



## Establishing a safe and supportive learning environment



Safer Internet Day provides opportunities for children and young people to think about their online lives and the issues that might be affecting themselves or others.

When delivering any activity that addresses potentially sensitive subjects, it is essential to begin by creating a safe, supportive environment. By helping learners to feel confident and secure, they are more likely to share their ideas and opinions, ask questions, and contribute to discussions without fear of judgment or negative feedback.



### Before running an activity



#### Think about your physical space

Decide beforehand if you would like to change the seating arrangement of your space, e.g. sitting in a circle or changing the seating plan. Learners may feel more comfortable seated in a circle or in smaller groups.



#### Think about your virtual space

If running any sessions remotely via online platforms, give learners clear expectations or boundaries, such as reminding them to find a quiet, private space with an appropriate background from which to join any video calls.



#### Expect inclusivity

Remind learners of your school/organisation policy around treating others with respect. Make it clear that learners are expected to be mindful of the ways other people work and communicate and that everyone's opinions are valid.



#### Take a non-judgmental approach

Although some views or opinions can and should be challenged, it is important for both the educator and other learners not to shame or judge a learner who shares something sensitive.





# An internet we trust

Exploring reliability in the online world



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## 'No real names' policy

Ask learners to talk in the third person and speak about 'a friend' or 'someone they know' instead of using people's real names if they are recounting a story or an example. If learners do feel they need to share a personal story, signpost them to a time and place where they can do so with an appropriate member of staff.



## Create a set of ground rules

Agree on a set of ground rules with your learners that clearly state the expectations for behaviour and communication from both learners and the educator. It is important these are generated by the learners themselves so that they feel responsible for them. Use language that is age appropriate and as much as possible, framed as positive behaviours, e.g. 'We will support one another.'

Examples could include:

