

Empowering young people with additional learning needs to connect safely online.

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# Tackling hate speech online

Although governments and organisations are working hard to remove hate speech online, with so many people sharing their views online, it can be hard to stop it altogether.

Get insight on how to help your child tackle online extremism and hate speech.



# What makes young people more vulnerable to extremist views?

**Children and young people are especially vulnerable to online hate. If your child is:**

- Struggling with a **sense of identity**
- **Becoming distanced** from their cultural or religious background
- **Questioning** their place in society
- Experiencing **family problems**
- Experiencing a **traumatic event or bereavement**
- **Experiencing racism or discrimination** to do with disabilities or difficulties
- Having difficulty in **interacting socially**
- **Having difficulty feeling empathy** or understanding the consequences of their actions
- Struggling with **mental health issues**
- Going through a period of **low self-esteem**



They may encounter hate speech or extreme views and **become drawn in by a sense of belonging to a group.**

Our research shows that young people who are vulnerable offline are also vulnerable online. They're more susceptible to people who want to influence them, and also more likely to try to be like the others to be accepted as a friend.

The online space can be anonymous and users cannot see the effect of what they have said on the recipient. This can mean people act without the restraints they would normally have face to face. Being behind the screen can take away people's usual inhibitions. For some who are easily swayed, this can mean they adopt the attitudes and beliefs of a group they join online. Often young people are more vulnerable to radicalisation as they are more trusting and susceptible to this type of grooming.

There have also been cases where through 'mate crime' vulnerable people have been targeted with the intention of taking advantage of their isolation to exploit them.



## Social media's big names can have unpleasant views or promote unhealthy fitness products and diets

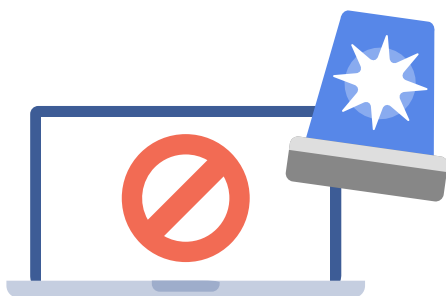
**Some young people follow their idols, stars, vloggers and other social media influencers.** They feel they know and adore this person who has 'let them into their life'. However, it is possible that some of these people will hold unacceptable views, or promote unproven diets or unsuitable products.

### How will I know whether my child's favourite social media channel is safe?

**You won't be able to watch everything that is said 24/7** so you might consider reading about this social media star on other websites, interviews, and reviews. Ask your child what they like about this person, watch a few videos together and keep talking to your child about staying safe, values, and wellbeing.



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hate**



### What should I do if my child is exposed to hate speech by other young people?

[EducateAgainstHate.com](https://www.educateagainsthate.com) - provides advice for parents if their child encounters extreme views. You can also see ['Tackling online hate and trolling' parent guide for more advice.](#)

If the hate speech is from other students at your child's school, keep the evidence and report it to the school in a written form, email or letter. Ask for a meeting, and at the meeting ask how the school will act in line with The Equality Act 2010 and your child's right to be safe.

If the hate speech is from someone known to your child who is not at the same school, it may be a matter for the police if it is persistent.

**Keep the evidence. Block or restrict the sender and report it to the social media platform.**