Trust is the foundation of online safety

Our kids need to trust that they can come to us if they're in danger – and that includes dangers online. They need to trust that we want what's best for them, and that any rules we have about using the internet are there to keep them safe.

Trust can be hard for children and young people in care. They may find it hard to trust that anyone is looking out for their best interests. Or they may trust too easily, because they are searching for love and affection.

Our kids sometimes try to protect us too. They may not tell you about something unsafe online because they don't want to upset you, or they might worry about getting into trouble. Trust helps kids come to us, even when they are worried.

> "The kids have to be able to come to us and tell us if something's gone wrong, and that's a really hard thing. With consistency and just being open and honest about the whole thing, you can build that trust."
>
> **- Ron, carer.**

Work together to set fair boundaries

Working together helps make rules feel fair and sensible for children and young people. Boundaries aren't a punishment, they're about safety and wellbeing.

Help kids understand

"Because I said so" doesn't work for most kids. Help them understand the reason behind the rules, even if they don't like them. They probably had different rules in other households.

Remember that everyone is different

Trauma, mental health concerns, developmental delay, disability and life experiences all shape the ways we use the internet. Online habits need to suit each individual.

Speak plainly – even on difficult topics

Clear, open and honest conversations show children and young people that we trust them. Kids sometimes don't understand figures of speech. Be age appropriate, but be honest and clear too.

Be consistent

Having consistent rules helps them feel fair and reasonable. We can try to make rules consistent across households, including with biological families and respite carers. Kids really care about fairness.

Do what we say we'll do

We need to follow the rules ourselves. If we make promises, we have to keep them. We all know trust takes a long time to build, but moments to break.

BLOCK DELETE REPORT

Trust is the foundation of online safety

Good online habits set up kids for future success.

We can help children and young people develop a sense of responsibility for their own online safety and wellbeing. This helps them become healthy adults.

Key messages

➡ Our kids need to trust that they can tell us about online dangers – and trust that we won't blow up or overreact.

➡ Trust takes a long time to build, and moments to break.

➡ Consistency, fairness and honesty are key to maintaining trust for online safety.