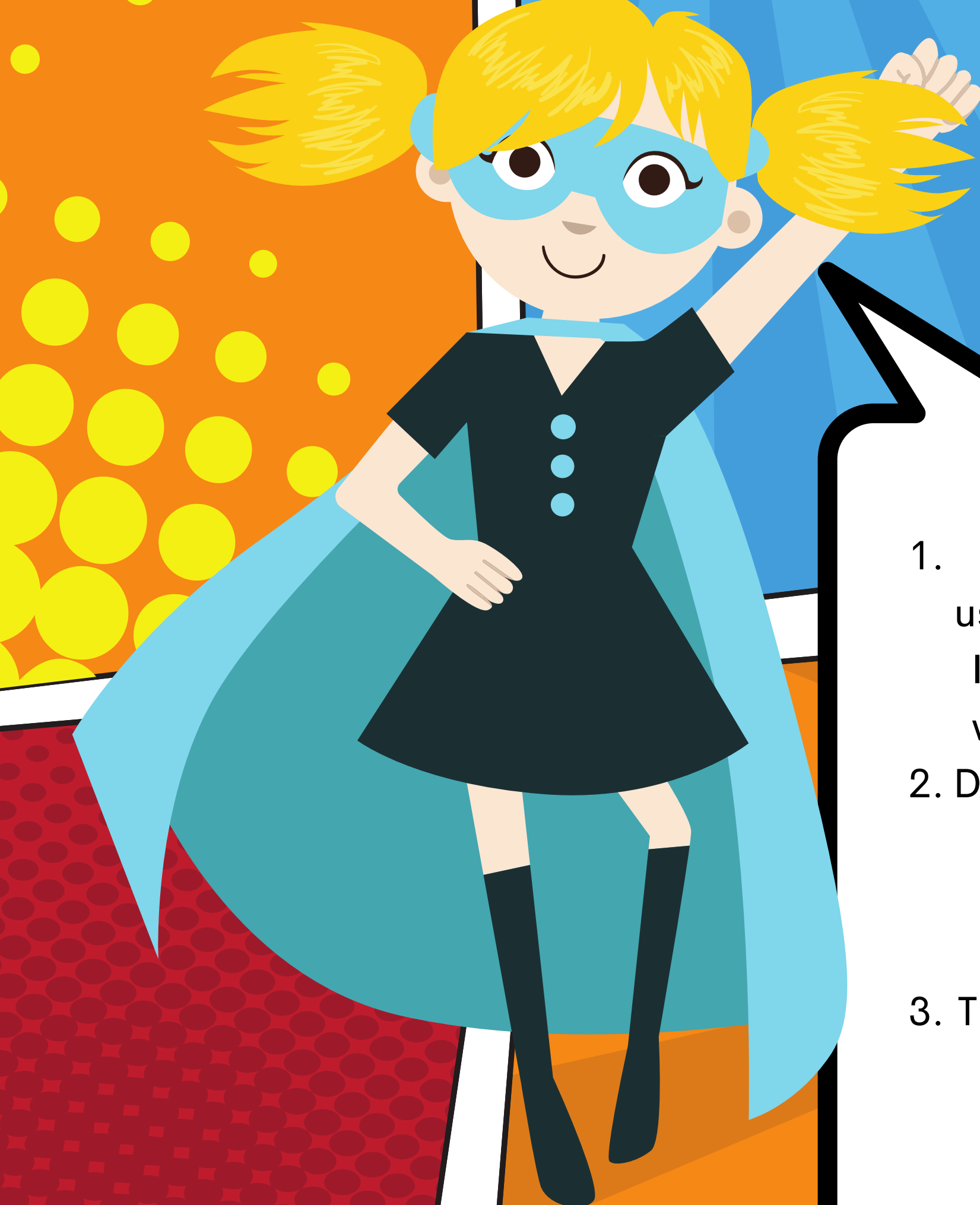
Once you've shared something online, it can be difficult to take it back. You may be able to remove the post you shared, but you can't stop other people from copying or screenshotting it and sending it on to more people.





What do I need to know about online gaming?  
There are lots of things to think about when  
online gaming, from other players, to spending  
money

**ONLINE  
GAMING**



## Username & Passwords

1. Don't include any personal information in your username. For example your name, age or school. Instead go for a nickname or another fun choice which doesn't include clues about who you are.
2. Don't go for an easy password. Things like 12345, Password123 or a password made out of your personal information are easier to guess and mean your account won't be as secure!
3. Treat your password like your toothbrush. It's just for you to know and use, and definitely don't share it with friends – even if you trust them.

## Spending money

Did you know that games and apps may charge you real money? Even after you've got the game, you may be asked to pay for additional items and upgrades. Look out for these words and signs which might show you're about to make a payment:

Buy now

£

\$

In-app purchases

In-game purchases

It can be confusing if games also have their own version of money (like gems or coins) which you can earn as you play and use to get upgrades. The most important thing to remember is:

If you're ever unsure about whether you're spending real money or not, speak to an adult first.





## Scams and Hacks

What is hacking?

Hacking is when someone tries to get into your account without your permission. When we're out in schools sometimes we're told about game accounts being hacked.

It's important to remember that the best thing you can do to avoid being hacked is keep your login details safe and secure – that means don't share them with friends and follow the tips on this page!





Have you heard of phishing?  
This is when somebody tries to get your personal information or login details by pretending to be a trustworthy company or person.

One form of phishing is when people create their own websites which look a lot like your favourite game. They want to trick you into submitting your login details which they can then use to hack your account.



**OTHER  
PLAYERS**

Playing games with your online friends can be great fun, but sometimes they can do and say things which aren't so nice.



## Top Tips

- If you're playing with people you don't know offline, remember not to share any personal information or details about yourself. (e.g. where you go to school, where you live or your passwords)
- If anyone says or does anything which is worrying or upsetting you, speak to an adult you trust for help and support.
- Make sure you know how to report and block other players, so if they break the rules or are participating in griefing or bullying you know how to stop them.





**GAME  
ADDICTION**

Games can be one of the best ways to have fun online, but for some people they can become a bit of an obsession.

Have you ever felt like this about your favourite game?

- I can't stop thinking about it
- I have to play it every day
- It's a really big part of my life
- I think I'm addicted to it
- Sometimes I even dream about it

Remember that there's always something you can do if a game is on your mind a lot.







## Top Tips

1. Talk to someone. It's not unusual to feel like this and talking to someone will make you feel better. They might be able to give you some helpful tips too!
2. Take regular breaks. This will give your brain a break from the game and give you an opportunity to think about or do something different!
3. Find a healthy balance. Try and find some other things you enjoy – maybe an offline activity like a sport and use this to balance out the time you spend playing games.



Adverts are ways for companies to show you other websites, apps and things to buy. Online adverts are normally designed to get us to click on them. They can appear as pop-ups, side bars or as full screen in an app. It's always best to avoid clicking on adverts, as you don't know where they will take you but they can sometimes be tricky to spot.



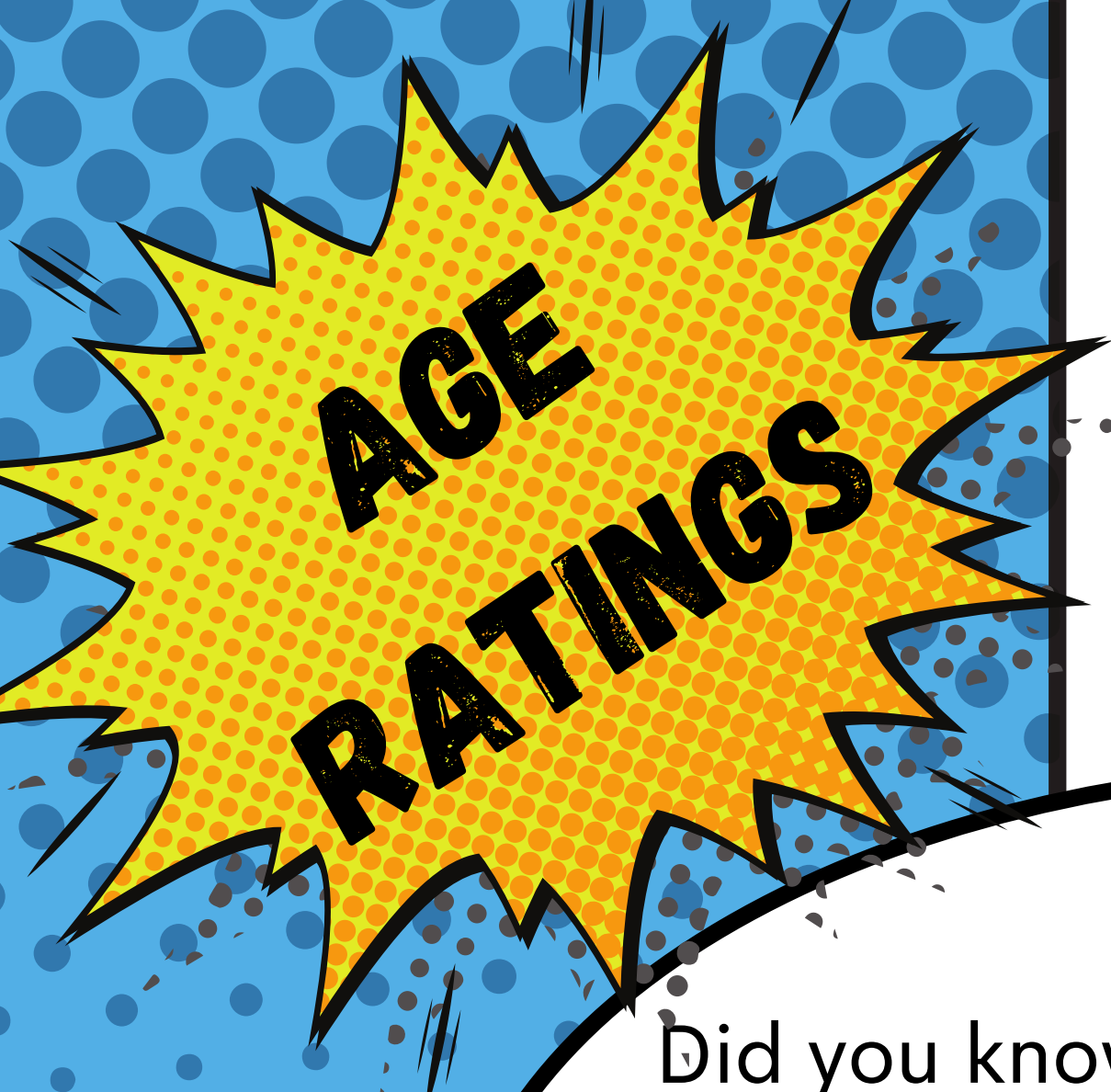


## How to spot adverts

Look out for anything:

- that looks different to the game
- you weren't expecting to appear
- that wants you to click on it (like a spinner, interactive task or a link to another site)





# AGE RATINGS

Did you know that games and apps are often rated by age?

This means that you need to make sure you're old enough to buy or play them!



Age rating information is shown on the back of the game case if you buy it in a shop and should be visible somewhere on the screen if you're downloading it. It's important to remember that games are given ratings for a reason – they might be scary, violent or show other content which is only appropriate for grown-ups. Sometimes we hear from young people who want to play a game even though they're too young, especially if other people they know are playing it too.



## Top Tips

1. Ask a parent or whoever looks after you for permission first. We all know grown-ups don't always know everything about the latest games, so it might be worth saying something like:
2. "I want to play this game but it's got a high age rating. Can you help me decide if it's safe?"
3. Remember that just because your friends are playing it, doesn't mean you have to. Everybody is different and just because your friends are playing it, doesn't make it the right choice for you too. We can all have different reactions to different things – there could still be things that might upset or scare you, so it's okay to decide not to play.
4. Know who to go to for support. Even if you've decided as a family that you're allowed to play the game, there's still a chance you might see or hear something which is upsetting. Make sure you have someone who you can go to for support – an adult at home or at school can give you advice and help you feel better.





**GET  
HELP**

Being online can be exciting and fun – but some things online can leave you feeling upset, worried or confused. If you feel any of these things when you're online it's important to know where to get help.





It's great to talk and it can really help you feel better about things. There's lots of people you can talk to, such as friends, family members and teachers.

Talk to someone!



### Make a report.

If something has happened on a service like a game or social media site, you might be able to make a report. You can often report other users if they've done something to upset or worry you. You can also report content – such as hurtful comments or upsetting photos that you don't want to see.



## Call Childline.

If you're really unsure about what to do and you don't have anyone you can talk to, then remember you can always call Childline on 0800 11 11

