# Moving on up!

Our guide to the online aspects of moving from primary to secondary school

Preparing young people to move to secondary education, and enabling them to settle quickly is important for their wellbeing and learning. To help you with the online aspects of this move we have identified four important issues and provided discussion questions, supporting top tips and useful links.

One key message, that applies for all of the issues, is to regularly remind young people to talk to you or another trusted adult if anything happens online that makes them worried, confused or upset.

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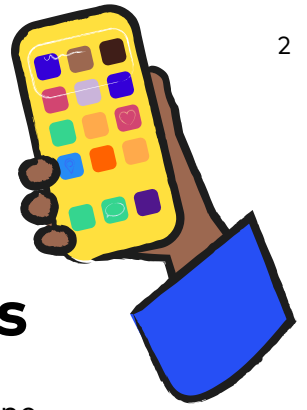
Supporting them with new devices

It is often around this age that young people will receive their first phone or a new games console. By starting conversations around these devices and establishing that you are there to help, you can really support young people to use them safely and responsibly.

Discussion questions

A Why do young people start to get phones at your age? Why do they want a phone?

B How can technology help someone to settle into a new school?

C What can go wrong when using a new device?

D How can adults like teachers and parents help young people use new devices safely?

Top tips

1 Talk to your learners regularly about the devices they are using. Ask them to tell you about any new features that phones or apps have or any new technology that they are hearing about. This can be an interesting way to discuss the benefits, risks and devise strategies.

2 Find out more about some of the risks young people face online: www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/teachers-and-professionals

3 Research any apps or games that young people are using that you are not aware of. Discuss these with colleagues and report any concerns you have to your Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Apps: www.commonsensemedia.org
Games: www.taminggaming.com

4 Encourage parents and carers to use parental controls. This useful site has step by step guides for devices, internet providers and apps www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls

# Preparing young people for an expanding circle of friends

Making the move to secondary school can bring lots of different emotions and a widening of young people's friendship group. They might be missing good friends from primary school but excited about the new friendships that are forming as they move to a bigger school. If they are using social media and games to stay in touch, this can make the move easier but it can also bring pressures and some risks. It is also important to recognise that some young people will not be playing online games, using phones or be on social media at this age.

Discussion questions

A Would you rather connect with your friends face to face or through devices?

B Is it better to use technology to keep up with old friends or make new ones?

C How might someone feel if they were in lots of group chats at their new school?

D How well do you think you should know someone, before you add them as a friend online?

Top tips

1 Acknowledge that technology can be useful to keep in touch with friends and remind them that friendships can change. When moving to a new school it can be difficult to keep up with old friends at the same time as making and meeting new people.

2 Remind your pupils to be careful with people they only know online. If that person ever asks them to meet up, for personal information or to see what they look like they should go to a trusted adult straight away and report it here: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
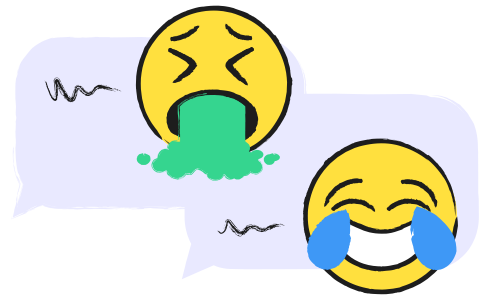
Peer pressure and online bullying

Being given your own device for the first time brings the potential to be connected to your peer group 24–7, and this can present challenges. Whilst it's natural for young people who are learning to use technology to make some mistakes, starting secondary school can result in changing friendships and bigger year groups, which means that arguments may be played out online, and peer pressure may increase from a desire to 'fit in' with new friends.

Discussion questions

A What are the best parts of connecting with friends and classmates online? What are some of the worst parts?

B How can you tell if something is bullying, and not just a joke between friends?

C How might someone feel if people make comments about their body or the way they look online?

D How can you be an ally to someone who is experiencing online bullying? (Take screenshots, report the content online, tell an adult, let the young person know that you are there for them).

E What should someone do if they are asked to do something online that makes them feel worried or uncomfortable? (Go straight to a trusted adult).

Top tips

1 Remind your learners about of the importance of being kind and respectful and how to do this.

2 Read our advice on tackling online bullying:
www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/online-bullying

3 Run activities to address sexualised bullying:
www.childnet.com/resources/just-a-joke

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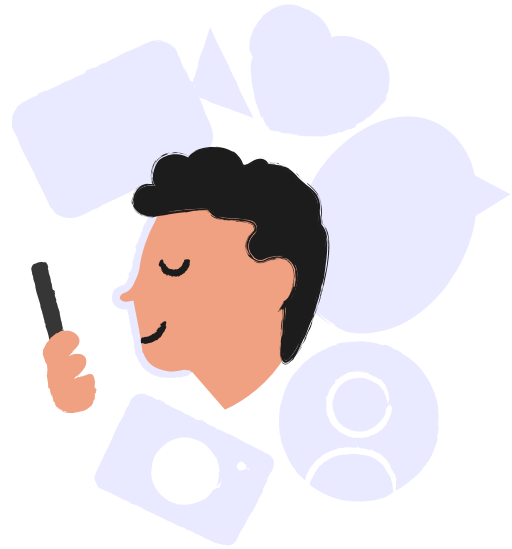
Digital wellbeing

Young people at this age are becoming more independent and likely to be experiencing big changes in their friendships, their bodies and their feelings as well as the place they go to school. These changes, together with new devices and friendships moving online, mean they may be spending longer on devices than before. It is important that young people begin to think about how going online can make them feel, and how to recognise when they need help.

Discussion questions

A   Would you like to spend more or less time online than you do now? Why?

B   How can going online make someone feel better or feel worse?

C   What can young people do to make sure that they enjoy going online? (E.g. interact with people who are a positive influence, turn off notifications, not feel the need to reply to everything straight away, using screen time tools, reporting inappropriate content etc.)

Top tips

1   Read up on helping young people have a healthy balance with technology:
www.childnet.com/help-and-advice/screen-time-healthy-balance-teachers

2   Provide opportunities for young people to discuss how going online can impact people's emotions negatively and positively.

3   Use this lesson to build their digital resilience:
www.childnet.com/resources/digital-resilience

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Childnet's mission is to work in partnership with others around the world to help make the internet a great and safe place for children. We work directly with children and young people from the ages of 3 to 18 on a weekly basis, as well as parents, carers, teachers and professionals, finding out about their real experiences online, and the positive things they are doing as well as sharing safety advice.

Explore more resources at childnet.com/resources