

10. Staying safer on screen; How to chat on webcam with confidence?

Do your children chat to people online who they have never met?

Do they chat on webcam?

Do they share pictures that they only want some people to see?

If they do, they need to know how to keep safe on screen.

Many people online are genuine and just want to chat and be friends. But the problem is, it's easy to lie online. There are a few people out there, abusers', who pretend to be friendly but want to hurt or take advantage of the other user. Their purpose is to get the child to chat on cam and then video them doing things they might be embarrassed about.

Like what?

Abusers will flirt, flatter and send sexy pictures. They might pretend to be a boy or girl similar age. They will try to convince the child that it's ok to talk to them about sex. Then they'll ask for naked selfies or go naked on webcam. They might ask the child to touch themselves or do other sexual acts. .

So what?

It's easy to get carried away on webcam. Chatting on webcam can be fun, exciting and feel sexy. It can feel really private. Unfortunately:

Webcam is not private, it can be recorded and shared

With the right software it's really simple to record anything that's displayed on a computer screen. That includes webcam video. If the person on the other end records the child, they could share the video with friends on Facebook, post it on YouTube or email it to others.

Abusers use videos to threaten young people

'if you don't go on webcam for me, I'm going to share this video with your friends'
Abusers try to force young people to make more sexual videos by threatening to share an embarrassing picture or video with their family or friends. Some have asked for money or for young people to hurt themselves.

"This would never happen to me"

Unfortunately this has happened to hundreds, potentially thousands, of young people in the UK. This has happened to boys and girls. It may have happened to someone you know. If it has, you probably wouldn't know about it.

Abusers try all sorts of tricks to make the child think it's safe to share an image or video

- They often pretend to be a girl or boy your age

- They send provocative pictures or webcam video of other people to Encourage the child to flirt
- The child might not be able to tell they are interacting with an abuser until after they've got a video or picture of you

Five common lies

Once they have an embarrassing video or picture abusers try to convince young people that they are more powerful than them. They're not. They lie to try to scare people into doing what they want. Here are some lies abusers use to try to trick young people:

Lie *"The police will never find me, I've hidden myself on the internet"*

Fact This is never true. All abusers leave a 'digital footprint' online. The police are very good at tracking these people down, even if they're not in the UK. Large numbers of individuals have been arrested for this type of crime.

You can report an abuser directly to the police: www.ceop.police.uk

Lie *"I'm definitely going to share this image if you don't go on webcam for me"*

Fact Abusers don't always share images, even when they've threatened to.

It's not in their best interests; the more information they share, the easier it is for the police to track them down.

Lie *"If I share this image you'll never get over it"*

Fact The child might feel you have no way out but this isn't true. If an abuser does share an image, this is better than being forced to do more sexual things. All problems can be solved with support. It's always best to report the matter, either to school by using reportbullying@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk or to www.ceop.police.uk

Lie *"It's your fault for sharing a naked image in the first place"*

Fact It's never the child's fault. If you're being threatened the only person responsible is the abuser.

Lie *"There's no one who can help you. I'm in control"*

Fact There's lots of help and support out there. Children can contact CEOP and speak to an advisor or school. Our staff are experienced and have dealt with this before, they won't judge the child or the family. They'll support you to make it stop.

How do you stay safe?

The best way to stay safe is for a child to understand that they should never do anything on webcam that they wouldn't want family or friends to see.

1. **Don't feel pressured to get naked on webcam.** If someone is pressurising you to go on cam, block them and report them to CEOP
2. **If someone threatens you online, tell an adult you trust as soon as possible.** If you can, get up from your computer immediately, walk away and tell an adult you trust or email reportbullying@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk
3. **It's never too late to get help.** No matter how far things have gone, there are always people out there to help. You can call Childline at any time on 0800 1111
4. **Remember - it's not the child's fault.** Whatever you've shared on webcam, the abuser is the only person to blame. They will be held responsible. The child will not be in trouble.
5. **The abuser has broken the law.** Encouraging a young person to get naked or do sexual things on webcam is a serious crime. The police will find and arrest the abuser.

Remember, you're not alone. If you're too embarrassed or scared to tell an adult you trust, you can call Childline on 0800 1111 or report to CEOP on www.thinkuknow.co.uk or email school on reportbullying@bostonspa.leeds.sch.uk

