

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Working together to keep our young people safe

Secondary | October 2024



In this issue:

- Image sharing
- Consent
- App focus: Telegram

Image sharing

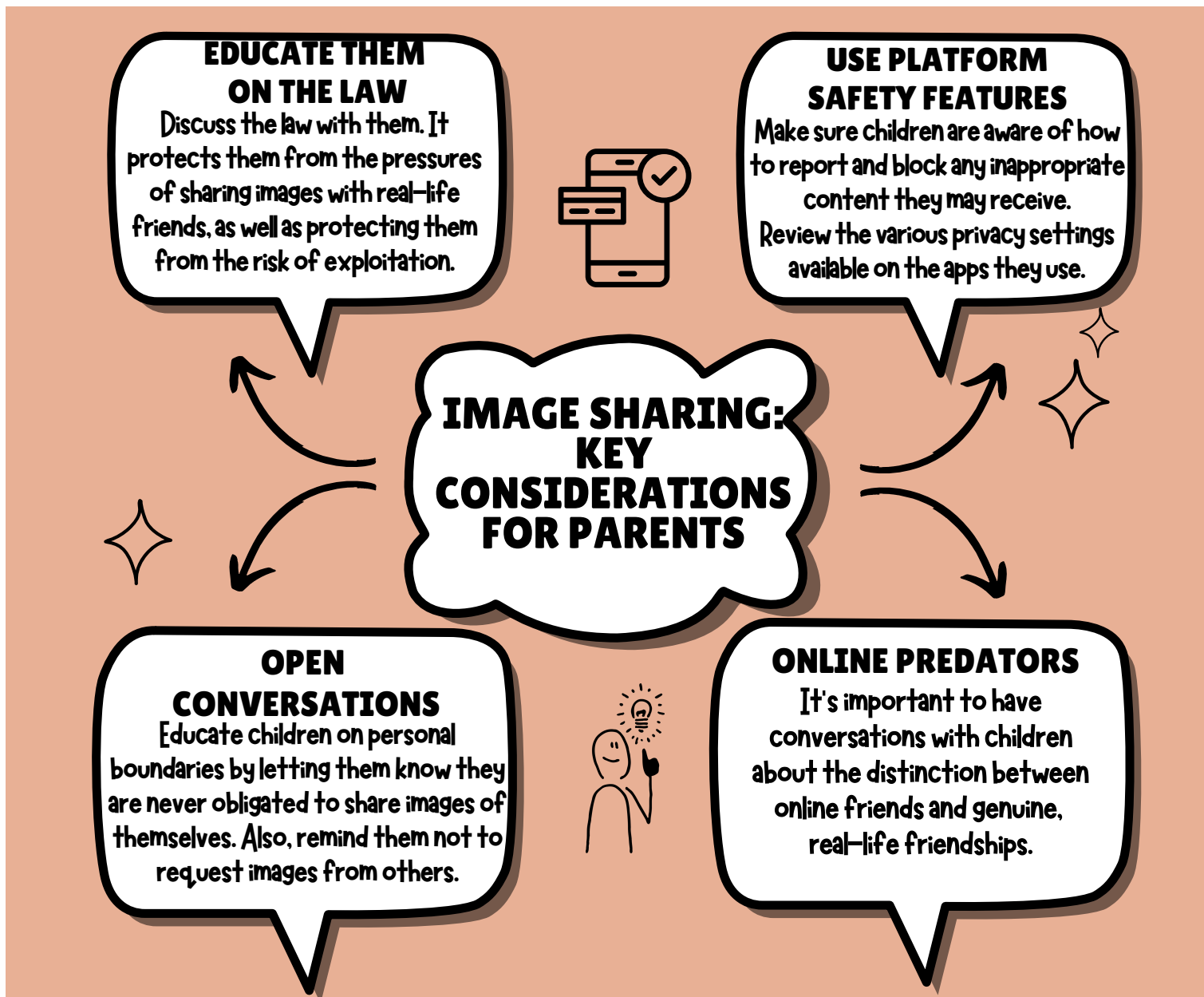
With the rise of camera phones and other devices in the last few years, taking photos of themselves and their friends is commonplace amongst young people. These photos are often shared online. In recent years, there has also been an increase in young people asking others to share nudes of themselves. This is commonly known as sexting.

There are reasons as to why a young person might agree to sending an image of themselves in this way:

- they may believe they are in a consensual romantic relationship
- they may be pressured, tricked or coerced into sharing an image
- they may be exploited or groomed into sending the images.

The law on image sharing:

In order to protect children, any indecent image of a child (someone under 18) is known as Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM), even if the image was created by the child themselves (self-generated CSAM). The law states that it is illegal to create or share CSAM. Creating images also includes AI or photoshopped images. The law also includes possession of an image and re-sharing images. Parents should not have images sent to their device, even if the intent is to report the image. Images should be reported to the Police immediately. It is important to note that this law is to protect children, not criminalise those who send images of themselves.



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Understanding consent

Consent is the explicit, informed and voluntary agreement to engage in a particular activity, often referring to sexual interactions, but it also applies to other areas such as relationships, sharing personal boundaries and decision making. For children, this means ensuring that they have the capacity to give consent without feeling pressured, coerced or manipulated.

Why is it important for young people to understand consent?

- Teaching consent encourages children to respect their own and others’ physical and emotional boundaries.
- Consent fosters open communication, mutual respect and equality in relationships.
- Educating teenagers about consent helps prevent situations of sexual assault, harassment and coercion.
- Understanding consent gives teenagers the tools to make informed choices about their body and relationships.
- Consent creates a culture of respect which helps to reduce harmful behaviours like victim-blaming.

The Four C’s of consent help children to know if consent has been or is still being given:

- **Clear:** Yes means yes. If it isn’t a yes, it’s a no.
- **Continuous:** Keeping check that it is still a yes; yes now doesn’t mean yes later.
- **Coercion-free:** It isn’t yes if pressure has been put on someone to do something.
- **Conscious:** The person giving consent must be fully capable of giving consent.

What parents and carers should know about Telegram

This summer, Telegram made the headlines when its owner was arrested.

Although it may not be the most popular messaging app among young people, it is considered one of the fastest-growing platforms.

While there are many discussions surrounding the risks associated with using Telegram, here are some key points to keep in mind:

4 WAYS TO TEACH CONSENT TO TEENAGERS

Teaching children about consent is vital for fostering respect and responsibility. Here are some effective strategies.

MODEL



Model consent in everyday situations. An example of this might be to ask for a hug.

TALK



Talk about what consent looks like in relationships. Use TV shows or news articles as conversation starters.

RESPECT







Emphasise mutual respect, taking into consideration seeking and giving consent.

DISCUSS



Discuss the legal aspect of consent, as well as the emotional impact of not gaining consent.

RISKS TO CONSIDER IF YOUR CHILD USES TELEGRAM

 END-TO-END ENCRYPTION	 SELF-DESTRUCTING MESSAGES	 LARGE GROUP CHATS	 LOCAL CONNECTIONS
Private conversations known as ‘Secret Chats’. can only be accessed by the participants. This puts children at risk.	A timer can be set when sending a message in a Secret Chat which will then self-destruct/ disappear.	Group chats known as Channels can include up to 200,000 participants. This allows for unregulated conversations.	‘People Nearby’ connects users locally, but may expose children to grooming and exploitation risks.

