

4 Cs of online safety

2025/26 edition

An important step in improving online safety at your school is to identify what the potential risks might be. KCSIE groups online safety risks into four areas: **CONTENT**, **CONTACT**, **CONDUCT** and **COMMERCE**. These are known as the 4 Cs of online safety.

The



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CONTENT

Content is anything posted online - it might be words, images or videos. The 2025 version emphasises that misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories are common and that staff and governors must be upskilled to teach these concepts.

3

CONDUCT

Conduct is the way people behave online. Respect is key. Some online behaviour can increase the likelihood of, or even cause, harm. This is often referred to as cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying/inappropriate conduct can include the making and sending of, or receiving and viewing of, explicit material. Challenges include peer-to-peer abuse in digital spaces and risks through livestreaming.



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CONTACT

Contact is the risk of harm young people may face when interacting with other users online. Manipulative and coercive behaviour can occur. Grooming or exploitation may take place for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes. Challenges now include realistic AI chatbots, immersive environments with chat, and synthetic identities created by combining real and fabricated information.

Children and young people interact seamlessly across the online and offline worlds. Teaching should reflect this, with online safety embedded across the curriculum - not just part of computing or technology lessons. We have a range of courses available to schools on our website www.amazingict.co.uk

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COMMERCE

Commerce is linked to the risk of losing money online. This includes online gambling (E.G. Where you pay to 'win' a new gadget or skin), phishing for personal details, and scams. Newer content includes loot boxes, influencer-driven scams and crypto and non-fungible token fraud (NFT).



The 4 Cs of online safety gives schools and colleges a framework to recognise and manage risk. Applying these when taking a whole-school approach to online safety will help empower schools to protect children and respond appropriately to concerns.