Lesson plan companion guide

This lesson plan is designed to support students in Year 6 who are increasing their online use. The lesson pack includes the lesson plan, handouts, slides and this guide to support you in the classroom.

What you need to know

63% of parents worry about their child viewing content that promotes dangerous stunts or challenges online
(Internet Matters tracker parents survey, wave 18)

83% of teens become aware of online challenges through social media
(Praesidio Safeguarding, Responses to dangerous online challenges)

46% percent of teens think that getting good information on risks and what it means to go too far is best in preventing harm from online challenges
(Praesidio Safeguarding, Responses to dangerous online challenges)

Aligning to curriculum

This lesson can align to different parts of the curriculum, specifically those which deal with risk and critical thinking.

England

Computing
- Use technology safely, respectfully and responsibly; recognise unacceptable online behaviour.

PSHE
- Supporting mental wellbeing (including online safety).
- Making safe and informed choices.

Scotland

Technologies
- Use technologies safely, responsibly and respectfully.
- Critically evaluate information and online content.

Health and Wellbeing
- Develop the knowledge and understanding that contributes to mental, emotional, social and physical wellbeing.
- Make informed choices about their health and well being, considering the influence of external factors.

Wales

DCF
- Be safe, responsible and respectful online.
- Critically evaluate information and online content.

Health and Wellbeing
- Develop the skills and knowledge to make informed choices to promote their own health and wellbeing.

Northern Ireland

ICT
- Use ICT safely and responsibly.
- Use ICT skills to evaluate information.

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding
- Develop personal safety and wellbeing skills.
- Making informed choices about personal safety and wellbeing in a range of situations, including online.

Top tips

1. Avoid referring to harmful online challenges by name.

2. Do your own research into new challenges you hear about to accurately address it among your students.

3. Give students the space to talk with you if they're worried.

4. Know how to block and report content on different platforms so you can show children how to do the same.

5. Avoid using absolute language such as 'never do this'. Instead, focus on the importance of thinking critically about things they see online before making choices.

Addressing more dangerous challenges

This lesson plan is intended to encourage critical thinking among children. While it uses relatively harmless online challenges to illustrate this skill, it's important to recognise that some online challenges have led to bodily harm and even death.

While we warn against sharing information about dangerous challenges, some students will likely have awareness of these things. The following are some potential questions or stories students might share, along with guidance to effectively address or answer them.

Potential question or story	Effective responses
I saw a challenge where …	If a student shares a dangerous challenge, make it clear that sharing or participating in such challenges can cause a lot of harm. You can use the strategies taught in the lesson to ask them to think critically about why the challenge is not appropriate to participate in. For less harmful challenges (such as dance challenges), you can ask them to brainstorm some ways they could minimise harm while doing such a challenge.
What if I think a challenge is dangerous, but I also want to try it?	In this case, students should speak with a trusted adult such as a parent or carer to get their input. If they wouldn't want their parent to know, that could be a sign that it's too dangerous to participate in. However, some challenges are not safe, no matter how many precautions we take. We should instead find an alternative that's safer.
I/my friend did/plan to do a challenge where…	For relatively harmless challenges, you can ask students to share what they did to stay safe. They can reflect back on it to see if there were potential risks, then they can conclude what they or their friend could have done differently to stay safe. If a child discloses that they or a friend participated or plan to participate in a dangerous challenge, it's important to reaffirm that doing so would not be a healthy choice. Moreover, you should inform those in charge of safeguarding at your school so they can properly address it as aligned with your school's policies.

Supporting resources

The following guides and resources can help you learn more about online challenges. You can also share the below resources with parents and carers to help them keep their children safe online.

Internet Matters

[Online challenges hub](#)

[Online challenges – Are they harmless?](#)

[Scary challenges (for young people)](#)
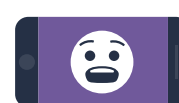

[Effective responses to dangerous online challenges](#)

[Introduction to Thinking Critically Online (lesson)](#)

[Online critical thinking guide](#)

[Scares, panics and challenges](#)