# FAQs from educators

**❓ What should I do if I suspect that one of the issues is directly affecting any of my students?**

If a student displays worrying behaviour or makes reference to events/experiences which concern you then always refer to your school's safeguarding policy and share your concerns with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). It may be that this student needs additional support and advice which the lesson is not designed to cover, so it is important to work in partnership with the student and their family to ensure appropriate provision is made.

If you would like advice on a specific concern then we recommend you contact the Professionals Online Safety Helpline (POSH) on **0344 381 4772** or by emailing **helpline@saferinternet.org.uk**. Alternatively you can contact the NSPCC helpline on **0808 800 5000** or email **help@nspcc.org.uk**.

**❓ How should I handle disclosures made about something online?**

Online safety is a safeguarding issue, as recognised by Ofsted and by the Department for Education. If a child comes to you about something that is worrying them online, whether it be from negative contact they have received or from being shown something upsetting online, you should deal with this information in the same way as you would treat any safeguarding issue. Ensure you are familiar with your school's safeguarding policy so that you know how to take the appropriate action. For more information on **how to deal with disclosures**, visit our Childnet website **www.childnet.com/handling-disclosures**.

In **Ofsted's eyes**, "Safeguarding is not just about protecting children, learners and vulnerable adults from deliberate harm, neglect and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including: …online safety and associated issues." In the Department for Education's **'Keeping children safe in education: Information for all school and college staff'**[15] (September 2018) safeguarding requirements are outlined and negative online contact could be seen as a form of emotional abuse and being shown something inappropriate online as a form of sexual abuse.

**❓ My students switch off when I talk about being safe online as they say that I don't understand, or they explain that they know all about the risks online. What should I do?**

Between the ages of 11-14, young people are finding out who they are, where they fit in and who their friendship groups are. Sometimes they may turn to the internet for answers and although many young people find comfort from support groups online, others may find it a confusing place. It is important to acknowledge young people's views and remember that they will use the internet differently given that they are growing up with it. However, you still know how to keep them safe and can share with them reporting routes and where they can go to get advice and support.

Although it is vital that young people know about the online risks that exist, this toolkit is more about generating discussion about what they see online, or how online content might make them feel. The online world contains so many different sources of information and content that it can be hard to know what you can truly believe. This toolkit helps young people explore different online messages and separate the myth from the reality. Moreover, an Ofsted report from 2013 **'Not yet good enough: PSHE education in schools'**[16], stated that in "just under half of schools, pupils received lessons about staying safe but few had developed the skills to effectively apply their understanding, such as assertiveness skills to stand up for themselves and negotiate their way through difficult situations." This shows that although young people might be aware that they need to be safe online, they don't always apply their learning so it is always worth revisiting and giving them opportunities to apply their skills to different situations.

**❓ How can I talk about these issues when I don't want to introduce my students to things they haven't necessarily heard of?**

Young people are experiencing increasing pressures from the internet and social media but it is important to remember that they all have different maturation rates and levels of sexual awareness. Therefore it is vital to explore the issues they may be facing in an age appropriate manner in order to enable them to form healthy relationships with others and their own sexual awareness.

Beginning any unit of work with a brief pre-assessment of your students' understanding and needs will help you to ensure the lesson is pitched appropriately. This can be done through mind mapping existing knowledge and exploring a topic further using the suggested starter activities and the talking heads questions.

It is important to take a sensitive and non-judgemental approach to these topics and work in partnership with parents. Review our advice for involving parent and carers on *pages 10-12*.

You may also wish to use techniques such as 'Save it for later' boxes/walls to capture questions and discussions not appropriate for that session.

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15. www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
16. www.gov.uk/government/publications/not-yet-good-enough-personal-social-health-and-economic-education

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# FAQs from educators (Continued)

**(?) How do I approach topics that I feel uncomfortable in teaching and use terminology that I am unfamiliar with?**

From our work with educators we know that they feel least confident in talking about the topic of online pornography with their students. This toolkit has been designed to address this and support teachers in tackling this important and difficult topic with young people.

It is understandable that not every teacher will feel best placed to discuss such sensitive topics with their students but there are a number of things you can do in order to feel more prepared. You can:

▶ Begin by reviewing the educator's guidance and individual lesson guidance in full to ensure you are clear on the key objectives and messages.

▶ Run through the teacher's guidance with other staff as part of a CPD session and speak with senior leadership or lead teachers to make sure you know your school's policy. You will find a guide for using this toolkit in a staff training session on *pages 14-15*.

▶ Refer to the 'Handling sensitive and controversial issues' advice on *page 8*.

▶ Keep to the discussion questions and use the Childnet focus group quotes and suggested answers as a guide for discussions.

▶ Check for CPD training in your area, local authority or through external agencies such as the PSHE Association **www.pshe-association.org.uk/cpd-and-training**.

**(?) How can I use this resource with young people who have specific learning needs?**

Whilst this resource is not specifically designed to be used in a SEN school many of the activities are easily adaptable and have been created under a Creative Commons license. You may wish to replace some words with images by using software such as Communication in Print or by allowing the students to draw instead of write or discuss their answer.

In some of the lesson plans suggestions have been made for how the activity can be tailored to meet specific needs.

**(?) Can I make changes to the worksheets to adapt them for my group?**

'Myth vs Reality' is a free, downloadable Creative Commons resource for schools and youth groups to use. Lesson plans can be easily downloaded from our website, although changes can't be made directly to the worksheets as they are in PDF form. For more information, look at the following link: **creativecommons.org/licenses/by-ncsa/4.0/**

If you do have amendments, suggestions for activities or feedback then please contact **education@childnet.com**.

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