



Selfies & Self-esteem

Information for Parents



The craze for 'selfies' – photos of yourself taken by yourself - is a huge phenomenon.

Fuelled by the rise in social media, the influence of celebrity culture and many other factors, selfies have become so popular that one study estimates that in the UK there are 1.2 billion selfies taken every day.

Young people growing up with technology and the internet at their fingertips could be seen to be the first 'generation selfie'. Taking and sharing selfies is one way that young people communicate with others, document their lives, express themselves and have fun. Taking selfies gives young people a means to create an image for themselves – when you're taking the photo yourself, you can present yourself in the best light. This can lead to some young people putting undue importance on their appearance and feeling under pressure to get lots of 'likes' on photos they share.

Helping children to feel secure about themselves and cope with being part of the selfie generation is really important. You can start by encouraging discussion about the reasons for taking selfies and what they think makes the 'perfect selfie'. Ask them if they edit their images in any way and if they do find out why. They might simply enjoy creating beautiful pictures but if they are trying to live up to an unrealistic image you might want to find out more.

These top tips should help:



Remind your child that age limits for most social media accounts are age 13 and over. Age limits help to protect your child on social media from inappropriate contact and content, so they should wait until they reach that age before they start using social networks.



Selfies aren't a bad thing and it's becoming the norm for young people to take lots of them to communicate with friends. But if you find that your child is behaving in ways

that you don't recognise, try to **open up a conversation** with them about how selfies make them feel.



Your selfie is yours and it's up to you what you do with it. Set a good example for your child by thinking about their **online privacy** before posting lots of selfies featuring them.



Selfies are now so commonplace that people forget to ask permission before taking them. Talk to your child about selfies they take with other people **and remind them to check that others are happy** for those pictures to be posted online



Talk about self-esteem with your child. Does seeing selfies that other people have taken make them feel differently about their own image? If they're over 13 and share selfies on social media, how does it make them feel when they receive likes? What would they think if they didn't get any likes on a picture of themselves?



Suggest they **think before they post** selfies as anything they do online could be there forever and visible to anyone. Ask them how a friend, teacher or relative might feel if they saw that particular image?

Sexting

It's also a good idea to discuss whether your child ever feels pressured to share selfies that are sexually suggestive, naked or near-naked, online and via mobile.

Research indicates that the reasons people tend to engage in sexting are to show off, show interest in someone, prove commitment or just as a joke. But sexting can have extremely serious consequences – for the sender, recipient and subject of the image:

- If someone takes, holds or shares indecent images of anyone under the age of 18, they are breaking the law under the Sexual

Offences Act 2003. Even if they do so voluntarily in the context of a girlfriend/boyfriend relationship.

- Images can easily be manipulated, copied, posted online or sent to others within seconds
- Images can easily be manipulated, copied, posted online or sent to others within seconds

Although it can be a difficult topic to discuss it's better to have a difficult conversation than to wait for a problem to arise:

- Talk to your child about sexting now, but don't assume they are necessarily doing it. It's especially important if they are an older teen who is in a relationship or considering starting one
- Discuss sexting as part of a wider conversation about relationships. Let them know that you understand they want to explore their sexual identity but make sure they understand they should never feel pressured into doing anything they don't want to do
- Explain that it's illegal to take, hold or share indecent images of anyone under the age of 18 under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. They should avoid passing these kind of images on if they receive them, as they are breaking the law
- If you're concerned that sexting is taking place at your child's school, speak to their teacher. They might be able to take action as part of sex education classes or in line with the school's anti-bullying policy
- If you're concerned that someone has sent your child indecent pictures or videos or that a stranger has made inappropriate contact online, report it to Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Command of the National Crime Agency. It is also worth contacting your internet or mobile provider and the Internet Watch Foundation will be able to help to ensure the image is removed from the internet.

More Information

www.antibullyingpro.com

www.parentzone.org.uk

www.parentinfo.org/

www.vodafone.com/content/parents

[www.vodafone.com/content/parents/advice/sexting.html](http://www.vodafone.com/content/parents/advice sexting.html)

<http://www.ceop.police.uk/>

OUR PROGRAMMES...

Diana Award



www.diana-award.org.uk



@dianaaward

Network/Training & Mentoring



www.facebook.com/thedianaaward



@dianaaward

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors



www.facebook.com/antibullyingpro



@antibullyingpro

PLEASE SUPPORT OUR WORK!

Diana Award, 2nd Floor, 120 Moorgate, London EC2M 6UR Tel: 020 7628 7499

Website: www.diana-award.org.uk Twitter: @Dianaaward

Facebook: www.facebook.com/thedianaaward



120 Moorgate, London EC2M 6UR

The Diana Award is a registered charity (1117288 / SC041916)

and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales number 5739317